

Home Bible Study Series

Our Highest Potential

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Lesson One

"A Sense of Servanthood"

A group of men in a small congregation met together one night to deal seriously with why they were not growing. They tried hard to be open and honest with their thoughts. Serious questions were asked, such as:

1. *"What is holding us back?"*
2. *"Why aren't we winning souls?"*
3. *"Why aren't we seeing growth?"*

In an attempt to be honest about their situation, they came out with some pointed statements, such as:

1. *"We are lazy."*
2. *"We don't care—not really—if the lost go to hell."*
3. *"I think it is fear....we are scared to try."*

If such a meeting was held here by the men, what kind of answers would we give?

When we take our cars to the shop to be worked on, we want it to come out running at "Peak Performance!" If not, we take it back and tell the mechanic, "Work on it some more!"

Do we think that the Lord wants His Church to work at "Peak Performance?" Is He satisfied with our just getting by or existing? In this series of Lessons we will be exploring some possible ideas or concepts that could make a difference to help us reach **"Our Highest Potential"** as a congregation. This first lesson begins with the concept of having **"A Sense of Servanthood."**

**TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN IS
TO BECOME A SERVANT OF THE MOST HIGH GOD!**

Scripture Emphasis:

- Phil. 1:1** _____
Jas. 1:1 _____
2 Pet. 1:1 _____
Jude 1 _____
Rom. 6:16-18 _____

When we obeyed the Gospel, we, too, became the servants of Jesus Christ. No one coerced us, made us, or threatened us! We became

servants of our own free will. We willingly made the decision to:

1. **"Die to sin"** (Rom. 6:1-2)
2. **"Die to self"** (Matt. 16:24-25)
3. Give up my will to do the will of God!

But the Christian is more than a "servant;" he is to a "trained servant" so that he can become a more effective worker in God's kingdom.

2 Tim. 2:2 _____

Eph. 4:12 _____

The end result of all teaching (Matt. 28:19) is to make every Christian a "trained servant" of God! To be a servant of Jesus is not an option for the Christian; but, neither is being a trained servant an option either! We need to become the **best servants** we can be to the glory of God!

**SERVANTHOOD BEGINS WITH A
PROPER SPIRIT!**

Servanthood is a turning from the wrong centers for our lives to the right center!

1. Accumulating money and possessions is not the right center for our lives (Lk. 12:15).
2. Neither is loving the world (1 Jn. 2:15).
3. Neither is loving my family more than God (Matt. 10:37).

Christ is the right center for my life! He is now "Lord" and "Master!" It should be obvious that whatever is central to my life, I become a servant unto!

Matt. 6:21 _____
Matt. 6:33 _____

Servanthood begins with a willing submission to all of God's Will and not just the easy things!

**SERVANTHOOD IS ALSO
A TURNING FROM SELF TO OTHERS!**

The theme of the world is to take care of #1 (SELF)! The theme of Christ's teachings was "Lose yourself and serve others!"

Matt. 20:26-27 _____

Phil. 2:3-4 _____

Serving deals with an attitude or an outlook! If you think you are better than others; then, they should serve you. But if you willingly serve them—in their eyes you have lowered yourself below them! This is where our problem arises! In order to be a servant to others, the Christian needs to deal with two problems:

1. He must deal with vainglory, conceit, or too high opinion of himself.
2. He must deal with selfishness (mine, mine, mine) or (me, me, me).

Have you noticed that true servant attitudes and actions **never** split or divide churches? They usually help to mend divisions and create unity and harmony.

JESUS, OUR EXAMPLE OF SERVANTHOOD

Matt. 20:28 _____

Phil.2:5-8 _____

1 Pet. 2:21 _____

Jesus came to serve mankind and He did it well! His servant outlook caused him to be lowly and humble and even led to his sacrificial death on the cross. He was submissive to His Heavenly Father in all things!

Heb. 3:2 _____

But.....Jesus' servanthood did not take away from who He was! He knew who He was—**the Son of God!** And so it must be with us as well—servanthood does not take away from who we are! We know who we are...**we are sons of the Most High God!**

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We are challenged to see:

1. That we made a choice to become servants of God;
2. That we need to learn from Jesus how to be good and faithful servants;
3. That our lives will be devoted to being a servant!

Someone has said:

"The mission of the church is not Evangelism, Edification, or Benevolence; but the mission is Servanthood! But true servants will evangelize the lost, strive to build up the saints of God, and will reach out to help those about them who are in need."

