

# CHIEF MINISTRIES

July 2024

Greetings,

In the last month or so I have come to realize the importance of saying “No”. It may sound odd, as we are called to be servants to the Lord and His people. But many times, we are asked to do or participate in certain ministries or acts of servanthood, and when we agree we find our time constraints are increased to the point that something must be realigned to accommodate. One thing that is frequently compromised/realigned is our “personal/intimate time we spend with the Lord”. As we continue in that added commitment, we find ourselves pouring out more than we fill up. We then become, upset, angry, and burdened by the very act or people we are called to love. Then the guilt comes because we are not serving well from sacrificing our beloved time we previously reserved for Him.

It is important to maintain your time with the Lord, and your commitments in ministry, so how do we do that?

First, let’s recognize that the busier we are “doing” the less time we can spend with Him. Secondly, God does not bring us guilt and condemnation but conviction. The enemy however does bring guilt and condemnation and if he can keep you so busy that your personal time (walk) is affected then guess what...That is exactly what he will do! The enemy is out to kill, steal, and destroy, first your walk then you!! Acknowledge who you are fighting and be aware of his schemes. The Word says:

*“Let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up.”* Hebrews 12:1 (NLT)

The most important word to remember for your spiritual journey may be a surprising one: that word is, *NO*. Your faith journey is a long one. Too many people start off well in their spiritual journey but puffer out before the end. God wants you to go the distance. You’ve got a marathon ahead of you, and you can’t run that marathon with a barbell in your hands. People often quit their faith journey early because everything they’re carrying wears them out.

We need to de-clutter. A cruise liner can get pretty fast in the middle of the water, but if it’s dragging a hundred lifeboats alongside it, it will slow it down. Plug a battery into one light bulb, and it’ll go a long way. Plug it into 15, and it drains much more quickly. Plug it into 100, and it’ll drain even more quickly.

That’s what happens to us when we try to do too much. Sometimes doing good keeps us from doing the best. Again, Hebrews 12:1 says, *“Let us strip off every weight that slows us down”* (NLT). Weights aren’t bad; they’re not sinful. They’re just unnecessary.

When you are asked to do something in/for the kingdom, first pray about it. Yes, I know the saying when someone asks you to do something and you really don’t want to give them an answer, or you don’t want to say no, or hurt their feelings, it is the Christian thing to say, “I’ll pray about it”. Don’t fall into that cliché trap. Unless the Lord asks you to do something directly, your answer should always be...“I’ll pray about it and let you know”. Even when Chief asked me to marry him, I told him I needed to pray about it, and even told him, not to take my response as a no or rejection in any way, but I needed to hear from the Lord on such a big decision, and we had known each other for 20+ years (BTW, I said...Yes!).

Even when the Lord has asked me to do something, I have asked for confirmation that it was Him, we are required to test the spirit right. Yes, I am His child and I know His voice and another I will not follow, but I will still seek confirmation. Let’s look closer at Hebrews 12:1 as it carries profound significance for us as Christians. It states:

*"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us," (Hebrews 12:1, NIV).*

This verse is situated within the broader context of the book of Hebrews, which emphasizes the superiority of Christ and the importance of faith in Him. In Hebrews 11, often referred to as the "faith chapter," the writer lists many Old Testament figures who exemplified faith in God. These individuals serve as examples or witnesses to the faithfulness of God and the power of faith to overcome obstacles.

Drawing from this context, Hebrews 12:1 encourages believers to live in a manner consistent with the faith they profess. The imagery of a race is used to illustrate the Christian journey. Here are some key points regarding the verse:

- *Throw off everything that hinders:* This part of the verse urges believers to identify and eliminate anything that impedes their spiritual progress. These hindrances could include sinful behaviors, harmful attitudes, distractions, even works, or anything that detracts from our relationship with God. It calls for a deliberate effort to rid oneself of anything that weighs down the Christian walk. Just say "No"!
- *The sin that so easily entangles:* Sin is portrayed as something that can entangle or ensnare believers, hindering their progress and causing them to stumble. The verse acknowledges the persistent struggle against sin and emphasizes the need for vigilance and perseverance in resisting temptation.
- *Run with perseverance:* The Christian life is likened to a race that requires endurance and perseverance. Believers are called to press on despite challenges, setbacks, and obstacles. This perseverance is rooted in faith and fueled by the hope of the reward that awaits at the finish line.
- *The race marked out for us:* Each believer has a unique journey of faith marked out by God. This race is not arbitrary but purposeful, with God guiding and directing each step. It underscores the importance of trusting in God's sovereign plan and following His leading.

