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# **The Reality of Responsibility**

**# 922-A**

**Series: Living Lessons From Proverbs**

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# The Reality of Responsibility

If someone were to come up and ask you, “Where are you headed in the Christian life”, could you draw them a reasonable road map? If someone should then ask you, “Where are you on that road today?” what would your answer be? If someone should ask you to define “responsibility” as a Christian, what kind of definition would you give? Would you consider yourself a “responsible” Christian? If someone were to ask you, “What does it cost to be a disciple?” could you experientially give an honest answer?

These are not hypothetical questions. These are the real issues of the Christian life that you and I must honestly look at if we’re to look at the subject of responsibility from the Living Lessons of Proverbs. Responsible Christians!

That’s the foundation upon which we will be building the next portion of our study as we continue to examine principles from Proverbs on Living the Victorious Christian life. Our lesson is on “The Reality of Responsibility.” Our purpose for this lesson is twofold:

- a) to remind you of where we are headed in our study of Proverbs
- b) to remind us of where we are headed in our Christian walk.

If that sounds like a big order, perhaps it is. But both are necessary, if we are to continue our study of Principles from Proverbs. To answer the first question, we must regress just for a moment and review, then overview, then preview our study to date.

Though time flies when you’re having fun, I must remind you that it was eleven months ago, some forty-three lessons ago, that we began a six-month series entitled Living Lessons from Proverbs. We are today at the halfway point, though we pray for your sake as well as mine, that the second half will go much

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faster than the first.

At the midway point of such a lengthy study a more extensive review is in order; so please bear with us as we look backwards for a moment. Lest we forget, our study of Proverbs was undertaken for the sake of WISDOM. Solomon, you recall, wrote these words:

These are the Proverbs of King Solomon of Israel, David's son. (Proverbs 1:1 TLB)

He wrote them to teach this people how to live, how to act in every circumstance, for he wanted them to be understanding, just, and fair in everything they did. "I want to make the simpleminded wise!" he said. "I want to warn young men about some problems they will face. I want those already wise to become the wiser and become leaders by exploring the depths of meaning in these nuggets of truth."

Solomon had a threefold reason for writing this book. First, he wanted simpleminded men and women to become wise. In other words, he wanted to teach the teachable how to live. To Solomon, the unteachable were not prospects. (They already knew more than they could handle.) Solomon was concerned about the teachable believer (the simpleminded). He wanted young, teachable Christians to become filled with the Wisdom of God, not necessarily bloated with knowledge; but filled with usable, practical wisdom. He wanted to teach them how to live!!! Not necessarily how to be professors of theology. But how to live! How to be understanding, just, and fair in everything they did.

Solomon's first objective was to teach the teachable believer, by giving him practical tools with which to navigate the seas of life under God's control. His second objective was found in verse 4,

I want to warn young men about some of the problems they'll face.

The Christian voyage is a voyage of victory. It will end as we sail—as conquering heroes into the port of eternity and are greeted by our Captain who will welcome us with all of the festivities of a victory celebration.

But the voyage into port is not one of calm seas and unchallenged occupation. The seas are guarded by an enemy force whose sole objective is to prevent our arrival, or at best, to destroy our spirits through constant bombardment and

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unending trials. He cannot prevent our arrival, but he can make our journey perilous. Our Captain has allowed the warfare to make us seaworthy saints, to prepare us to reign, and to shape us into men and women who have the Captain's mind (so He has allowed the warfare). He does not, however, want us to sail those seas without a roadmap. He wants to warn us of the problems we will face and give us the principles we'll need to overcome. That's his second objective in writing this practical book we call Proverbs.

The final objective is in verse 5, "I want those already wise (or already becoming wise) to become the wiser, and to become LEADERS."

God says this book is a leadership manual for men and women who plan to do more than stay in the barracks and wait for the war to be over. Those who are willing to man the front lines need training. God needs lieutenants and captains, and this book is His Leadership Manual.

So God has three basic objectives in writing His Proverbial Principle Book.

