

Stop Trying, Start Training

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Date: 21 April 2024

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[0 : 0 0] All right, well, amen. Last Sunday, we started this series called New Life, A Fresh Beginning with Jesus. And first of all, how many of y'all enjoyed that choir special we just heard?

Wasn't that a lot of fun? Yeah, I thought they did awesome, man. It got a little soul up in here. There's nothing wrong with that every once in a while. All right. I would like to invite you to take the Word of God with me and let's go to... Let me make sure this is working real quick here. Y'all, we are good to go. Let's go. Let's have a little Jesus clap that the slides are working today. If you've been coming here for a little while, you've seen days when they just did not want to cooperate. So we are grateful that that's all on track today. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 17. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 17. This is our second Sunday in this new series called New Life, A Fresh Beginning with Jesus. If you wouldn't mind, if you're able to and willing, would you join us in standing?

We'll just read this verse briefly and then ask God to bless our reading of the Word today. And I hope that He speaks to you as He has to me and I know many others in our church. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 17. Everyone looking at a copy of God's Word if you can and if you just can't get your eyes on one, then we have it up here on the screen. Let's read together.

Ready? Begin. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away and see, the new has come. Can you read those two words highlighted on the screen up top in front of you? Ready? Begin. New creation. And God, we ask you to remind us that as many of us are in Christ, we are a new creation. The old has passed away. The new is here. Yet sometimes we find ourselves chasing after the old. We find ourselves going backward. Remind us, God, that every day, every morning can be a fresh beginning with you. You're doing something new in the life of our church.

We see it. Recognize it. Show us our place in it. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. You may be seated. Thanks for standing. So 2 Corinthians 5, 17 teaches us this foundational truth to the Christian life that the old is gone, the new is here. The old way was the way of the Old Testament. The law that none of us can measure up to. The sin that easily tears us down, holds us back. We can't seem to shake it. And therefore, we could never match up to the expectations that God's law set for mankind.

[2 : 5 2] That is the old way. Then Jesus came and he replaced the law. He is better than the law.

Jesus came and showed the flaws of the law. That while it would reveal our sinfulness, the truth about us, it would never bring us to God. But Jesus could do that. Jesus was the way that you and I could have a relationship with God. The only way that that would be possible.

And so if we have followed that way and we have chosen the Jesus way, then now we are in Christ. We are no longer in our flesh. We are no longer in or under the law. Now we are in Christ. We are under grace. We are now living free. And if we are in Christ, we are a new creation. The old is gone. The new is here. Last Sunday, we looked at Isaiah 43 and 44 and we read how God is doing a new thing in the life of our church right now. Man, we showed that slide last Sunday of all those kids who have gotten baptized in just recent months and weeks. And we see that God is doing a new thing. And we didn't even have the two up there from last Sunday. Or the ones that are yet scheduled to come and be baptized and give testimony, public testimony to what God is doing in their life.

God is doing a new thing in our church. And often he starts with the younger ones. Oftentimes he starts with your children, your grandchildren, the generations coming up behind you because they might be less calloused. They might be less hardened. They might be more open to the new thing that God is doing. So the question is, do we see what he's doing? This new thing. Today, I want to talk to you about this simple concept. Stop trying and start training. This came from someone who taught me, man, this guy teaches me something every time I heard him speak. How many of you ever heard of Craig Groeschel, pastor of Life Church in Oklahoma City? Anybody? We got like six of you, maybe. That's all right. Hey, if you have a chance to hear his podcast or go online and watch his preaching, I've never heard him preach anything off base or unscriptural. If you have, come talk to me. We'll look at it together. But personally, he's blessed me, convicted me, and moved me every time I've heard him speak or read one of his books. And so I got this concept from him. God showed me this. And I realized the biblical truth that supports it. So the theme for today, and it's probably going to be a recurring theme over the next several weeks, is stop trying, start training. Stop trying, start training. What do we mean by that? Well, let's go to the Word of God.

Galatians chapter 1 and verse 10. You and I find ourselves trying to do all kinds of different things. words. We'll try to lose weight. We'll try to be a better dad or a better wife. We'll try to be a mother. We'll try to be a better son or daughter. We'll try to be a better friend. We'll try to be a better employee. We'll try to make more money. We'll try to handle our finances better. We'll try to get up and do the things that we need to get done. We'll try to get up early in the morning. We'll try to go to bed earlier. We'll try to do all these different things that are worthy endeavors, and we should do those things, but try, try, try, and what happens so often, we fail, fail, fail.

