

Chapter 3

Self-Sufficiency

“Anyone who will not work will not eat”

(II Thessalonians 3:10).

What is meant by self-sufficiency? Self-sufficiency means providing the necessary food, personal items, shelter, and transportation needed for yourself and for those who are dependent on you. This is easy to say but difficult to achieve. So . . . how can you become self-sufficient?

Make Good Decisions

The primary decision is to ask God for help. Pray that God would guide your thinking and your decisions.

Another key decision is to begin to think of others and not just yourself. Listed below are key points to consider in order to become self-sufficient.

- ♦ Make decisions that will please God.
- ♦ Make sure your decisions are not going to cause you to break the law.

Jesus Will Never Leave You.

[Jesus said,] “I have told you these things, so that you can have peace because of me. In this world you will have troubles. But cheer up! I have won the battle over the world” John 16:33

- ◆ Make sure your decisions are in line with your parole/probation agreement.
- ◆ Make sure your decisions demonstrate a strong desire to become self-sufficient.
- ◆ Make certain your decisions show that you want to live a “balanced lifestyle”.

Remember, building a successful life will come from good decisions on your part!

What Is Meant By A “Balanced Lifestyle”? _____

Many inmates attempt to work 60-70 hours a week when released. Yes, you need money. Yes, you want to occupy your time with positive activity, but do not forget something very important! God does not want us to work endless hours every week! Our bodies have a natural need for seven or more hours of sleep every day.

The ex-offenders who start off this way may violate their parole agreement within a few months. Why? Because they can't keep it up. Then, they may turn to drugs to keep going and burn out, just like before. Then they don't want to report for fear their parole officer will charge them with violation of parole.

Serve the Lord in all you do.

Work at everything you do with all your heart. Work as if you were working for the Lord, not for human masters. Work because you know that you will finally receive as a reward what the Lord wants you to have. You are serving the Lord Christ.
Colossians 3:23-24

Worship Your Lord _____

God created the world in six days. On the seventh day, He rested. One of God's commandments tells us: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." That means, take time to worship God!

If you do not have a church to attend, please call one of the following numbers to locate one:

- WI Evangelical Lutheran Synod offices: 1-888-214-6490
- WELS Prison Ministry office: 1-507-354-3130

Take Care of Your Body _____

Balance in your life also means taking care of your body. Visit a doctor and a dentist. God tells us in 1 Corinthians 6:19, "Don't you know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit? The spirit is in you!" God wants us to take care of our bodies, and not abuse them.

Family Time _____

Balance in your life means spending time with your family. Many who are serving time are parents. Inmates suffer separation, some even divorce, while serving their sentence. Don't let your children see you using drugs or alcohol. Let them see you growing self-sufficient and stable. Children need and want to feel safe and secure. It may also be wise to re-connect with your family gradually to give your children time to adjust.



A “balanced lifestyle” should include:

- ♦ **God** (Time for worship and Bible study)
- ♦ **Family** (Spouse, children, grandparents, and extended family members)
- ♦ **Work** (Physical activity including employment)
- ♦ **Relaxation** (Resting your body and enjoying some time for yourself with a fun hobby)

A “balanced lifestyle” is very important to continued recovery.

Stress & Worry _____

Stress and worry can lead to relapse. Stress includes peer pressure from old friends and/or old places. Many people worry about getting a job, having enough money to take care of the bills, etc.

Stress-filled lives are an enemy of a “balanced lifestyle.” One of the most beautiful passages from the Bible that deals with stress and worry are Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:25: “I tell you, do not worry. Don’t worry about your life and what you will eat or drink. And don’t worry about your body and what you will wear. Isn’t there more to life than eating? Aren’t there more important things for the body than clothes?” We don’t need to worry because Jesus says we have a Father in heaven who knows about and will supply all our needs.



You Are Not Alone.

*And you can be sure that I am always with
you, to the very end. Matthew 28:20*

Re-entry stress is not unusual. In fact, it is typical. In one week you move from “three hots and a cot” to a world of many new challenges:

- ◆ Finding work
- ◆ Finding a place to live
- ◆ Finding a place to worship
- ◆ Reconnecting with your family
- ◆ Working with your parole/probation officer

The stresses “outside the walls” can be far greater than those “inside the walls.”

“I have learned the secret of being content no matter what happens. I am content whether I am well fed or hungry. I am content whether I have more than enough or not enough. I can do everything by the power of Christ. He gives me strength” (Philippians 4:12,13).

You are facing many challenges, tasks to be done, and choices to be made. You are starting over. There is so much to do, so much progress to make. It won't happen overnight. Pray to God for patience. Seek God's help to do His will in His time. Pray that God would make you content with what He gives you from day to day. Pray for strength and courage to do His

You Have No Need To Fear.

So don't be proud. Put yourselves under God's mighty hand. Then he will honor you at the right time. Turn all your worries over to Him. He cares about you. I Peter 5:6-7

will in your life. Study God's Word for wisdom to know what His will is. God promises to supply your needs. He loves you and has forgiven your sins. Trust Him!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please grant me patience and wisdom. Help me wait to see your plan for my life. May your will for me be accomplished on your timetable. Make me content regardless of any situation I must face. I know that you will take care of me. Father, grant me strength and courage for the road ahead. Whatever struggles and hurdles may come, let me do your will. Help me to know that you will get me through every difficulty. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.



The Lord Will Guide You.

I will guide you and teach you the way you should go. I will give you good advice and watch over you. Psalm 32:8