- 1- To Teach Teachable Young Christians how to live
- 2- To warn Believers about the problems they will face
- 3- To train leaders in the Christian faith.

Now that's a big order. But ours is a BIG GOD...and HE designed this fascinating primer of principles we call Proverbs and placed it strategically in the Scriptures to be certain that we would take the reality of the Law and allow it to dissolve into the grandeur of Grace under the Leadership of His Holy Spirit. His Goal is WISDOM. And Wisdom, you must recall by now, is nothing more, nothing less, than "THE MIND OF CHRIST IN CONTROL OF THE CHRISTIAN." Once more I remind you, wisdom comes in three stages.

*Stage one is KNOWLEDGE = knowing the facts.*

Knowledge is knowing what God says about a given subject. But knowledge is not an objective in the Christian life. Knowledge is a vehicle in the Christian life. Knowledge of itself "puffeth up" It serves to serve the flesh with attention, to draw attention to itself.

Knowledge is accumulating information about how God

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thinks, so God can do something with it... nothing more than that!

*Stage two is UNDERSTANDING: the personalization of knowledge.*

It is one thing to know that God hates lying. It's another to understand that you're a liar. When knowledge becomes personal, understanding begins to take place. But even understanding is no end within itself. TO simply be aware that you are a liar is painfully discouraging...unless you are in the process of attaining wisdom, of learning how the Mind of Christ can control of your tongue (can start telling the Truth). Then understanding becomes exciting...it is the door through which God marches with transformation. And as we allow God's Mind to be exercised in us with regard to each of these subjects dealt with in Proverbs, we are in the process of becoming wise. As we do, three things will happen.

- 1- If we are teachable, we begin to grow.
- 2- We learn what life has in store and begin to prepare for it.
- 3- We see, supernaturally, God develop spiritual leaders.

Ought we to be surprised? Did not Solomon promise us those three things would happen? No wonder we are so encouraged to study this book, and no wonder we must go on and complete our course.

At the outset of our excursion through the seas of Proverbs, we determined that what God had done was to take and use as ingredients principles necessary to attain wisdom in all of the key areas of life; then having lovingly folded in all of the ingredients, He turned on the mix-master of His Grace and blended them into thirty-one layers of wisdom, each layer unfolding more of each of the ingredients. So that by using this book as a textbook on a daily basis, we can have a strong portion of wisdom imparted to us each day of the month for 31 days, and then by beginning again the next month, a whole new horizon of truth surfaces as we read the very same pages, but God unveils new vistas of truth.

For example, there are important principles about friendships in chapter one, but there are also more in chapter two, and three, and four, and thirteen, and fourteen, and so on. There are principles about diligence in chapter six, but also in

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ten, eleven, thirteen, sixteen, and on and on. Some eighty key subjects, you remember, emerged as we attempted to categorize the facets of wisdom God had poured into this divine recipe book for Godliness. Our task for this study, was to draw back those subjects, one at a time, and regroup them together topically, so we can discern everything God has to say in Proverbs about... correctability, or about murmuring, or about anger, and thus to see develop before us the Mind of Christ where correctability, or murmuring, or anger was concerned.

To do this, we sought to find a pattern of development and divide it into logical stages...those stages we called the Four Faces of Wisdom. Many of you weren't here eleven months ago. So let's review how those stages emerged.

The First Face of Wisdom was Humility. It was the *attitude of heart* God demanded before anything else worthwhile could happen. It permeated every page of His Word. Before one could attain wisdom, one must have a right perspective of who he is before God and who he is before others. We looked at the perennial problem of pride, at the dangers of spiritual pride, at the high cost of humility, and finally discovered, much to our relief, that the battle was not ours but God's. Then we began to see that true humility developed into a hunger for the Word, that humble Christians must be treasure-hunting Christians. And lastly that above all, humble Christians must be correctable Christians. Through all of this, the pages of Proverbs painted an indelible portrait of the attitude of God's wise man or wise woman an attitude of deep humility and thus teachability before both God and man.