To reach **Our Highest Potential**, requires that we possess a "servant spirit!"

DO WE HAVE SUCH?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- _____ 1. I honestly want to know what we can do in order to see more growth.
- _____ 2. There is no difference between the terms "slave" and "servant."
- _____ 3. I know I must become a servant of Jesus, but I do not need to be trained to be such.
- _____ 4. Putting my family first in my life will not affect my service as a Christian.
- _____ 5. Serving deals with an attitude.

- _____ 6. Servants do not divide the church, but help to create unity and harmony.
- _____ 7. Because Jesus was Deity in the flesh, He is not the best example of servanthood.
- _____ 8. To reach our full potential, we must be servants!

Lesson Two

*"A Sense of being Saved by the
Grace of God"*

In Ephesians 4:15-16, God wants His Church to grow up—become mature in Christ! He wants the Church to function smoothly and efficiently with each member contributing his or her part. He really wants it to come to "peak performance!" But peak performance does not happen by chance! Many things contribute to such. We have already discussed one of these—"A Spirit of Servanthood!" In this second lesson we want to consider one of the greatest motivations God has given us to cause us to perform at our best! We call it—"A Sense of Being Saved by the Grace of God!"

THINGS THAT HINDER OUR PERFORMANCE

Nothing is more damaging than an unsureness of my relationship with God. Uncertainty can bring **fearfulness, insecurity, guilt, doubt**, etc. All of these will greatly hinder our efforts to serve God.

Jas. 1:5-8 _____

Eph. 4:14 _____

If doubt lingers over a long period of time, it can cripple us and make us worthless as servants of Christ. It can eventually lead to a falling away because we feel defeated and discouraged and will quit! Doubt must be dealt with....correctly! God wants our doubts removed!

1 John 5:13 _____

Why do doubts come? We will suggest four possibilities:

1. A lack of proper understanding of Scripture! A one-sided view and not a balanced view can help defeat us.
2. Continued disobedience in one's life can bring doubt of our relationship with God. Such will bring on continued guilt. A lack of sincere study to fully know the Will of God. A failure to use our abilities. Or, just plain indifference to God's Will.
3. Difficult circumstances and hardships can cause me to doubt God's love for me. Such will open the door for Satan to come in

to tempt us.

4. Emotional disturbances or physical illnesses can bring on doubts if we do not guard against such. If we deal with them correctly, we can be strengthened and grow—not be destroyed. (Heb. 12:3-7).

**GOD WANTS US TO BE ASSURED OF
OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM!**

1 John 5:13 _____

Eph. 2:8 _____

Acts 2:38 _____

There are too many passages that emphasize this sureness! They are too plain and very hard to misunderstand. They clearly state our relationship with God.

However, this relationship is not secured and maintained by a meritorious system of self-justification. There are only two ways to be justified before God:

1. Justification by perfect Law-keeping;
2. or, Justification by Grace through Faith!

The Scriptures are very clear which one we must be justified by. It certainly is not by perfect Law-keeping.

Rom. 3:23 _____

We all know this all too well. Justification has to be by Grace through Faith. It has always been so with mankind from Adam to the end of time!

There is a **grave danger** that must be guarded against, however! Justification by Grace does not do away with God's Law! Such similar expressions as the following merely show a person's ignorance of the Bible ("**Give me Christ, but not Doctrine!**").

Lk. 6:46 _____

Rom. 3:31 _____

It should be obvious to all that if we are not under Law to God then there can be no sin; for sin is the breaking of God's Law! If there is no sin; then, there is no need for Grace because we are not under penalty of death! All mankind have always been under obligation to keep God's Law. We are responsible human beings. We must act responsibly by

doing right! But this is what makes us sinners in need of God's grace. We don't act responsibly at all times! We break God's Law and come under its curse of death!

Gal. 3:10-11 _____

We need to be delivered from sin's penalty, not delivered from being obedient to God! Justification by Grace makes it possible to be forgiven of sin without having to **merit** that forgiveness!

There are two extremes that we must guard against:

1. That we can save ourselves by our own works of merit.
2. And, that man has no responsibility at all—God's Grace does it all!

A Day of Judgment says clearly that man is a responsible human being. God's offer of forgiveness does not remove this responsibility; but, it does provide forgiveness through Faith in Christ.