[6 : 42] Paul wrote this in Galatians 1.10. Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings or of God? Am I trying to please people?

If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ. You know what? That is the motivation usually behind our trying.

Our endless trying is usually to please somebody else. Maybe it's to get your spouse off your back. Maybe it's to get your boss off your back.

Whatever it is, it's usually to please someone else. Maybe you have a mentor that you've let down and you're trying to win their approval again. Whatever it is that you're trying to do, most often when we boil it down to its very basic reality, it's we're trying to please somebody.

So, Paul says, I'm not doing that. I'm not trying to please anybody. I wouldn't be a servant of Christ if I was.

[7 : 56] So now let's look at 2 Timothy 3 and verse 16. If the children have their sermon listening guides where they get to draw and write in a question for the pastor or something like that, this verse is on there.

All scripture is inspired by God, is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness. You see the difference in those two words?

There's trying, which Paul says, I'm not doing that. I'm not trying to please people. Over here in 2 Timothy 3, we read that the Word of God is there to train us in righteousness.

So the man of God or woman of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. The Bible is there to train us.

God does not ask us to try, try, try. Instead, he says, if you walk with me, I will train, train, train you. And there's such a mind shift between those two words.

[9 : 00] There's such a different outlook on life between those two concepts. God tells us to treat our children this way. He says, train up a child in the way he should go.

And then even when he is old, he will not depart from it. God works with us that way, doesn't he? He doesn't say, man, you better try to follow me. You better try to be good.

He knows we can't be good. We can fake it for a while, but that's all it is, is faking it. God says, let me train you. Let me walk with you.

Let me lead you. This is going to be a lifelong process. You're not trying. You're in training. So that's what we're asking ourselves to do today is stop trying and start training.

This could be the first time that you wrap your head around this concept in your entire walk with Jesus. Maybe you've been a born-again Christian for decades, but you've been thinking about it as I'm trying, trying, trying to follow God, to do what's right, and man, it's hard.

[10 : 14] Yes, yes it is. But you know what? If you have a simple redirection of how you're looking at this, then you realize that training is hard.

How many of you ever trained for something? Anybody? Slip your hand up. Bruce, what'd you train for? Marathon? It's awesome. Did you run it?

Twice. Bruce is just flexing on us over there. I've run two marathons. That's awesome, man. I bet that took a little bit of training. Just a little bit.

I bet you didn't just go around around the track at the school a couple times. You're like, I'm good to go. Well, my brother ran one of those, and it liked to kill him. We have very different body types, my brother and I.

I want to start with like a 5K, okay? And then maybe someday before I'm dead, we'll get to a marathon. We'll see. But y'all, training is hard, is it not? You can't just go eat whatever you want and then run a marathon.

[11 : 20] How many of you ever trained for football? Anybody in the room? We got more football players than that. Come on, get your hands up. Here we go. How many of you have trained? There we go, there we go. How about basketball?

Anybody? Volleyball? Softball? Baseball? Tennis? Golf? How many of you have a lifelong training relationship with golf, and it feels like you haven't progressed all that far?

Yeah, yeah. Me too. Anybody who's played golf with me, Jacob Browning, can tell you. That man needs to keep training. Really bad.

I know I do. Y'all, training is difficult. Training is hard. But here's the thing. When you're training, you don't get mad at yourself for not succeeding right away because you recognize that you're not performing yet.

You're not there. You're training. So when we're training in the Christian life, we don't get upset and aggravated in ourselves that we mess up sometimes because we recognize, just like Paul said, he said, I have not attained.

[12 : 30] I have not been made perfect. What does he mean by that? I haven't reached where God is taking me yet. I'm on my way, but I'm training. And I think that is the shift that many of us, including myself, need sometimes in our walk with God is we've got to stop trying, trying, trying, and recognize that we are training with Jesus.

1 Corinthians 9 is where we'll spend the rest of our time this morning. 1 Corinthians 9, verse 25. I'm reading from the New Living Translation. If you want to look on, go ahead. But I've got it on the screen here. All athletes are disciplined in their training.