Then there unfolded the second phase of wisdom...the second "face" if you will. It was the issue of self-control. It became apparent that once the believer had God's mind about his role, his mind and his body must come under the constant control of the Spirit to be effective. This meant that the will must learn to respond to the WORD even over the objections of the emotions and the appetites. We looked at Proverbial Principles on internal self-control: impulsiveness, anger, envy, and fear. We looked at principles of external self-control and what Proverbs had to say about adultery, gluttony, and drunkenness. Lastly at expressional self-control; what Proverbs had to say about the fiery issue of taming the tongue. There we had to wrestle with

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such tongue twisters as arguing, murmuring, boasting, judging, lying, and gossiping, to name but a few. Throughout this leg of our journey, I trust it became apparent to you as it did to me, that God's teachable saint, God's leader of tomorrow, must today be in the process of bringing His life under God's Control in his attitudes, in his behavior, and in his expressions. The man or woman of God, to be the man or woman God wants them to be, must be men and women, who are humble in spirit, and controlled in behavior.

The last two faces of wisdom as you can see, build on the first two. The third is responsibility; the fourth is generosity or sensitivity. Each level builds upon the other. For example, self-control without humility is nothing more than legalism. Responsibility without self-control is only hypocrisy; and generosity without responsibility is but foolishness. (It is without purpose.) So each level depends upon the one beneath it to carry its load.

In this lesson we begin our study of the third face of wisdom, the issue of Christian Responsibility or as we might term it "God's Perspective of Discipline". Let me begin this new dimension in our perusal of Proverbs with another definition.

*RESPONSIBILITY: Man's response to God's ability.*

I trust that the real impact of that definition will be more evident as we progress. Responsibility is man's response to God's ability. It is a perfect blending you see, of God's Sovereignty with man's accountability. It says "Christian", you are RESPONSIBLE to do certain things. "I", says God, "will be RESPONSIBLE for the outcome." God has the ability. But it is our response that frees His ability to flow through our lives and lead us on into the lush forests of maturity we all so long to inhabit. We may have begun learning the basics of walking in humility, and even begun learning the keys to exercising self-control, but the fruitful Christian life is not simply restraining ourselves from pride, and restraining our behavior. Victory comes when the restrained life becomes responsible. When we begin to respond to God's ability the way He designed us to do.

So phase one was seeing life from God's perspective, phase two was controlling life for God's objectives, and now phase three is structuring our live according to God's designs.

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There are more than 180 verses in Proverbs on becoming responsible believers. They divide themselves roughly into five categories, categories we will be studying in the next few lessons.

1- Becoming responsible for your life's direction. (Taking control of your life's purposes. Understanding God's plan for your life.)

2- Becoming responsible in the home (principles on parenting, primarily, even more specifically on discipline.)

3- Becoming responsible on the job (the disciplines of diligence we might painfully call it)

4- Becoming responsible in business (the principles of management in the marketplace and in the home. Proverbs may be the best business management textbook ever written.)

5- Being responsible in relationships (how to be a friend ) than 30 verses(, and how to be a godly man or woman).

Interestingly enough, those 180 verses divide themselves almost evenly among those subjects. So we know that all of them must be equally important in our quest to become responsible Christians.

We begin our look at responsibility in the Christian life by looking at the most basic issue of all. Before man can have a responsible posture in the home or in the market place, he must first become responsible in God's overall plan for his life. The question we must now go back and ask ourselves is this: "DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU'RE GOING IN LIFE?"

Paul knew (and no one could possibly sidetrack him): In I Corinthians, chapter nine, Paul gave this capsule expression of how a responsible Christian should view his life. Let me read it from the Amplified New Testament:

Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run your race that you may lay hold of the prize and make it yours.

Now every athlete who goes into training conducts himself, temperately and restricts himself in all things. They do it to receive a wreath that will soon wither. But we do it to receive a crown of eternal blessedness that cannot wither.

Therefore I do not run uncertainly without definite aim, I do not box as one beating the air and striking without an adversary.