SALVATION BY GRACE HAS CONDITIONS!

God's Grace requires something of man! These requirements do not earn or merit God's Grace; but God's Grace is not bestowed without meeting certain requirements on man's part! Noah is a good example to show this:

Gen. 6:8 _____

Heb. 11:7 _____

God offered man an escape from destruction and Noah by Faith accepted it and was saved from the Great Flood. The people of Noah's day despised God's Grace and were destroyed. Noah was saved by the Grace of God; but, he had to believe God's warning and promises and act upon them by building the Ark as God prescribed. His work was an expression of his faith in God and was not something he earned. His blessings from God came through his faith, not a perfect life! Notice the comparison:

1 Pet. 3:20-21 _____

Noah's salvation and our salvation today is the same: **Saved by Grace through Faith**.....but a faith that obeys God's Will. Baptism is a reaching out by faith to accept God's gift. Living a godly life is our faith reaching out to God to maintain our relationship with Him.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

To serve God at my best is to keep a strong sense of being saved by the Grace of God! It is a realization that my salvation does not depend upon my meriting it by a perfect life. It is realizing that my righteousness comes through Faith—but a Faith that is submissive to God's Will. It is a Faith that:

1. Causes me to die to self;
2. Causes me to deal with sin in my life;
3. Causes me to be a diligent worker in the kingdom of God;
4. Causes me, at all time, to understand:
 - a) It is God's Grace.....
 - b) Through the death of Christ....
 - c) That cleanses away my sin day by day!

1 John 1:7 _____

With this understanding, my doubts, guilt, insecurity goes out the window. I realize that in Christ Jesus I am free from condemnation. My performance is from a spirit of Great Debt and Gratitude to God for His unsearchable mercy! My service to God is no longer a grievous duty (1 John 5:3).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- _____ **1. Doubt is a tool of God to force us to study.**
- _____ **2. Doubt is a sin and must be repented of.**
- _____ **3. I can know I am saved by how I feel.**
- _____ **4. Salvation by Grace means that there is nothing that I must or can do to be saved.**
- _____ **5. Christian can only "know" they are saved by their faith.**
- _____ **6. Justification by Grace does away with God's Law.**
- _____ **7. There are only two ways to be justified before God.**
- _____ **8. People are saved today in the same way Noah was saved.**

Lesson Three

"Giving God Our Best!"

There is a saying: *"He who falls in love with self has no rival."* The idea is—too much stress on self makes us self-centered! We need balance in our lives—that is, to also look out to others as well. Jesus stated it very well:

Matt. 22:39 _____

Phil. 2:4 _____

Someone has described a most self-centered man like this:

"He always wants to be the center of attention. Even at a funeral, he is sorry that he is not the corpse. Those who know him best are sometimes sorry for the same reason."

All of us have to deal with selfishness! There are no exceptions that I know about. Some just have a harder job than others. The reason for this should be obvious—we have natural drives within that can cause us to be self-centered. Unless we control them, channel them, and use them for good and not evil, for upbuilding and not destroying—we will continue to be self-centered. We all basically want to attain a place of recognition, to have a sense of accomplishment (my life counting), to be respected, and to even be involved with others. But if we do not properly control and channel these wants, we will continue to be self-centered. On the other hand, if we will properly control and channel these wants, we can be very useful tools in God's hand. (By the way, this may be one good reason for having children—to train us out of our selfishness!).

A CONGREGATION can exhibit this same spirit of self-centeredness!

Rev. 3:17 _____

It is obvious that a congregation needs to be built up and edified—our needs need to be met! We are to help one another to this end.

Heb. 10:24 _____

But a congregation **ALSO** needs to reach out **beyond itself!** It can never reach its full potential remaining self-centered!

UNSELFISH SERVICE AND WORSHIP

Read Rom. 12:1-3 and see the kind of service and worship that God wants from us. It is not a dead sacrifice (as under the Old Covenant), but a living sacrifice. It is not an impure, blemished sacrifice, but a holy and unblemished one.

This service is a reasonable one! God does not ask the impossible of us. But it is to be an acceptable sacrifice. It is reasonable because:

1. Of the Great Debt we owe to God. It is a debt we can never repay. It is a debt that demands the very best I have to offer.
2. It is a service that God has a right to expect. (1 Cor. 6:19-20). We have been saved by God's mercy and have been given hope of Heaven someday.