The other versions will say something similar to this concept, but I love that this New Living Translation had the word training in here. It really jives with what we're trying to drive across this morning. All athletes are disciplined in their training.

Well, we know that, don't we? If you're a real athlete, then you're going to be disciplined in whatever you're training for. If you're an Olympic athlete, you don't get there just by skill. You can't.

You can't get there just by talent alone. You have to train for the disciplines that you're trying to succeed in. So athletes are disciplined in their training.

[13 : 44] They do it to win a prize. Back in ancient Greece, when the Olympics were invented, what was the prize that they were trying to win? It was a little wreath that would go over their head of leaves.

Obviously, it was the status, it was the attention, the glory that came with being the winner, the victor of their particular event. But that wreath of leaves would fade away so fast, right?

They would strive, strive, strive, and work, work, work to win an event for a prize that would fade away. I've heard stories of Olympic athletes getting into financial trouble later and literally selling their gold medals to try to pay bills.

The prize that you win on this earth is never guaranteed to last. But we do it. We train.

We are disciplined in our training for an eternal prize. God's not promising us a trophy or a leaf wreath or a gold medal.

[15 : 04] He's promising us rewards in heaven, glory and honor and blessing that we can then turn and give right back to our Heavenly Father.

The Bible says that whatever we do for Christ will result in gold, silver, and precious stones that we will receive in heaven someday.

It's an eternal prize. So we are disciplined in our training because we know there is something waiting for us that will not fade away.

Verse 26, So I run with purpose in every step. Here's where we're going to bring it home, okay? I am not just shadowboxing. I'm not just fighting at the air.

I'm not just fighting with no opponent or no purpose. There is intention and purpose in everything I do. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should.

[16 : 08] Paul is writing this to us and he's saying, this is what I have to do to successfully run this Christian life. I have to discipline my body. I have to discipline my spirit.

When I run, when I take a step on this journey with Jesus, I do it with purpose. Y'all, as a church, okay? Now individually, we need to take this to heart.

But as a church, together, we're all gathered and this is a perfect opportunity for us to re-identify ourselves as a church. Do we run every step as a church with purpose?

Is there a reason for every ministry we have? Have we identified the prize that lies ahead of us? We are training. We are training as a church.

We are not yet there. We've been here since 1876, haven't we? Maybe not here, but we've been in existence since 1876. We've been around a long time.

[17 : 07] Some of you have been around close to that long. But we have not yet arrived at our goal. We have not yet achieved what God established this church in Henrietta, Texas to be.

So if we are looking ahead to a prize that we know won't fade away, you know what won't fade away in the life of our church? Those baptisms that happened. You know what won't fade away is the time that you spent instructing young people.

The time that you spent on your knees crying out to God for people to be saved, for their lives to be transformed. Those things will not fade away. Man, there's all kinds of things the church can do that will be forgotten, that will fade away, that will not truly make much of an impact for the kingdom of God.

But there are some things that we are called to do. We are called to lift up Jesus in our home. We are called to pour into somebody else and try to take someone's hand and walk with them toward becoming like Jesus.

We are called to share the good news of Jesus with others and lead them into church where they can get up and testify of the decision that they've made to place their faith in Jesus and they can get up there and get baptized and say, I'm walking with Jesus now.

[18 : 30] We are called to do these things and those things don't fade away. So if the goal of our church is discipleship, becoming more like Jesus, becoming a disciple, a follower, a true follower of Jesus, then what are the purposes of the things that we actually do in our church?

what about the preaching? What about the singing? What about the offering? What about the announcements? What about the kindness ministry?

What about the Sunday school? The youth group? What about the benevolence committee? What about the different things that our church does? We've got to put everything under the microscope and say, are we running with purpose in every step?

Because if not, we're not training well. Instead, we're just trying. Well, I don't really know if this is going to fulfill the mission of our church, but I feel like we need to try something, so let's try this.

Let's try that. I remember back 30 years ago, we did this and it seemed like people enjoyed it, so let's try it again. Let's not try, let's train with purpose in every step.

[19 : 57] Then, we know we're pursuing the goal, which is Jesus, which is making much of Jesus, which is raising our children, our friends, our family, everyone in our circle to make much of Jesus.