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But, [like a boxer] I buffet my body, handle it roughly, discipline it by hardships and subdue it, for fear that after proclaiming to others the gospel and things pertaining to it, I myself should become unfit, not stand the test and be unapproved and rejected as a counterfeit.

(I Corinthians 10:24-27 Amplified)

In a race, everyone runs but only one person gets prize. so run your race to win.

To win the contest you must deny yourselves many things that would keep you from doing your best. An athlete goes to all this trouble just to win a blue ribbon or a silver cup, but we do it for a heavenly reward that never disappears, So I run straight to the goal with purpose in every step. I fight to win. I'm not just shadowboxing or playing around.

Like an athlete, I punish my body, treating it roughly, training it to do what it should, not what it wants to, Otherwise, I fear that after enlisting others for the race, I myself might be declared unfit and ordered to stand aside.

(I Corinthians 10:24-27 TLB)

Now I wonder if we fully grasp what Paul was saying about the Christian life in that passage. Apparently, I don't or I would not be wandering as aimlessly as I am towards my apparent destination. Christianity, Paul said, is not a sparring match. It's not an exercise in modified behavior. It's not a happening. It's not a game with no rules, a field with no goal, or a story with no ending. Christianity is a life. It is a life dedicated to warfare; a life that anticipates victory, but not without cost. The VICTORY (singular) has been won, and at the greatest cost ever paid for any conflict. It cost the life of God's only Son.

The victories (plural) that are ours en route to enjoying the final victory are not cheaply won either. They are the result of uncompromising decisions, steadfast purposes, and unflinching dedication to discipline. We're not playing the game in an electronic arcade. This is no cheap imitation. We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers. We are on the battlefield and every inch of ground we see gained counts towards the final crown. What Paul is saying is that God takes the Christian life seriously, and so should we. We must know where we are going, we must know how we are planning to get there, and we must not take our eyes for one minute off the goal, nor for one minute forget that in this conflict there hangs in the balance things eternal.

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Men and women come to Christ. He enters their hearts and begins to dwell there. He promises them spiritual blessings in the Heavens; and spiritual privileges in the here and now. And well-meaning theologians and compromising fellow-believers soon impose a saccharine-sweet imitation of the real thing upon their thinking, until, especially in these United States where Christianity is an acceptable if not even advisable religious affiliation, we begin to settle into a double-minded form of existence. Do all you can for Jesus, but get all you can out of this world.

The church becomes a party house; the Bible becomes a helpful storybook; the gospel becomes a last-ditch escape from hell...and the Christian life becomes a maze of traditions mixed with compromises. And we call it Christianity. Jesus didn't. Paul didn't. And we mustn't.

Christianity is an all-encompassing way of life that so engulfs the entire sphere of mind, emotion, will, of body, soul, and spirit, that no thought can be thought that does not first consider Jesus.

Christianity is a person—a person on a throne—a person with a Kingdom—a kingdom with a King—a king with servants. And we happen to be the servants. And every breath we breathe ought to be but a whisper, “LORD, what wouldst thou have me to do.”

Where are you headed in this pilgrimage we call the Christian life? Are you on course? Like Paul, are you running straight to the goal with purpose in every step? Or as Paul surmised, are some of us just shadowboxing, just playing around”. Paul said He never so much as took a breath without considering where he was going... you know why? He was fearful that after having enlisted others for the race, he himself might become disqualified, and asked to step aside.

The Book of Proverbs addresses the issue of purpose and direction without apology as it begins to direct the Christian in his pilgrimage towards responsibility. In the time remaining today, we're going to look at some of those passages and draw from them principles concerning the responsible Christian life. Many of these passages have a dual thrust they draw conclusions about individual decision-making processes, and about the process of life itself. Let's look together at what Principles Proverbs gives us

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on the Goals and Priorities of the Christian Life.

We will ask the Holy Spirit to answer the question from the Book of Proverbs: “What does a wise man do with his life?” and here’s how Proverbs answers:

### Principle 1- A wise man knows where he’s going.

He has a goal. He has priorities. And he understands there are obstacles, but nothing stops him.

