

## **Kingdom Logic: The Weight of Responsibility**

Being responsible is not something that the modern world embraces with open arms because it sees a conflict between responsibility and personal freedom. We believe that doing whatever one feels like doing at any time is the key to fulfillment and success, even as we struggle to find examples of people achieving success in this way. So how do we become more responsible and develop a better mindset towards it? Let's spend some time this week looking into that.

### **Day One**

#### **That's What Authority Does**

One of the primary problems in our thinking about responsibility is that it somehow feels like those who require a response from us shouldn't have the right to do so. I remember having conversations with co-workers at my first job where the primary subject was how our manager was out of line for requiring us to clean the bathrooms every hour. When we found out it was a directive that came from the regional manager through the store manager, we still felt like they shouldn't be giving us a requirement like that because they never cleaned the bathrooms and didn't actually know how often they should be cleaned. That same kind of conversation takes place at workplaces all over the country every day, and is also had at schools and every other place where authority exists. What we rarely stop to think about is what the word authority means and what authorities actually contribute to us. Authority is authorship, and those in authority, like God, build us through their words. That is their whole purpose for existence. My manager at my first job was authoring my ability to be a good employee through their commands to me, building my value to the company through their words. It was needed, because I was a pretty dumb 16-year-old with no work experience. Every authority in our lives gives us the service of telling us what to do, and we give them the service of doing it. That is the deal we have, the exchange that takes place, and it benefits us if the authority is legitimate (I am not addressing illegitimate authority here). We can help ourselves to be more responsible by understanding this and changing our attitude to the directives we are given.

*Verses: Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 2:13-20, 1 Samuel 15:22*

*Prayer Topics: Duty, Humility, Gratitude, Respect*

## **Day Two**

### **Make Your Body Responsible**

One of the first steps in becoming more responsible is to make your body responsible to your mind or spirit. Why is this one of the first steps? Because until your body becomes responsible to your mind, you cannot make it responsible to the commands or words of others. I remember very clearly that when I became a youth pastor, I was given an open invitation to attend a men's breakfast. At the time, I was having a lot of problems with sinus infections and had a hard time getting up and getting going in the morning, so I found that I just couldn't make myself get up in time to attend the breakfast. It was no good wanting to go if I couldn't make my body obey my brain. No matter how much good it would do for me, I was not able to comply with the invitation. Many times, we find ourselves having good intentions, or we go to church and feel inspired to be more obedient to God, but our responsiveness to God's word is undone because we have not trained our bodies to be responsible to our spirits. Are there areas of your life where your body is calling the shots? Does your body need to be disciplined so that it will follow the commands of your mind? Take some time today investigating where you might need to start making your body your servant, so that it can be God's servant.

*Verses: 1 Corinthians 9:27, Proverbs 25:28, 2 Timothy 1:7*

*Prayer Topics: Discipline, Routine, Habits*

## **Day Three**

### **The Bad Thing About Good Intentions**

One of the things that often keeps us from being as responsible as we would like is that we value good intentions too highly. I am not saying good intentions have no value at all, for it would be hard to do anything good at all without first having the intention to do so. Most of us struggle with the opposite problem, that of allowing our high estimation of good intentions to derail us from doing good things. The problem we often face is that we tend to give ourselves some credit for having the intention, and that credit serves as a placeholder of good feeling until we can complete the task. Too often, that completion is only partial, or never comes at all, and we don't rightly judge our failure because we had good intentions. In the parable of the talents, the master gives the servants their charge of getting a return, and he gives them their tools, the talents that they started out with. It does not appear that he grades them on their good intentions, or gives them partial credit for their proper desires, but instead grades the effectiveness of their service. The problem with good intentions is that almost all of us have them, for it is rare indeed that someone sets out to do harm or evil, or to completely fail in their responsibilities. I have talked to many people who had a parent walk out on them when they were young, and very few of those adults who left intended to do so from the start. Being responsible to God means doing the work and making the sacrifice to be obedient to the calling we have been given, and waiting for the master himself to tell us when we have been profitable servants.

*Verses: Romans 12:17-21, James 2:26, James 1:22*

*Prayer Topics: Truth, Reality, Actions, Results*

## **Day Four**

### **Watch Out For Fear**

Given the subject of yesterday's devotion, it might be that we may face some fear when being given our responsibilities. If we are judged as profitable or unprofitable based on performance, some fear might accompany the duties we are assigned. In the parable of the talents, the one talent servant admits that the motivating factor for his lack of responsibility was his fear, so not only is fear a possibility, but it seems it might be a common reason for failure. How do we accept the responsibility we are given without fear? Faith seems to be the common answer that is found throughout scripture. Whether we look at Abraham and his need to leave his country at 75, or we see the

turbulent life of Moses who leads Israel from the promised land at 80, all of the characters of both testaments had very large tasks given to them. How do you avoid fear? Fear has to do with punishment, scripture tells us, and our punishment has been taken by our savior. When we fear, we evaluate our chances of success by taking stock of our abilities and talents rather than the abilities of God. Over and over again, God assigned his saints difficult tasks, but he did not expect them to accomplish these tasks on their own resources. David did not defeat Goliath on his own, nor did Shadrach and his companions defeat the flames of the fiery furnace by being innately immune to heat. In all of these things, God desires his people to trust in his power rather than theirs. So we must watch out for fear, for it is the enemy of faith.

*Verses: Isaiah 41:10, Romans 8:15, Psalm 23:4*

*Prayer Topics: Confidence, Hope, Joy, Unity*

## **Day Five**

### **Take Care**

How do we begin to make progress in responsibility? Take care of the things that are yours. This may seem like an answer that is way too simple, but it is how you grow in responsibility. God has given you a part of his kingdom, and if you want to be given more things, take care of and make fruitful those things you have already been given. I have seen people in ministry who lamented the size of their congregations, reading in Christian ministry magazines about churches or ministries that have seen amazing growth. When that kind of ministry is not given to them, or their initial efforts aren't blessed with record breaking results, I have seen more than a few give up. What most people fail to realize is that quantity is no substitute for quality, and that a whole bunch of people you don't care about cannot take the place of a few that you do. If you were a celebrity, how many strangers wanting your autograph would make up for not having anyone in your life that really loved you? For most people, the answer is simple in that there is no such number. In the same way, having one sheep you care about is worth hundreds you don't, and if you cannot love one sheep you will never love many. You must walk before you run, and you must develop the ability to truly love greater things by learning to love lesser things, so take care of what you have been given, and thank God for the responsibility he has granted you.

*Verses: 1 Corinthians 3:8, Luke 16:10, 2 Peter 1:10*

*Prayer Topics: Love, Generosity, Attention*