This service is to be according to God's directions. We do not go by what the world wants (Rom. 12:2). God wants to direct our minds, hearts, actions, and our whole being.

UNSELFISH USE OF OUR GIFTS

Read Rom. 12:4-8 and see how we are to use the gifts, talents, abilities that He has blessed us with. We have become a part of the "One Body" of Christ. We are a fellowship together, not isolated individuals off by ourselves. We have something to offer to each other. We each have been given gifts from God. They obviously were given, not for our own benefit only, but to find ways of using these gifts to help others.

Questions to consider:

1. **Are we unselfish with what God has blessed us with?**
2. **Does God get the glory for the use of our gifts?**
3. **How can you use your gift(s) to help or serve others?**
4. **Do we merely use our gift(s) on ourselves only?**

OUR HIGHEST POTENTIAL REQUIRES THE USE OF GIFTS

Our peak performance as a congregation can only be reached when all are using their God-given abilities to unselfishly reach out to others. Suppose you had a 6-cylinder motor in your car. It is only hitting on 4 cylinders. To say the least, it is inefficient! But, it will chug along, missing, trying to do what it can. But it never works at its peak performance. But neither does a congregation in a similar way. It, too, can chug along with only a few people willing to be involved and working. The few will do

what good they can, but the church will never come to its highest potential. God wants His Church to hit on all 6-cylinders!

Eph. 4:16 _____

He wants every member (every part) working properly to their fullest.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Jesus said of those who use their "talents" (gifts) well:

"Well done, you good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter into the joy of your Lord."

(Matt. 25:21)

But Jesus also said to those who would not properly use their "talent":

"You wicked and slothful servant...You ought to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury...cast you the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 25:26-27).

Which kind of servant are we?

1. One that is busily trying to make use of whatever talents, abilities, or opportunities God has blessed us with;
2. Or, One that uses what he has all on himself, for his own purposes?

Peak Performance is possible only when we are all involved in reaching out to others; and thereby get out of our self-centeredness.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- _____ 1. Love for self is selfishness and a sin!
- _____ 2. The Apostle Paul said that every man must not look on his own things.
- _____ 3. There is no one that is totally unselfish.
- _____ 4. It is the natural drives or needs within us that makes us selfish.
- _____ 5. Congregations can be selfish just like individuals.
- _____ 6. When the Hebrew writer commands us to provoke one another unto love and good works, he is helping us to be selfish as a congregation.
- _____ 7. Our service to God must not be according to the thinking of this world.
- _____ 8. The saying, "*Use me or lose me,*" is a way of a person saying, "*I want to be involved!*"
- _____ 9. Peak Performance of a congregation will never be achieved.
- _____ 10. God wants His Church to hit on all 6-cylinders.

Lesson Four

"Creating the Right Atmosphere"

The Psalmist asked and answer his question in (24:1-10).

1. The Question—**"Who shall stand in God's presence?"**
2. The Answer—**"The one with clean hands and a pure heart."
(the one who is honest and sincere).**

What kind of people do you like to be around?

1. The wicked, ungodly, irreligious, selfish, self-centered, egotistical persons?
2. Or, The godly, religious, sincere, honest person, the unselfish?

The answer is obvious. There is something special about people like that! They tend to attract other good, honest, and sincere people. We believe the church will grow if people can see this in our midst also.

Matt.5:16 _____

The church does its best work and has its greatest effect for good when it has the right atmosphere in its midst!

THE DESIRED ATMOSPHERE

1 Cor. 14:24-25 _____

When a visitor comes into our building he can detect an atmosphere by what he sees, hears, and experiences. When he sits in the pew next to me, he will pick up on our atmosphere. When he hears the singing, praying, observing the Lord's Supper, making announcements, sermon, etc., he can detect or pick up on this atmosphere. But also notice below:

1 Cor. 14:23 _____

What is this atmosphere that is so important? It possibly could be some of the following:

1. A spirit of sincere friendliness, caring, and concern for one another.
2. A spirit of unity, harmony, and love.

3. A spirit of reverence, honor, and obedience to Christ.
4. A spirit of thanksgiving, praise, and adoration to God.
5. A spirit of involvement, commitment, and discipleship.
6. A spirit of encouragement, building each other up, and challenging one another.

HOW CAN WE HAVE THIS ATMOSPHERE?

First—It requires an individual effort on the part of each one. No one person can create that spirit—each one helps to contribute to it. It is an individual commitment to that end.

