

## Living in Hope with the One Leader Study Series

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### **Title: Living Above the Chaos, Part 1 – “Well Done”**

**Instructions:** This Bible study is provided for personal or group use. Please copy, print, or share with anyone.

(Please note: this study has four parts based on the scripture in Matthew 25:21, 23 – “Well Done,” “Good,” “Faithful,” “Servant.”)

### **Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant**

**We live in dark and difficult days.** Political vitriol, pandemic, riots in the street, cultural civil war, abortion, global starvation, to name a few. What is the answer? What should we do? We will be faced with a continual wave of difficulties and challenges. Our future is uncertain, yet we do know we are not returning to normal, to a “new” normal, or to a “next” normal. Times simply will be “not normal.” We can wring our hands, offer solutions from the sideline, or just try to survive. Or, we can let Christ be our hope and answer and allow Him to make a difference in our life and in the lives of those around us. The world is desperately seeking reality and truth. This four-part series will help each of us to live above the chaos, to make an eternal difference in difficult times today, so our lives will be a light amid the darkness.

### **Context: Understand and Embrace the Times**

The context is real, painful, and uncertain. Headlines...they are the same now as they were then.

**World:** John 16:32-33 (“in the world, there is tribulation”); 2 Timothy 3:1 (“in the last days, difficult times will come”).

**Spiritual Warfare:** 1 Peter 5:8 (“devil seeks to kill, steal, and destroy”); Ephesians 6:12 (“spiritual forces of wickedness”).

**Individual Heart:** Psalm 40:17 says, “*As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me. You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God!*” (ESV)

### **Living Above the Chaos—Making an Eternal Difference in Difficult Times**

In a parable about the end times, Jesus offers a picture of what our lives should look like in face of challenges. He was facing His death, and He knew the disciples had rough days ahead. So, His point is that very believer has been given capabilities, opportunities and privileges. The Lord has invested in us. What will we do with what we have been given?

The parable speaks to the fact that each of us must give an accounting, and this reckoning and reward will be the focus of the four parts of this study.

**Matthew 25:21, 23** says, *“Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.”*

“Well Done,” “Good,” “Faithful,” and “Servant” provide the framework of this study, with the outcome being that Jesus will put us in charge of many things with an invitation to enter into the joy of the master. In part one, we will look at the first of the four descriptions of who we are: Well Done. We will specifically look at what, why, and how, and it will challenge us to examine our lives and make specific application in light of today’s circumstances.

**WHAT: “Well Done” literally means “great job” and “from now on be my partner!” It comprises various aspects: to glorify and be pleasing to the Lord, to have excellence in work, to be set apart, and to finish well.**

To hear “Well Done” should be our greatest desire.

The only way to achieve “well done” is to develop a vibrant relationship with Christ that is much different than a relationship with the world, and which is revealed through the paradoxes of the Christian life that Jesus and Paul taught. These are at the heart of our faith.

1. **To live is to die** – see Matthew 8:34-37 and Matthew 10:38-39. **Luke 9:23-25** also says, *“He was saying to them all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?’”* To gain your life is to lose your life. We can’t hold on to our life, but we yield and submit our lives, our decisions, our will, and our hearts to Christ. Practically speaking, it’s dying to self by confessing flesh patterns and giving them up. It’s praying for God’s will only. Surrendering your life, dying to self, and declaring God’s will not my will creates dependence.
2. **To be strong is to be weak** – see 1 Corinthians 1:27. **2 Corinthians 12:9-10** says, *“My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”* Embrace vulnerability, needs, and lack of strength in difficulties, because this creates community—we need one another. I cannot do it all nor can I by just trying harder. The Christian life is not performance-based acceptance. Admit failure and seek help.
3. **To be first is to be last** – **Matthew 19:30** says, *“But many who are first will be last; and the last, first.”* Let others go ahead, and give up your privilege for others. Give others credit and shoulder the blame. Clean up others’ messes and make sure things are completed and done well. Go unnoticed and be okay with it. This builds up one another.
4. **To lead is to serve** – **Luke 22:26** says, *“But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant.”* Help those who can’t return it. Seek to help and invest in those around you. Servant leaders focus on the needs of others before their own needs. This creates unity.
5. **To receive is to give** – see 1 Corinthians 9:6. **Luke 6:38** says, *“Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by*