So, stop trying, start training. How do we prepare for that? How do we get ready for that? Number one, we equip ourselves. If you've ever trained with something, you realize you've got to go out and get the equipment, don't you?

If you're going to run a marathon like Bruce did twice, you're probably not going to dress like you're herding cattle. Now, maybe he did.

I don't think so. How many of y'all ever watched American Ninja Warrior? Anybody on TV? I love that show. My kids love it. We got some American Ninja Warrior fans in this church. All right. Maybe we need to have an A&W; party up here sometime and have a little watch party when they have the next season.

How many of y'all ever heard of Lance Peacus, the cowboy ninja? Anybody? There you go. That's like taking it down a level. All right? Yeah, I've watched American Ninja Warrior. How about Lance Peacus?

[21 : 10] Now we know who the real fans are. Lance Peacus wears jeans every time and early when he would start running those first couple races before you get up to the nationals level, I think he ran in cowboy boots a time or two.

He's running this obstacle course where you got to jump and swing and climb and all this physically taxing stuff. He's running in jeans and cowboy boots. He would have a cowboy hat on that would inevitably fall off at some point while he's running his race.

And I've seen because I've been a little bit of a diehard on American Ninja Warrior. I've seen him suffer because he didn't have the right clothes on at times.

You see these guys get out there and they're wearing their athletic outfits and their nice shoes and shorts and tank top or whatever and they're able to have the freedom of movement to do whatever they need to do.

It's important to wear the right equipment. My kids just the other day discovered that football players have not always had full face masks on their football helmets.

[22 : 17] And they're sitting there thinking man how did they do that? Well they got hurt a lot. That's what happened. They got a lot of concussions. It was rough.

Nowadays you got all the technology and the fancy helmets and the coach could be talking to you in there and I saw recently some of the newest helmets have like head up displays that you can see you know plays and all this in your visor and it's just crazy what they can do now.

The equipment is important if you're going to train well. If you're going to get ready to train as a Christian what do you need to equip yourself with?

Well you probably need to download the YouVersion Bible app on your phone so you can have the Bible with you when you're not always carrying that paper copy with you right? I bet there's sometimes in your life in your day that you go around that you don't always have a copy of God's word on your person do you?

But you probably have your phone don't you? So maybe there's an opportunity to download the Bible app that you can go read good devotionals on there. You can have reminders pop up that hey it's time to read God's word.

[23 : 29] You can have a verse of the day that always pops up that gets a little bit of scripture into your day. Maybe you need to have some memory verses like Emma was memorizing the word of God.

Maybe we can take her cue and start learning some of God's word. Put a little sticky note up on your mirror that has a Bible verse on it. You need to equip yourself set aside a time set aside a schedule that will help you prepare to train.

What do we need to do to equip ourselves to train as a follower of Jesus? And then number two how do we plan? And that's what we're talking about with scheduling.

How many of you guys we asked last Sunday and I reminded everybody on Facebook this week and the Facebook group but I said I would love if some of our church would commit to a time to pray for God to move in our church and show them how they can help and have a key part in our church going forward this new thing that God's doing.

And I was so blessed to see comment after comment pop up on that Facebook reminder that I put out said man I've been doing at 8 o'clock. I did it at 8 p.m. on Wednesday. I did it at 5.30 when I wake up.

[24 : 42] All kinds of people were popping up saying I've been praying. I'm praying. We have to plan. It is not in our nature to say I'm going to dedicate my day to God.

None of us are going to do that just by ourselves on our own. We're not going to do that. That's not in our flesh. That's not in our nature. We have to intentionally plan to do this.

So if we're going to train for Jesus if we're going to train to see the next generation turn into Jesus followers if we're going to train to actually make a difference in the lives of our loved ones and beyond then we have to plan for it.

We can't just be unhealthy and then hope that somehow we become healthy. We have to plan to be healthy don't we? You can't just change all your eating habits overnight without maybe going to the grocery store first.

You've got to stock yourself with food that will be good for you. You can't just plan to go to bed at a certain time without maybe telling someone to remind you and setting things in place to help you not do the same habits that have been tearing you down.

[26 : 02] So what plans do we need to set in place to train for Jesus? So it leads us to these last two questions.