Rom. 12:1 _____

I must not come with a divergent spirit—one that is critical of others. We have not come to sit, watch, gripe, whine and go home mad!

Mark 3:2 _____

They didn't go to the Temple or to hear Jesus to learn; but to find fault with the teacher, Jesus! I must not come with the attitude, "*Amuse me or entertain me.*" I am not to be an inactive spectator, but a sincere participant! I should not demand, "*Stir me up; make me feel good.*"

Acts 17:21 _____

These people were not interested in truth from God. They didn't want to know their duty to God. They just wanted to be amused, entertained.

If I do not come with the right spirit to the assemblies I cannot contribute to the right atmosphere that is needed. In reality, I may become a hindrance to such.

Second—It requires a congregational effort! It is something that we build together.

1. We sing praises and hymns together.
2. We bow our head and pray together.
3. We study God's word together.
4. We partake of the Lord's Supper together.
5. We willingly, liberally give of our prosperity together.
6. We are building an atmosphere together.
7. A non-cooperative spirit is quickly seen!

This togetherness is helping to create the kind of atmosphere that is needed. We see obvious cooperation with those who lead us. We witness a spirit of harmony. The fellowshiping and talking with one another shows a spirit of love and concern.

Heb. 10:24-25 _____

Third—It requires that we come together with the right purpose. We are here to express our adoration and praise to God. We offer our sacrifice of praise and devotion to Him, expressing gratitude for all His blessings.

Ps. 29:2 _____

We come to express our Awe, Reverence, and Submission to God. We come to worship Him according to His directions (Jn. 4:23-24). But we also come so that "we" might look within our own hearts.

2 Cor. 13:5 _____

1 Cor. 11:27-30 _____

We are to examine ourselves, our motives, our intentions. We are to look at our life in view of God's standard. We look to see if there is faithfulness, loyalty, commitment, and discipleship; or, is there unfaithfulness, disloyalty, non-commitment, or a lack of following Jesus!

We also come to that we might look "without." We are in the midst of brethren and identifying with them in mind and heart. It is expressing a desire to build one another up, to exhort, and to instruct. We are challenging each other on to higher ground....to the fullest of our potential as individuals and a congregation.

Col. 3:16 _____

It is striving to fulfill God's commands together—to His glory, but also for our mutual upbuilding. We are saying to each other: This is God's will for us, it is right, it is for our good, and it is our way of glorifying our God.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

What a wonderful, meaningful, and desirable atmosphere can be built within our midst, if we all work at the job! It is worth the effort to have it...for all will profit from such. Our worship and fellowship together can be a rewarding experience for all. Who wouldn't want to be a part of such a fellowship?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- _____ 1. Atmosphere is something that is created by people being together.
- _____ 2. Atmosphere is something we can detect but cannot feel.
- _____ 3. Paul tried to explain to the Church at Corinth about a proper atmosphere.
- _____ 4. Atmosphere is what often determines whether a visitor returns or not to our worship assembly.
- _____ 5. No one individual can create an atmosphere.

- _____ 6. The purpose for which the people went to hear Jesus in Mark 3:2 was legitimate.
- _____ 7. The Athenian Scholars came together to discuss and learn new things.
- _____ 8. A person who comes for the wrong purpose into our midst can be a hindrance to the right atmosphere.
- _____ 9. Coming together is a good time for examining the lives of other Christians.
- _____ 10. Our coming together is primarily to offer our worship to God.

Lesson Five

"To Rise Above Mediocrity"

The true story is told about a daughter of a coal miner that had very little to look forward to in life. But she conceived in her mind to go to college—no one else in the family had done so. She studied hard and finished High School with Honors. She received scholarships and worked hard to receive a degree from college. She even took special courses in Insurance. She tried and tried again to find a job, but no one was willing to give a "woman" with no experience a job. Finally a man took a chance on her. 25 years later, she was honored as an outstanding insurance sales producer in the country. She had refused to live in despair and mediocrity.

Why does someone like this succeed well in life? Why doesn't everyone do what **Mary Crowe** did? A large part of the answer is **MEDIOCRITY!** Most people are content to live a mediocre life. They go so far, get comfortable, and start coasting. They let habit take over because it is easier. Most people have very little internal challenge to keep them growing, reaching, and dreaming!

What about Christians?

