

PREPARED FOR THE WORK

Positioned to Grow. Equipped to Serve. Determined to Stay the Course.

Paul teaches that the believer who purges himself becomes “...*a vessel unto honor sanctified, and meet (fit) for the master’s use, prepared unto every good work.*” **2 Timothy 2:21** God positions us where we can grow, equips us so we can serve, and strengthens us to remain faithful when distractions attempt to pull us away from the work.

1 Corinthians 12:18 KJV – “*But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*” **Acts 2:42** – “*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*”

Colossians 2:6-7 “*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: **rooted and built up** in him, and **stablished** in the faith, as ye have been **taught**...*”

1 Corinthians 4:2 – “*Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*”

Note: Assignment requires stewardship, and stewardship requires faithfulness.

Part One: Position Yourself to Grow:

We are God’s workmanship (Ephesians 2:10), prepared in Christ to walk in good works He has ordained. Many members (Romans 12:4-8) with different functions and gifts. To develop these and grow spiritually, we are to (1) faithfully exercise the grace God has given us, and (2) continue in the environment which forms us spiritually and prepares us to function within the life and mission of the Church – through the *local* church:

- Doctrine (teaching)
- Fellowship
- Communion
- Prayer

According to Paul (**Ephesians 4:12**), Christ gave ministry gifts to the Church “*for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.*”

Note: the word translated “**perfecting**” carries the idea of equipping, preparing, and bringing believers toward maturity. We are equipped so that we can participate in the work of the ministry. Therefore, ministry is not merely discovering what we enjoy doing or where we enjoy going. It involves being spiritually formed and prepared to serve effectively.

Ephesians 4:14 – “*that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.*”

God wants us to grow in the knowledge of who He is so we can function consistently in His will within the Body of Christ AND the local church. This requires us to grow beyond spiritual instability.

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Positioning ourselves to grow does not mean earning a calling. It simply means to place yourself in an environment where spiritual formation can occur:

- Learning the vision and mission of the local church.
- Sitting under sound biblical teaching.
- Participating in worship and fellowship.
- Developing a consistent prayer life.
- Studying and obeying Scripture.
- Receiving correction with humility.
- Serving faithfully in available areas.
- Building healthy relationships with other believers.
- Allowing character to develop alongside giftedness.
- Becoming dependable in small responsibilities.
- Remaining planted long enough to mature.

Jesus said (**Luke 16:10 KJV**), “*He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.*” Sometimes people are searching for a title, platform, or prominent assignment while overlooking the ordinary places where God is developing character. The *smaller* opportunities may be part of the preparation.

Remain. To get an understanding of how God wants to use our gifts, experiences, abilities, and testimony, we must remain planted, teachable, faithful, prayerful, and connected to the body. This is where God begins to make our place and purpose clearer.

Part Two: Recognize and Protect the Assignment (Nehemiah)

“I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down.” **Nehemiah 6:3 KJV**

Before Nehemiah could say this, he first had to understand what God had placed in his heart to do. This began with a burden. He *saw* the condition of Jerusalem. He *saw* and *heard* about a need (broken wall around Jerusalem). (**Nehemiah 1:3-4**) He first positioned himself before God: he sat down (stilled himself), he wept, he mourned, he fasted, he prayed. And ***the burden led him into the presence of God.*** In prayer, he: **worshipped** God, **confessed** sin, **remembered** God’s covenant, **recalled** God’s Word, and **asked** for direction and favor.

Nehemiah helps us understand why God must prepare us. A burden without spiritual maturity, gifts without character, calling without preparation, passion without wisdom or desire without discipline: can cause us to get out of order, move impulsively, cause harm, create confusion, and become frustrating for self, ministry, and community.

Part Three: Defend the Work Against Distraction

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Note: Not every distraction is sinful. A distraction can be good, legitimate, necessary, or even ministry-related but still pull us away from what God requires at that moment (season).

1. There is nothing wrong with **attending a meeting or having a conversation**. But Sanballat's invitation would have taken Nehemiah away from the wall and interrupted the work God had assigned to him. *"Why should the work cease, while I leave it, and come down to you?"* **Nehemiah 6:3**
2. **Helping people** is biblical. However, we cannot meet every need, solve every problem, or accept every request. [*neglecting responsibilities, prayer, church commitments, or assignments God has already placed in your hands*] The issue is not that helping is wrong but whether we are helping under God's direction or allowing other people's demands to govern our lives.
3. **Employment and career advancement**. Working, earning income, and pursuing professional growth are honorable. However, even career ambitions can consume so much time, attention, and energy that prayer, worship, family, service, and spiritual development are continually neglected. The career is not necessarily sinful. However, it **can** become too central.

A distraction does not have to be evil. It only has to become **more influential than the assignment**. Some distractions will look reasonable, beneficial, urgent, or even spiritual. Maintaining our connection with the body of Christ through our local church helps build us spiritually; making us strong in faith, obedient to the will of God, faithful in the local church, and able to discern what is going on around us.

Final thought: Your assignment (church) is too important, too great, and too valuable. Let's position ourselves to grow, allow God to prepare us, mature us, and reveal where we fit in His plan. Remain watchful, prayerful, faithful, and steadfast.

The enemy does not always have to destroy the work. Sometimes he only needs to **distract** the worker. (*Martha was busy doing many things but neglected what was more important. (Luke 10:38-42)*) But when we are prepared for the work and clear about the assignment, we can say bold confidence and authority, **"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down!"**

Other Scripture References to study to help us recognize, guard, and defend ourselves against distractions:

Hebrews 12:1-3; 1 Corinthians 6:12; 1 Corinthians 10:23; Matthew 26:41; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Proverbs 4:25-27; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Philippians 3:13-14; Colossians 3:1-2; Mark 4:18-19