What can you add and what can you change? maybe there's something that you're currently not doing that will help you train and you don't say I'm going to try to start doing this you say no I'm going to start training and this is how I'm going to do it and when I don't do it I recognize that it's okay because I'm not trying I'm what?

Training that's right I'm not trying to be a follower of Jesus I'm training to be a follower of Jesus I'm not trying to be like Jesus I'm training to be like Jesus because all by myself I don't know how to so I need to let God train me in how to do this so is there something you need to add or is there something you need to change that will help you train to be like Jesus I love this quote man I've been using so many quotes from her recently Corrie Ten Boom a Dutch prisoner of war who was helping the Jewish people and was captured by her family she and her family were captured by the Nazis and put into terrible terrible concentration camp where she suffered greatly for Jesus but she gave us so many great quotes especially knowing what she went through she said God has plans not problems for our lives man the problems that she endured makes it so much more powerful to hear those words come from someone like her

God has plans not problems for our lives the life of a Christian is an education for a higher service God is training you for something all of you every one of you last week we talked about how God's moving in the younger generation and he is we see evidence of that but God is training all of you for something younger middle aged older everyone every category God is training you for something otherwise he loves you so dearly he'll bring you home to heaven to get a jump start on all of eternity in that loving relationship that he's going to enjoy with all of us for all of eternity in his presence but if he's waiting on that because he's training you for something still he's still got a purpose for you you've still got a role to play he's training you for something incredible that he wants to do through you so don't try train we're talking about new life a fresh beginning with Jesus

I pray that this concept of training not trying can help you begin fresh with Jesus I hope it can help you overcome something that has been dragging you down getting you down depressing you to understand that God does not expect perfection from you God does not expect you to be like him without his help he's going to help you let him train you let him pick you up when you fall let him set you back on your feet what would it look like for our church to be a church of people in training not trying what would it look like would we be a church that constantly sees people stirring those baptism waters giving evidence of life change would it be a church that when you speak the name of First Baptist Church in Henrietta Texas and beyond people would say I don't know that's a group of people that seems like they really care that's a group of people that seems like they really love

[30 : 04] Jesus I know that guy said a bad word on the job site but I know he instantly turned around and said man forgive me Jesus didn't want me to do that that's not honoring to God is it somebody that could be that their life could be changed by people who are training to be like Jesus and what does that mean for us what does that mean for our church does it mean that we cut some things that aren't purposefully moving us toward being like Jesus does it mean we add some things that we've been dropping the ball in does it mean that we change some things tweak some things that can be more effective in leading us to be like Jesus church we're not trying we're what we're training so let's do that God I pray that you would speak to us right now

I've spoken your word I've spoken the truth that I believe you gave me to preach from your word today but I can't individually go to every person in this room and say here's what you need to do if I did that I would be wrong in whatever I told them but you individually can speak to each of our heart and you can show us exactly how we need to change for you how we need to train you can show us the area we've been maybe hurting ourselves in reaching our goal you can change our hearts you can change our minds so I'd ask that you would do that God I can't lead this church where it needs to go but you can so I pray that you would start with me that you would start with my family and you would go out to our church staff and our volunteer leadership and go on through every heart of everyone in this room and everyone watching online and everyone who calls this church their home that you would change us to make us trainers people in training for your glory because we want to see what thing you're going to do

God you're raising up new life all around us help us to not miss it show us what it is that God has for me in my house would y'all look at the screen real quick real quick when God is about to do a mighty new thing we looked at this last week he always sets his people praying so can we do that now can we pray can we can we bow our heads together and we're about to enter into the Lord's supper it's a perfect appropriate time to reveal our hearts to God and just say God I'm not hiding anything I'm not holding anything back I'm an open book you show me what you have for me right now it's going to be different for every one of us but you show me what shift needs to happen in my thinking what shift needs to happen in my heart God I'm a vessel for your service you train me I'm not going to do anything in my own strength can we pray now God your people are praying your people are looking to you our hearts are open and as we enter into a time of Lord's supper speak to us God move in our body move in our midst we'll give you the glory in Jesus name music's going to play for just a couple of minutes let's use this time as a reflection to open our hearts to God and ask him to speak to us peace about

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