

Hednesford Pentecostal Church

You Know What You Can Do With
Yourself

You Know What You Can Do With Yourself

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Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Keep Yourself.....	3
3. Devote Yourself.....	4
4. Present Yourself.....	5
5. Behave Yourself.....	5
6. Exercise Yourself.....	5
7. Consider Yourself	5
8. Humble Yourself.....	6
9. Love Yourself.....	6

1. INTRODUCTION

There are recorded within the Bible instructions which indicate what God expects us to do for ourselves. As we grow in the faith, we are take more and more responsibility. We need to move away from spiritual milk and start eating spiritual steak. A Christian that has to be spoon feed, and who needs others to clean up their mess, is a spiritual infant.

I want to look at some of the things that God expects us to do for ourselves. Now if God instructs us to do these things, it means that He will not do it for us, and neither does He want anyone else to do so. If the Bible tells me to do something, it is no use me praying that God will do for me, and it is no use asking other people to do it. If they do it, then they are not doing what God wants and neither am I growing in the faith.

We are told:

Heb 11:7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

God's instruction to Noah had been:

Gen 6:14 "Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch.

Gen 6:21-22 "And you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather it to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them." {22} Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.

God warned Noah about the flood, but Noah had to respond with faith and with action. He believed God's word, he believed that a flood was coming, but that was not sufficient, he also had to build the boat. God was not going to build the ark for him. Disobedience would have been disastrous.

New Testament salvation is like that. It is appropriated by faith, but it requires action. It is absolutely free and yet it costs so much. It is all of God's work, and yet we need to respond by living an altered lifestyle.

So what has God commanded that we do for ourselves?

2. KEEP YOURSELF

1 Tim 5:22 Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; **keep yourself** pure.

Phil 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own** salvation with fear and trembling;

We are called to keep ourselves. When someone is making us late we say "What's keeping you?" The question is what is keeping us? What is keeping us in church, what is keeping us in faith, what keeps us praying, what keeps us believing? We have many external forms of encouragement and help, but at the end of the day we have to learn to keep ourselves. That is that we are not reliant on somebody or something else for our motivation or enthusiasm.

Some people can be carried by a crowd, carried by other people's enthusiasm. But when the crowd disappears, so does their devotion. Some people live off second hand experiences.

You Know What You Can Do With Yourself

We need to keep ourselves. We to keep ourselves believing, keep ourselves hoping, keep ourselves loving, keep ourselves joyful, and we need to keep our eyes upon Jesus. Jude says:

Jude 1:20-21 But you, beloved, **building yourselves up** on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, {21} **keep yourselves** in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

We are to build ourselves up¹, feed and strength ourselves in the faith; praying in the Holy Spirit, keeping the attitudes of the heart in the love of God, and looking for and expecting the mercy and goodness of the Lord.

Gal 6:2-5 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. {3} For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. {4} But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. {5} For each one shall **bear his own load**.

The load referred to in verse 5 is a soldiers kit bag.

3. DEVOTE YOURSELF

1 Cor 16:15 I urge you, brethren; you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have **devoted themselves** to the ministry of the saints;

The Christian life demands that we are a people who are devoted. We need to be devoted to God, devoted to meeting with Him, in prayer, in His word and in worship. Our partner's devotion is not good enough, the worship leader's devotion is not good enough, the house group leader's devotion is not good enough. We need to be devoted for ourselves.

I can pray for you, but I cannot do your praying. You can pray for me, but you cannot do my praying. I can read the Bible to you, but I cannot read the Bible for you. You can listen to worship tapes, but no one can worship for you.

Having devoted ourselves to the person of God, we also like the household of Stephanas need to become devoted to ministering to others. This means practical as well as spiritual support and help.

It is said of the early church:

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

These were a devoted people. They remained steadfast in the important basic things of the Christian life. Our devotion needs to be our motivation. We are not seeking to be carried, we are not seeking other people to do it for us, we are going to do it for ourselves.

Mat 11:12 "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.

The picture is of eager men with ardent desire pushing on into the kingdom of God. Some things are worth fighting: our marriages, our health and our families.

¹ Like a body builder

4. PRESENT YOURSELF

2 Tim 2:15 Be diligent to **present yourself** approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The AV phrases this as “study to show yourself approved”. The Christian life requires diligence, study and preparation.

Elsewhere Paul talks about presenting the members of our body:

Rom 6:13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

This is talking about making deliberate choices with what we do and what we don't do. We need to set ourself boundaries in life, boundaries determined by scriptural principals.

1 Cor 6:12 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

1 Cor 10:23 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.

Good things and legitimate things can be harmful, even destructive if we are possessed by them.

1 Tim 6:5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such **withdraw yourself**.

Titus 2:7 in all things **showing yourself** to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,

Like or not, our lives are on show, people are watching. We have to present a consistent walk and authentic Christian character.

5. BEHAVE YOURSELF

1 Tim 3:15 ... I write so that you may know how you ought to **conduct yourself** in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Our behaviour is important, what we do and the way we behave speaks volumes. A conductor leads an orchestra to keep everyone in time. We need to conduct ourselves, keeping in step with the leading of the Holy Spirit.

There is a suitable manner in which people can behave in the church. Church is not a club or society where we can all have our say, or where we can choose what we accept and what we reject. Church membership requires commitment and obedience to Scriptural principles.

6. EXERCISE YOURSELF

1 Tim 4:7 But reject profane and old wives' fables, and **exercise yourself** toward godliness.

Godliness does not happen by chance. It takes a disciplined lifestyle of spiritual exercise.

7. CONSIDER YOURSELF

Gal 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, **considering yourself** lest you also be tempted.

You Know What You Can Do With Yourself

1 Tim 4:15-16 Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. {16} **Take heed to yourself** and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

What we think about ourselves is important.

Some people don't consider themselves. They never take stock of their lives, never prayerfully ask simple questions about themselves: "How am I doing?", "Am I proceeding, am I taking ground, am I growing?" "Is there anything I need to address, anything I need to change?"

Some people think too lowly about themselves. They never see themselves as God sees them, never see their potential, never see what faith in God can achieve. They are defeated before they start, simply unable to believe that God can do it through them.

Still others think too highly of themselves. They are oblivious to their weaknesses and failings. They trust in themselves, in their judgement, in their ability in their will-power and self motivation. Peter was like this before He denied Jesus three times.

8. HUMBLE YOURSELF

1 Pet 5:6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,

It is best to humble ourselves, rather than being obstinate and forcing God to humble us. This is a process, not a one off decision or a single prayer, and is based upon a relationship with God and a recognition of His majesty. This process is described in Matt 5:3-12, the beatitudes. Jesus humbled Himself and was later exalted, and in like manner God has a day when the meek will inherit the earth².

Rom 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

9. LOVE YOURSELF

Rom 13:9 For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall **love** your neighbour as **yourself**."

We have already said that what we consider about ourselves is important, but so is the love we have for ourselves. We need to be kind to ourself.

² Psa 37:11 But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.