1. Do we see the need to go beyond mediocrity in our lives?
2. Do we see the need for more and more spiritual growth?
3. Do we feel it is too much trouble to keep growing?
4. Just how would our lives be characterized...Dead, Mediocre, or Zealous?
5. Is it a matter of indifference?
6. Do we need to have no concern about the matter?

Listen to the Words of Jesus:

Rev. 3:15-16, 19 _____

The Lord wants His people to be "hot", "zealous," or "boiling over" for Him. Lukewarmness, unconcernedness, and lack of zealous-ness are not what He desires. He wants us to:

1. See the great potential in our lives in His service;
2. To see that we are capable of doing far more than we give ourselves credit for;
3. And that we need to be challenged to climb to higher ground.

GOD'S CHALLENGE TO HIS PEOPLE

God challenges His people to the highest, but he does not call on us to do something that He gives no help with. We all need help to live life to the fullest. We need help from one another; from close loved ones; but, most of all from God. Christians are without excuse in having a defeatist attitude. We have every reason for success. We should make Heaven without a question about it. We are expected to be faithful and zealous servants of God. He has provided the help we need to be such.

Eph.3:20 _____

God is all-powerful, but He is limited by our lack of faith and submission to Him.

1. Unless we desire knowledge, He cannot enlighten us.
2. Unless we desire purity, He cannot purify us.
3. Unless we desire pardon, He cannot pardon us.
4. Unless we desire spiritual strength, He cannot strengthen us.

Our unwillingness and narrow-sightedness can limit the power of God in our lives. He cannot do many mighty works through us because of our unbelief!

Phil.4:13 _____

God often places great challenges before us and will provide the strength to meet them if we are willing! We do not have to live in mediocrity; but, rather, we can live in zealousness. Christ provides the strength to do all things needed.

Phil.3:13-14 _____

We need an ultimate goal to give motivation to our lives; and, God has given it to us! It is a great goal, a courageous goal. But we also need goals for every day of our lives, and He has provided such---

the evangelization of the world! It is a great goal and a courageous goal. It calls forth the very best that is within us to reach this goal. And God also wants us to live a vibrant, faithful, and zealous life for Him. He does not expect the impossible, but the possible. He has give us the motivation, and the power, and is willing to prepare us for the tasks ahead.

HOW DOES GOD PREPARE US FOR THE TASKS?

1. He prepares us by constantly reminding us "Who" we are!

1 John 3:1 _____

1 Pet. 2:9 _____

We have been given great privileges, but also grave responsibilities!

2. By constantly reminding us of why He has redeemed us!

1 Cor. 6:19-20 _____

We are willing slaves of God—servants of righteousness. We were not forced, nor coerced. It was a choice we freely made—let's not forget this!

3. By reminding us that He does not give us a job beyond what we can do.

Matt. 25:15 _____

Rom. 12:6 _____

There is far more within us than we often realize; but, we may never know until we are challenged! How many thought that man could fly to the moon? Could you handle a handicap effectively and thereby glorify God? Could we handle a divorce of a mate and not lose our zeal to serve God? We real don't know the fullness of what we can do until called upon. With God's help, we can do all things!

2 Tim. 1:6-7 _____

"Adversity causes some men to break; and others to break records."

"I would never have amounted to anything had I not been forced to come up the hard way."

Matt. 7:14 _____

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

God has designed the Christian life as a challenge—not to break us, but that we might break records! He does not want us to live a mediocre life for Him, but a ZEALOUS LIFE!

"The fire of enthusiasm won't burn forever, unless you throw some fresh logs upon the fire to feed it." We must constantly go to that source of POWER—to God and His Word! God calls us to zealous living for Him.....

HAVE WE ANSWERED THAT CALL?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- _____ 1. Mary Crowe was honored by men for her vision and zealousness.
- _____ 2. God wants His people to be "boiling over!"
- _____ 3. Only the Lord knows the full potential in each of us.
- _____ 4. Christians are without excuse in having a defeatist attitude.
- _____ 5. God is limited by man in the use of His great power.
- _____ 6. Christians not only need an ultimate goal, but goals for every day of their lives.
- _____ 7. God is willing to prepare us for any worthwhile goals in our lives—only if we are willing.
- _____ 8. Motivation is a key concept in helping people to accomplish great things.
- _____ 9. Adversity causes some men to break; and others to break records.
- _____ 10. The choice is ours to make whether we will live a mediocre life or a zealous life for God.

