

Reading: Acts 15:32-41; 2 Timothy 4:10,11

Topic: Working On Improving
Ourselves For Ministry

INTRODUCTION: No matter how many years we have _____ the Lord and no matter how much experience we have had in the _____ of God, we all can still improve and grow to be better.

I. NO ONE IS PERFECT:

A. Imperfect Vessels:

1. Someone has stated that the only vessels that God uses are imperfect vessels, and that is _____ when you look in the Word of God and see the _____ of people that God chose to do His work.
2. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord and he was chosen by God to _____ the human race, but in the Word of God we find him later on drunk and _____. Gen. 9:20,21
3. Jacob was chosen by God to be the father of the twelve tribes of _____, but in his younger days, he was a deceiver, a _____ and a thief. Gen. 27:18-20
4. Samson was chosen by God to defeat the Philistines, and he was _____ by God, but he messed around with Delilah and _____ his consecration, but was later listed as a hero of faith. Heb. 11:32

B. We Too Are Imperfect:

1. There is no one on earth that is _____ and all of us have faults of one kind or another which is why Jesus instructed us to not be looking at each other to find _____. Mt. 7:3
2. The people of the New Testament including the disciples of Jesus were also _____ and made mistakes in their _____ and ministries, but were also anointed and effective.
3. Our duty and Scriptural responsibility is to acknowledge our faults and _____, and then to work on improving ourselves and overcoming our weaknesses to be more effective for _____. 2 Tim. 4:11

II. STEPS TO IMPROVEMENT:

A. Own Up To Faults:

1. It is vitally important for us to realize that we will never _____ and improve in our life and ministry so long as we do not recognize, admit to and see our own _____ and flaws. Gen. 32:26-28
2. As long as we deny our _____ or blame someone else for the way I am, then we will never begin to work towards changing and doing _____ for the Lord Jesus. Gen. 3:11-13
3. If we use the _____ game to excuse ourselves for the way we are, then we give the control of our life to someone else, but if we take ownership of the problem, then we take control and can _____ towards doing something about it.

B. Make Needed Changes:

1. While we understand and recognize that we will never be _____ here in this life, that does not excuse us from taking steps to _____ our behavior.
2. Using the spiritual disciplines of _____ and fasting and the Word of God, this will open the door of opportunity for God to reveal to us what He wants to see _____ in us. Jn. 15:1,2,8
3. There is no _____ and improvement without change, and though change is _____ for us, we can pray to God for the wisdom and the strength to make improvements.

III. CHANGING OUR THINKING PATTERNS:

A. The Grasshopper Syndrome:

1. When Moses sent the twelve leaders of the tribes of Israel to _____ out the Promised Land, he did not know that ten of them would be afflicted with the grasshopper syndrome that would end up _____ them and leading to their demise. Num. 13:31-33
2. These ten men were afflicted with a defeatist mentality that was a carryover from their days as _____ in Egypt, and they saw themselves a defeated people instead of seeing what God had _____ for all of them as they moved _____.
3. The grasshopper thinking pattern was contagious and it spread quickly throughout the _____ of Israel causing the rest of the people to _____ the same thoughts of defeatism.

B. Changing From Negative To Positive:

1. Joshua and Caleb saw the exact things that the other _____ spies saw, but instead of seeing themselves as weak and defeated, they had the thinking _____ that was in line with God. Num. 14:6-9
2. Some people use the _____ saying, "That's just the way I am." However, that kind of thinking will not lead to change and improvement to overcome our _____.
3. If John Mark could grow and make _____ and improvements to the place where the Apostle Paul wanted to have him with him, then it is possible for all of us to grow and _____ also.

C. Faults That I Know I Have:

1. List some of your own faults that you have that you need to work on:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____

CONCLUSION: While the Word of God states that we should – "Confess our faults" – not the faults of others, admitting them is the first _____ to making _____ that are necessary in order for us to make _____ and growth in our life and ministry.