



## Church of God Ministries

Spanish Fort, Alabama

### Keys to Being a Successful Christian

In 2020, Tom Hanks accepted the Golden Globe Cecil B. DeMille Award, which is given for outstanding contributions to the world of entertainment. During his acceptance speech, he told a story which happened when he was an intern back in 1977. He and some other actors had been out partying late the night before, and Dan Sullivan the director came in and yelled at them. He told the actors that their job was to, *“Show up on time, know the text, and have a head full of ideas, otherwise I can’t do my job.”*

Hanks said, “That was the greatest lesson a young actor could possibly ever get.” In reality, that piece of advice is a very important piece of wisdom that anyone could receive for whatever profession or job they are doing. In fact, it applies to whatever you are doing in life. It even applies to being a Christian and walking in the path that God our Father has called us to live.

We as Christians have been called to a way of life described in the Bible. When asked about the way of life he lived, Paul said, “... I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets” (Acts 24:14). We are called to live a life according to all that is found in the entire Bible.

#### **Show up on time**

True Christians follow what is written in the Bible. In 2 Peter 1:10, Peter admonishes us to “be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble.” We are called to “show up” and do what we have been called to do. David’s example is recorded in Psalm 119:60, “I made haste, and did not delay to keep Your commandments.” He was not late, or delayed, or hesitant, he was “on time.”

How do we know if this is the time? In Mark 1:15, we are told, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” The time to show up is now. God is calling us to repent from our past life, and to follow the new life that He sets before us. He is giving us that opportunity at this very moment.

Christ came and suffered so that we could have this opportunity now. He has called us “and [left] an example, that [we] should follow His steps” (1 Peter 2:21). Paul informs us, “That now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed” (Romans 13:11).

#### **Know the text**

After showing up, Mr. Hanks says that we “need to know the text.” As Christians, our text is the Holy Word of God, the Bible. We need to be reading the Word of God daily. When Paul and

Silas went to visit the Bereans, they found out that the Bereans “received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). They were earnestly digging into the Word of God to know what it said.

Paul encouraged Timothy to study or “be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). After the death of Moses, the Lord instructed Joshua, “Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do” (Joshua 1:8 NLT).

In the time of the Israelites, the king was instructed to “write for himself a copy of this law in a book” (Deuteronomy 17:18). This way he would have a copy of the law so that he could study it and refer to it daily.

We are encouraged to “fix these words of [God] in your hearts and minds” (Deuteronomy 11:18 NIV); because “all Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right” (2 Timothy 3:16 NLT). It is important to “know the text.”

### **Have a head full of ideas**

Once you know the text, what are you going to do with it? Before going to enter the Promised Land, Moses encouraged the Israelites, “You shall teach (these words) diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up” (Deuteronomy 6:7). This one verse gives a whole list of ideas of what to do with the knowledge gained from studying the scriptures.

When Jesus gave the great commission to the disciples, He said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20).

We are not to keep the knowledge that God has given us for ourselves. We are to share it with others. We all have been commissioned to be an example to all “by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching” (Titus 2:7 NLT).

We are to be a light to others. “You are the light of the world...let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father” (Matthew 5:14, 16 NLT).

God has chosen us and appointed us that we should go and bear fruit (John 15:16). And as Paul told those in Colossae, “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men (Colossians 3:23 ESV). God expects us to have many ideas on how to spread the Gospel and to work diligently at it.

We have been given an incredible calling! We are called to be the children of God. He has opened our mind to understand about His future Kingdom, and His awesome plan for mankind. Let's be diligent, be on time, and be present with God. Let's study and know His Word, His Text, and then let us share that knowledge with others who cross our path each day.

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