Lesson Six

"A Sense of Destiny"

A woman speaker was speaking to several hundred women and stated clearly: *"I'm going to move my world, you just wait and see; God and I are going to move my world."* This woman only weighed 100 pounds and she was going to affect her world?????

How do we feel about affecting our world? We all should know how God feels about this matter—He wants and expects His people to move the world in which they live!

Matt. 5:16 _____

Matt. 13:33 _____

On the Day of Pentecost, a small group of people were to begin an effort to affect their world.

Acts 1:8 _____

Mark 16:15 _____

This was God's method—to affect the world through His people!

2 Cor. 4:7 _____

They did make a difference in their world! No, they didn't reach great numbers in comparison to the world, but they did affect their world then and even to the present. They had a sense of purpose—a sense of destiny! And because of that, they made a difference!

What about us today? Do we, or should we have the same sense of destiny as they did? Should we be saying: *"Look what our world is coming to,"* or *"Look who has come into the world to save us?"* One statement is a sense of Despair; the other, a sense of Destiny! Do we affect our world, or do we allow our world to affect us? The answer for the Christian should be obvious!

WE CAN AFFECT OUR WORLD!

With God's help, we can affect our world for good--and help to determine the direction of our world as we have opportunity. Our efforts for righteousness is not wasted.

Ezek. 22:30 _____

Such was said! But, if only 10 righteous people could have been found in Sodom and Gomorrah, they would have been spared destruction. There needs to be an awareness:

1. That we have something to offer, to contribute;
2. That our lives can and do make a difference in our world;
3. That souls are dependant upon us!

We can and we must have a sense of Destiny!

Even from a negative standpoint, we can serve a great purpose!

Isa. 55:10-11 _____

2 Tim. 4:1-5 _____

As long as the Word of God is faithfully proclaimed:

1. It will serve God's purposes!
2. It can mean salvation for those who take heed to it!
3. But, it can also be a judgment upon those who reject or ignore it.

This concept is illustrated in the life of Elijah! He faithfully proclaimed God's truth to Northern Israel. But it seemed that his work was not accomplishing good even at the height of his efforts at Mount Carmel. And shortly after this he experienced his greatest disappointment. He had to flee for his life. His conclusion was: *"No one cares, what use is it to keep trying?"*

1 Kings 19:4 _____

The futility of his efforts are expressed in verse 10: _____

God's answer to Elijah.... **"Go back to work!"** And what Elijah evidently didn't know is that 7,000 people had not bowed the knees to Baal. Elijah's efforts were still needed! You still need to have a sense of Destiny!

We need to take courage from the life of Elijah! We need to not be discouraged, but to have a sense of Destiny—that we are needed!

Gal. 6:9 _____
1 Cor. 15:58 _____

OUR GREAT OBSTACLES!

To keep our sense of Destiny high, we have big obstacles to overcome—persecution, hardship, doubt, and tribulation!

2 Tim. 3:12 _____

1Pet.4:12-16 _____

These things should only heighten our need for a sense of Destiny! They tend to show just how much our efforts are needed. The world needs changing and the Gospel is the solution!

Rev. 2:10 _____

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

To fulfill our sense of Destiny will bring its glory:

1. To God's people:

Rom. 5:3 _____
2 Cor. 4:17 _____

2. To God as well:

1 Pet. 4:14 _____

Our fulfilling of our Destiny in spite of hardship brings glory and honor to the God who has sent us forth.

We must realize, as God's people, we are important to this world. We definitely should have a sense of Destiny (purpose)! Our lives can make a difference in our world! If we do not believe this, then why make an effort to do anything?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- _____ 1. It is not the weight or size of a person that helps to make a difference in our world.
- _____ 2. God's method of affecting the world was to be through people.
- _____ 3. To have a sense of Destiny one must have purpose for his life.
- _____ 4. Christians can serve a positive as well as a negative purpose in our world.
- _____ 5. The Prophet Elijah lost his sense of purpose because of the influence of Jezebel.
- _____ 6. God's answer to the discouraged....do more praying.
- _____ 7. A great lesson to be learned from Elijah is that we are needed whether the world realizes it or not.
- _____ 8. Obstacles should only help us see that we are needed.
- _____ 9. To fulfill our sense of Destiny can bring glory and reward only to the Christian.
- _____ 10. I believe my life can make a difference.