*your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.” We give when we are stewards of what the Lord has given. This creates being a channel of blessing.*

- 6. **To be exalted is to be humble** – James 4:10 says, *“Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.”* Humility is good in every circumstance. We step down and lift up others. We shine the spotlight on the Lord and others. This creates glory to the Lord.
- 7. **To grow is to be thankful in trials** – James 1:2-4 says, *“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”* To be thankful in the trials means that we are thankful that the Lord is with us in the pain and that He will never leave or forsake us. This creates maturity and growth in us to finish well.

**WHY: “Well Done” is to glorify and be pleasing to the Lord. It is to have excellence in work, be set apart, and finish well.**

- **Glorify the Lord** – Make Him known; offer praise, worship, and thanksgiving; minister to Him.
- **Be pleasing to the Lord** – For us to enter into this life, it is by faith (see Hebrews 11:6). It is a walk of FAITH, a belief and an action.
- **Have excellence in work** – Do our best in order to reflect the Lord.
- **Be set apart** – Sanctified; we are different; we cause the world to take notice, ask questions; we offer hope.
- **Finish well** – We complete this life without stain or tarnish.

**HOW: The ONLY way to live these paradoxes is to allow Christ to live in and through you—that is the true Christian Life.**

| Issue                          | Why don't people finish well in life?   | What it takes to finish well.   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. <b>Heart – Jesus/Gospel</b> | Little or no prayer or time in God's Word for direction, encouragement and wisdom.      | Christ is our life—not just trying to be like Him. Growing spiritually and engaged with the gospel. |
| 2. <b>Money/ Wealth</b>        | Love of money. Identity tied to money and what it can buy. Focus on things/possessions. | Understand and practice stewardship.  |

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| <b>3. Work/Purpose</b>             | Play and seek entertainment. Fail to plan. Busy. Not intentional.                         | Satisfied by hard work and doing well. Clearly defined purpose. Intentional– pressing on. |
| <b>4. Success/ Significance</b>    | Self-absorbed. Leave monuments to self and personal achievement.                          | Know who they are and can invest in others and seeking to multiply the work.              |
| <b>5. Relationships/Community</b>  | Go alone and don't seek counsel or listen to wisdom.                                      | Value and appreciate others. Seek and need others.  |
| <b>6. Circumstances/Challenges</b> | Allow circumstances and life to overwhelm. React rather than respond.                     | Press on and press in to difficulties. Resolve conflicts.                                 |
| <b>7. Resources/ Generosity</b>    | In bondage and entangled to the world and the things of the world. Fail to pay the price. | The price of obedience, discipline, sacrifice is costly yet rewarding.                    |

The way to allow Christ to live through us is having an abiding relationship with Him. We can't possibly live these out all the time, let alone for one day. We can't, but Christ can do it through us (see John 15:5, Philippians 1:21, and Galatians 2:20). As He lives through us, there is much fruit. He produces the fruit of the Spirit.

As our lives reflect Christ, we begin to live above the chaos in our hearts. Circumstances keep our feet on the ground, yet our hearts and minds are on things above. We will stand *for* something and not just *against* something. With Christ as our life, our lives will reflect:

**Love not hate | Good not evil | Light not darkness | Life not death  
Justice not injustice | Unity not division | Eternity not the temporal**

“Well done” is costly and sacrificial. “Well done” is fruitful and rewarding for eternity. “Well done” is a walk and journey of faith.

### **APPLICATION: Putting action into your faith**

The promise in Galatians 6:7-10 says, *“A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers”* (NIV).

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