Every prudent man acts out of knowledge but a fool exposes his folly. (Proverbs 13:6)

A wise man thinks ahead; a fool doesn’t; and even brags about it. (Proverbs 13:6 TLB)

In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines His steps. (Proverbs 16:9)

We SHOULD make plans, and count on God to direct us. (Proverbs 16:9 TLB)

The wise man looks ahead. The fool attempts to fool himself, and won’t face the facts. (Proverbs 14:8 TLB)

What proverbs says throughout is that there are two kinds of men in the world: those who know where they are going, and those who don’t. The one group is characterized as being “fools”, the other as “wise”. Fools according to these passages have this common characteristic: they don’t know where they’re going, and are proud of it.

Sometimes, in the name of faith, they refuse to face the realities of life. Instead of admitting where they are, and examining where they are going, they simply live each day as though the days were not interconnected, as though the events did not eventually form a pattern, as though one sin did not lead to another; as though one’s sins did not eventually find them out.

The fool sees life as a maze of circumstances that are unconnected and uncontrollable. The wise man sees life as a Master Plan in the hands of a Master Planner, and sees every detail as an integral part of that plan. Therefore he has a goal, to be Christ-like in EVERY facet of his being. And because he has that goal, he has a set of priorities. Whatever it takes to become more Christ-like comes first. Whatever stands in the way must go. Now ask yourself: are you a wise man? or a fool? Look at your schedule. Look at your friendships. Look at your choice

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of entertainment. Look at your choice of investments. Listen to your conversation. Listen to your private thoughts. Is that the schedule, are those the friendships, are those the priorities of a man whose heart beats only for GOD?

Ask yourself what is my one goal in life? Where is it I am going? Your answer ought to be: I am going to be with JESUS and all of my life is lived in the light of that fact. If that's where you're going, then stop and look at how you spend your time, at how you spend your money, at how you use your influence, at what's important to you, at what burdens you down with worry.

My friend, if Jesus Christ is who we say He is, and if He is who we say He is to US, then is the priority we place on prayer, on the study of the Word, on pouring our lives into others, in harmony with what we say?

If Jesus is who we say He is, then politics, and sports, and money, and pleasure, and recreation, and success are not even viable considerations when we draw up a list of our priorities. The wise man looks ahead... and faces facts. The fool doesn't and is boastful of his unconcern. Jesus said it best:

Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?

For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, "This fellow began to build and was not able to finish."

Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another King. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with 10,000 men to oppose one coming against him with 20,000?

(Luke 14:28-31 NIV)

Jesus is saying, anyone who does not count the cost to see where he is going is a fool. Then adds, "In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."

My friends, that's the cost. You want to follow Jesus? Give Him everything! Count the cost, consider it worth it and never look back. The fool pretends there is no cost; the fool pretends the Christian life to be a masquerade where no one ever becomes totally HIS. The wise man considers the Christian life to be a life of surrender, where there is no choice, but that everything

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become totally HIS.

Some of us have counted the cost in the past, and become sidetracked. We've forgotten those commitments of the past, written of those moments of surrender as emotional weakness, ignored those commitments to special assignments, or pretended we were not called to some special calling. We've lost our sense of spiritual urgency, because we've forgotten where we're going.

### Principle 2- A wise man asks directions along the way.

Let's paraphrase these verses from Proverbs. Listen to the power in this principle:

Life's plans go awry without someone to follow. Always seek counsel as you go. (Proverbs 15:22)

How can you be ignorant enough to make choices, when you are not sure you have all the facts. (Proverbs 18:13)

Get all the advice you can; wisdom will follow you if you follow wise counsel.

