

The God Life Part 3: "Learning To Be My Own Boss" 04.22.12

Scripture: Luke 12:35-40 / 2 Peter 1:5-6 NIV

Intro: I have ambitious plans for tonight's sermon. I'd like to share with you one of the most important lessons I have ever learned - a lesson that has made a dramatic difference in the way I've lived my life... a lesson that I believe can also make a dramatic difference in the way you live your life. That lesson is this. Learn to be your own boss. Take charge of your life. Learn how to be self-controlled. Learn the art of alert discipline. My dad taught me from an early age that if I would be tough on myself, I would never have to worry about anyone else being tough with me. It's true. And, I believe, it's Biblical. Peter tells us:

"For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control..."
2 Peter 1:5-6a NIV

"So don't lose a minute in building on what you've been given, complementing your basic faith with ... alert discipline."
2 Peter 1:5-6a MSG

Today I have a big job in front of me. In 30 minutes I'd like to share with you six reasons - 6 motivations - for WHY you should be your own boss. We learn these six reasons for self-discipline from Jesus in Luke 12. Then, before we finish, I'd like to share 3 prompts for being your own boss. Three HOWs to get you started down the right path.

6 Reasons for "Alert Discipline"

1st Reason: I AM A SERVANT.

The first thing we learn about being your own boss - as a Christian - is that the reason you want to be your own boss is that you really aren't your own boss. You serve someone else! You are not the master. You are the servant. Jesus taught...

"Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet."
Luke 12:35-36a NIV

It may seem like I'm being contradictory here. The truth is that the best way that you can be the best servant for Christ is that you are in control of yourself. That you in charge of yourself. The best servant is the one who is intentionally the best servant, **who works to serve well...**

2nd Reason: I WANT TO SERVE WELL.

Jesus tells us that the excellent servant is the one who is ready to open the door for the master when he comes.

"So that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him." Luke 12:36b NIV

So, you may ask, what does this have to do with being your own boss. The servant who serves well is the one who says to himself: "This is my priority. I'm going to do what I have to do to serve well. In this case he stays awake. He remains alert. He keeps the lamps burning - which in those days involved a lot more than turning on a light switch. He had to keep the fuel in the lights. He had to keep himself awake. One of the best ways to be a good servant is to WANT to be a good servant - to prepare yourself to serve well.

3rd Reason: I WILL BE REWARDED.

Another motivation to remain in charge of yourself so you can serve well is that there will be a great reward for you!

"It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come wait on them." Luke 12:37 NIV

Some people struggle with the idea of serving Christ as well as possible so that they might be rewarded. There's one person who didn't have a problem with this concept. Jesus! In fact, he said that the reward for serving well would be that the master would, in turn, serve you! This may be one of the hardest things for us to accept. It doesn't happen because we demand it. God does not act on our wishes. What we see here is that it is God's delight to wait on those who dedicate their lives to Him! But this dedication does not come cheaply or easily. **It involves...**

4th Reason: I NEED TO BE PREPARED.

To be prepared is to think through what you must do to serve well. What are the sacrifices that you will need to make? How can you be ready?

"It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak." Luke 12:38 NIV

This is a big reason WHY you want to be self-controlled. Because otherwise you cannot serve as well. You cannot be ready when God calls you. The truth is many of us are not sensitive enough to even hear God, let alone act upon his call. The self-controlled, self-disciplined servant is ever tuned to hear and act, always prepared.

5th Reason: I MUST BE DEFENSIVE.

It's also the best way we have of being prepared for the enemy of our soul. Jesus slips this into the story. **There is a thief in the night...**

"But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into." Luke 12:39 NIV

In this story it's not just a matter of the servants being prepared for the master to come, but also prepared for the enemy - the thief - to come. This is an interesting insertion into the story. Jesus had been talking about the servant of the master's house. Now he's talking about the owner of the house. Why? *Because each servant is the owner of his house - his body, his soul, his existence. God never takes from us what we are unwilling to offer. This is why it is so important for you to "be your own boss." If you are not in charge of yourself, how could you possibly "give yourself away?"* It's for this reason why many of us serve so poorly. Because we don't think through that the best way to protect myself is the same best way to serve God - to be purposeful in my alertness. To be disciplined in my commitment. **There's one more reward...**

6th Reason: I DON'T WANT TO MISS OUT.

Jesus tells us that He will be coming back and that we need to be ready.

"You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." Luke 12:40 NIV

I don't want to miss out. And neither do you. How can we be prepared. How can we best make ourselves in charge of ourselves so that we can best serve and be ready for Christ - our ultimate Master? **3 Prompts!**

3 Prompts For “Alert Discipline”

#1 The Power of PURPOSE.

We do not live just for ourselves. We find our purpose in Christ! He has designed each one of us for a specific purpose.

“It’s in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ... he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living.” Ephesians 1:11 MSG

We never come across this unique purpose by being selfish. It’s never about what is my purpose for me... It’s always about “What is my purpose for Christ?” Interestingly this is the best way to find my true self!

“Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself?” Matthew 16:25-26a MSG

#2 The Power of PATTERN.

The power of purpose is amazing. Once I know what I’m all about, what my true self is all about, then I can address my habits. Are my habits - what I do over and over again - leading me toward my purpose? If there is any question about what kinds of habits - or patterns - we should be following, we need only look to the examples given us in Scripture:

Jesus: “I’ve laid down a pattern for you. What I’ve done, you do.” John 13:15 MSG

Paul: “Hold on to the pattern of wholesome teaching you learned from me - a pattern shaped by the faith and love that you have in Christ Jesus.” 2 Timothy 1:13 NLT

#3 The Power of PRACTICE.

And now we come to the crux of the matter - HOW we work within ourselves to become our own boss - to become self-controlled and self-disciplined enough to live out the patterns and habits that we see in Christ Jesus. We have the POWER to do this supernaturally - God’s Spirit in us! But there is nothing supernatural about the reality of making these habits - or patterns - in our lives. They come THROUGH PRACTICE! This is what the early Christ-followers always taught!

Paul: “Practice these things. Immerse yourself in them so that all may see your progress.” 1 Timothy 4:15 ESV

Peter: “If you practice these qualities you will never fail.” 2 Peter 1:10b ESV

Conclusion: We have given you much to think about. We are not our own. We are Christ’s servants. Christ is our Master... our ultimate boss! But to be the very best servants we can be - we have to discipline ourselves - we have to put ourselves in charge of ourselves. We have to be committed to being prepared, to being ready. And this never comes without intention, without sacrifice. We never completely arrive. But we should be *seeing progress* - as Paul wrote to Timothy. Are you seeing progress? Are you more in charge of yourself today than you were a year ago? Are you more of a prepared and ready servant than you were one year ago? What practice do you need to be working on today?