The importance of saying no to things that take us away from our personal time with the Lord, Hebrews 12:1 underscores the need for prioritizing our relationship with God above all else. Just as athletes focus on training and discipline to excel in their sport, believers are called to prioritize spiritual disciplines such as prayer, Bible study, worship, and fellowship with other believers. Saying no to activities or distractions that detract from our personal time with the Lord allows us to grow deeper in our faith, maintain spiritual vitality, and stay aligned with God's purposes for our lives.

To avoid the pitfalls described in Hebrews 12:1 and stay focused on the race of faith, we as believers can implement several practical steps:

- **Regular Prayer and Reflection:** Cultivate a habit of daily prayer and reflection to stay connected with God. This includes both structured prayer time and spontaneous communication with God throughout the day.
- **Consistent Study of Scripture:** Make reading and studying the Bible a priority. Regular engagement with God's Word provides spiritual nourishment, guidance, and wisdom for navigating life's challenges.
- **Accountability:** Surround yourself with fellow believers who can provide support, encouragement, and accountability in your walk with God. This may include participating in a small group, accountability partnership, or mentorship relationship.
- **Guarding Your Heart and Mind:** Be intentional about monitoring the influences that shape your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors. Avoid exposure to media, entertainment, or relationships that promote sin or compromise your values.

- **Practicing Self-Discipline:** Develop self-discipline in areas such as time management, financial stewardship, and personal habits. Setting boundaries and prioritizing your spiritual growth can help prevent distractions from derailing your faith journey.
- **Regular Spiritual Check-Ups:** Take time to assess your spiritual health and identify areas where improvement is needed. Regularly evaluate your priorities, commitments, and habits to ensure they align with God's will for your life.
- **Seeking Help When Needed:** Don't hesitate to seek guidance or support from spiritual leaders, counselors, or trusted friends when facing challenges or temptations. Humble yourself before God and others, acknowledging your need for assistance in overcoming obstacles.
- **Cultivating Gratitude and Worship:** Develop a lifestyle of gratitude and worship, acknowledging God's goodness, faithfulness, and provision in your life. Cultivating a thankful heart and worshipful attitude can help guard against discontentment and spiritual drift.

By implementing these steps, believers can guard against the pitfalls described in Hebrews 12:1 and remain steadfast in their pursuit of God's purposes for their lives.

His desire for you and you finishing the race strong is at the top of His list. He loves you and has a hope and a future for each one. Look for it, lean into Him, and run the race with perseverance, keeping Him first in all things.

What is the weight in your life? It could be a circumstance like prison, a job, a relationship, or a hobby. It's something that slows you down from what God wants from your life. And it's not worth it. Even in prison, you can choose to have faith, walk closely to the Lord, and live a godly life for yourself and those who may be watching your life and walk. How many times have you heard, "Why should I be a Christian, so and so say they are Christians and look what they are doing, saying, talking, walking!" That is not what you should want others to say when they look at you. You should want them to want what you have, Jesus, and walk in the favor and peace that He brings. It's time for you to "*strip off every weight*" that's slowing you down.

- What are some of the *good* things you're doing that might be keeping you from the *best* God has for you?
- What weights does society or prison try to convince you are good, even though they distract you from God's plan for your life?
- What kind of weights might be slowing you down? How can you cast them off to focus on the race God has set before you?

Praying you are successful in your race and able to keep your priorities in order, God's order! Pray about everything and let Him guide you. Learn to say No to those weights!

Blessing to each of you,

***Ms. Chief (aka Ms.G)***

***If you want to know more about CHIEF Ministries or would like to be a part, please go to [www.chiefministries.com](http://www.chiefministries.com)***

***Christ's Heart In Every Felon***



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