Get all the advice you can and be wise the rest of your life (Proverbs 19:20 TLB)

Don't press ahead until you have sought other's advice. Don't make a move till your counselors agree. (Proverbs 20:18)

The principle in one word is this: DISCIPLESHIP. Discipleship is the process of learning by example. Instruction is a part of it. But you will more likely turn out to be like what they are than you will be what they say. And counseling and discipleship are really interrelated terms. Counseling is short-term discipleship; discipleship is long-term Counseling. Both involve seeking out someone who has walked the walk longer than you, or one who has passed through the fire you are passing through, and saying, "Hey would you walk with me through this? I really need help."

Responsible Christians know where they're going, and responsible Christians know they can't make it without help. Paul knew it. Timothy knew it. The twelve knew it. You know it. I know it. The issue is this: If you've missed the mark in your prayer life and you are not on course, then find someone whose prayer life is what you wish yours to be. Ask them if you can walk along side them for a while, if you can become their prayer partner.

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If you've missed the mark in your Scripture memory, and you're not on course, find someone who has made it a successful part of their life and ask them to help you. But don't just accept the fact that your objectives have changed, and forget it. STAY THE COURSE, and get help.

### PRINCIPLE 3- A wise man doesn't flirt with danger.

Cease my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge. (Proverbs 19:27)

Stop listening to teaching that contradicts what you know is right. Proverbs 19:27 TLB)

It is dangerous and sinful to rush off into the unknown. (Proverbs 19:2 TLB)

A wise man is cautious and avoids danger; a fool plunges ahead with great confidence. (Proverbs 14:16)

The principle in a nutshell is this: The man who knows where he is going, isn't always going off in tangents, seeking new spiritual thrills. He doesn't walk the tightrope of sound doctrine seeking something unique to claim. The wise man sets his course on the center of what he knows is right. He views all of what he hears with an ear to the Word. In other words, he measures experience by the Word, not the Word by experience. The highway to spiritual greatness has strewn alongside it so many who were not content to stay on the main road, but who, seeking shortcuts to maturity, found dead ends instead.

The second way a wise man doesn't flirt with danger is with besetting sins. God's man or woman knows the things that create desires and attitudes that defy the LORDSHIP of Christ in their life.

They don't toy with those things and see how close they can get without getting harmed. If something or someone is an unusual temptation and he or she has a choice, God's man or woman flees evil, rather than tempting GOD. A wise man doesn't flirt with danger. Not doctrinal danger. Not moral danger; there is too much at stake. Because everything is at stake.

### PRINCIPLE 4- A wise man accepts responsibility for his own choices.

The foolishness of a man perverteth his way and then his heart fretteth against the LORD. (Proverbs 19:3)

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A man may ruin his chances by his own foolishness and then blame it on the LORD. (Proverbs 19:3 TLB)

The Key to spiritual responsibility is spiritual accountability. Until you can stop blaming your parents, your church, your husband, or GOD for your choices, you can never really finish the course with joy. The heart that frets against the LORD for its own wrong choices is destined for spiritual mediocrity. Some of us this morning need to bury that once and for all admit I made my own choices, I will live by those choices. I serve a GOD who forgives and I will forgive. I am not a failure because of what my parents did. By God's grace I am a success because of what JESUS did. I hereby bury the past. I have personally never seen a man or woman achieve any real measure of Spiritual maturity who would not accept the responsibility for his own choices.

### PRINCIPLE 5- A wise man rests in the Sovereignty of God.

We can make our plans, but the final out come is still in God's hands. (Proverbs 16:1 TLB)

We toss the coin, but it is the LORD who controls its decision. (Proverbs 16:33 TLB)

There's the final mark of the man of God. He honestly believes Romans 8:28. It's not knowledge to him; it's wisdom. He can accept that a Sovereign God is in Control. He plans, he seeks counsel, he avoids pitfalls, and he accepts responsibility for his own choices. But in the final analysis, he is at rest. He has charted a course, and he stays on that course. The responsibility to stay the course is his; the responsibility for the outcome is GODS. He may become a successful evangelist, or continue to be a simple clerk, evangelizing his peers.

He may be a successful teacher, or continue to simply teach his children to walk in truth. He may be well-known or unknown, those are not issues with GOD'S man. He is on course. He has given his life to JESUS. And nothing else, and no one else... comes between.

The issue is not success by acclaim. The issue is success by consistency. The day you came to Christ you swore nothing would ever come between. Has it? The day you surrendered to serve Him you vowed you would give your life (if need be) to share your faith. Have you? There was a time when you would die before you would miss your time alone with HIM. Has that changed?

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God has a plan for your life, and for mine. It is total, unconditional surrender to the will of God and total, unconditional commitment to whatever task He calls us to. He asks us today this one penetrating question? Are you responsible? Do you know where you are going? And are your priorities in harmony with your objectives?

A wise man knows where he's going.

A wise man seeks counsel along the way.

A wise man doesn't flirt with danger.

A wise man accepts responsibility for his own choices.

A wise man rests in the sovereignty of God.

So a wise man, like Paul, can look into the face of Jesus and say, as he did.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the LORD, the righteous judge, will give to me in that day, and not to me only, but to all them also that love HIS appearing. (II Timothy 4:7,8)

I can't speak for you. I can only speak for me. And I know that I cannot look at my Master today and say those words. By God's grace, as the days go by, I pray that I might reach the place that I can.

In the next few lessons, we'll be looking together at becoming more responsible on the job, as parents, as friends, as businessmen, and as housewives. The Scriptures will have some penetrating standards for us to follow. We are not able to do it. The ability is God's. The response is ours. That's responsibility. But our responsibility on the job or in the home or in the marketplaces of life is only the reflection of the real issue: Have we lost sight of why we are here? Paul said it clearly,

For me to live is Christ. (Philippians 1:21)

Paul said here's why I live:

That I may KNOW HIM (experience) and the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to HIS death; (Philippians 3:10)

Paul said I have one reason to live. That reason is Jesus Christ. If our one reason to live, like Paul's, is Jesus Christ,

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then our course is clear. We must return if we have strayed from spending quality time in His presence, and continue to increase the amount of that time so long as we live. We must lay His word on our hearts, as the treasure it is, savoring every syllable as the WORD of life We must invest our time in people. Not in projects, in people. Projects die; people are eternal.

And we must lay aside every weight and the sins that so easily beset us and run with patience the race that is set before us. Paul said not everyone who runs the race, wins the race. So run, he begs us, that you might win the prize. "My reason?" he asks. "Simple!" he answers. (Paraphrased)

Lest I, who have enlisted others in the race, might myself be declared unfit, and be asked to stand aside.

(I Corinthians 9:27)

I must be totally honest with you. I get weary of the inconsistency of my own faith; of the hypocrisy of my own convictions, of the absence of faithfulness in the disciplines of my own life. I am amazed at the patience and at the mercy of GOD. I am amazed at how HE could continue to use me at all, when I so often forget to stay the course.

But I believe GOD has called me right now to once again take an honest look at my own life, and at what I consider to be important, to reassess my priorities in the light of my objectives. I know the time I spend with HIM or don't spend is an issue I must deal with. Maybe some of you have the same need. I know my faithfulness to memorizing the Word is something I must deal with.

Maybe some of you have the same need. I know I need to reevaluate the people I spend time with. I know I need to reevaluate the depth of love I have for them. I know I need to think through once again, just how it is I'm to use the time I have. We all think we're so put upon, but are we really? Don't we have more conveniences, more recreation, more means of communications than ever before? Is it really how much time we have? Or has not this world crowded it's way into our priorities until we're no longer viewing time from God's perspective?

My problem isn't time...It's my responsibility, my response to God's ability to manage my time that's my problem, maybe it's yours too. What I believe GOD is saying to me today (and maybe

## The Reality of Responsibility

to some of you) is this: Get out the road map, son, and remind yourself of why you're here, and of where you're going. Find out where you took a detour or two from the course I charted for you, and son, get back on course.

I must agree with Paul it would be such a tragedy, if we who have enlisted others in the race, were to be declared unfit, and asked to stand aside. That must not be, and it will not be if once more we become...responsible!

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