

Books to read:

The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren;

The Life You Have Always Wanted by John Ortberg;

Prayer for Beginners by Peter Kreeft; *Rebuilt* by

Michael White and Tom Corcoran



Week One – Staying Power

What commitments do you find the easiest to keep? What has made it easier for you to keep them?

When have you found yourself making a commitment with a good intention, but then not keeping it?

What are some activities that you would love to get off of your schedule because they do not produce any fruit in your life?

What obstacles or tests have you encountered in your life that have kept you from your spiritual commitments?

In your life, what fruit have you seen from staying committed to a spiritual practice?

Scripture/Quotes

*And as when a great crowd came to him, he said in the parable, “A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell along the path, and was trodden under foot, and the birds of the air devoured it.” **Luke 8:4-5***

*And some seed fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. **Luke 8:6***

*And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew with it and choked it. **Luke 8:7***

*And some seed fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundredfold.” **Luke 8:8***

The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, that they may not believe and be saved.

Luke 8:11-12

*And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy, but these have no root, they believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away **Luke 8:13***

And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.”

Luke 8:14

*And as for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience. **Luke 8:15***

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Week Two – Staying Power

What is your biggest challenge or obstacle with prayer?

What has been most effective in helping you make prayer a priority in your life?

“We do not want to be beginners. But let us be convinced of the fact that we will never be anything else but beginners all our lives.” What are your thoughts about this quote?

If you could give one or two pieces of advice about prayer, what would you say?

When have you seen prayer make an impact in your life? Where have you seen prayer make an impact on your world?

What is your prayer plan? How do you pray?

Scripture/Quotes:

“We do not want to be beginners. But let us be convinced of the fact that we will never be anything else but beginners all our life.”

– Thomas Merton

“Nothing can cure our sick world except saints, and saints are only made by prayer”

- Peter Kreeft

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Week Three – Staying Power

What is the biggest obstacle that keeps you from sharing your faith with others?

Do you agree that *sharing your faith, will grow your faith*? Why or why not?

A few different ideas were given for how to reach outsiders. Which steps are you most likely to take?

Who are the people that God has placed into your life, so that they may be brought into a relationship with God?

Why is the Gospel good news and worth sharing?

Have you ever had the experience of leading someone to faith or seeing someone far from God come to know God? What happened in that experience?

Scripture/Quotes:

For missionary activity renews the Church, revitalizes faith and Christian identity, and offers fresh enthusiasm and new incentive. Faith is strengthened when it is given to others! It is in commitment to the Church's universal mission that the new evangelization of Christian people will find inspiration and support.

- Pope St. John Paul II

But the angel of the Lord said to Phillip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert road.

And he rose and went. And behold an Ethiopian eunuch, a minister of Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning; seated in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah.

And the Spirit said to Phillip, "Go up and join this chariot."

So Phillip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

Acts 8: 26-30

And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Phillip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the Scripture which he was reading was this:

"As a sheep led to the slaughter or a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken up from the earth."

And the eunuch said to Phillip, "Please, about whom does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?"

Acts 8:31-34

Then Phillip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told the good news of Jesus. And as they went along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What is to prevent my being baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they went down into the water, Phillip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

Acts 8:35-38

*And when they came up out of the water, the spirit of the Lord caught up Phillip; and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. **Acts 8:39***

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Week Four – Staying Power

What do you think of when you hear the word “engage”? What does it mean to you?

What can our group do to deepen our engagement and commitment to one another?

Of the obstacles mentioned, which are the biggest for you? Which ones are the biggest for the group? What helps you keep your commitment to this group?

Read aloud **Hebrews 10:24-25**. Where are you feeling discouraged in your life? Where do you need encouragement from this group?

What are your thoughts on the analogy of a small group being like a retirement plan?

Scripture/Quotes

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.

Hebrews 10:23-24

Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing nearer.

Hebrews 10:24-25

Two is better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil; If they fall one will lift up his fellow, but woe to him who is alone when he falls, he has not another to lift him up.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

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Week Five – Staying Power

Read aloud **Philippians 2:5-7**. Have you ever considered serving as beneath you? How do these verses challenge us to think of serving?

Have you ever had the experience of the Holy Spirit using you to serve someone else? What was that experience like?

What is the biggest obstacle that keeps you from serving?

Do you agree that serving in the Church is vital to spiritual growth? Why or why not?

What is your next step in serving in ministry or missions?

What tests have you experienced with serving? Have you been able to overcome them? If so, how?

Scripture/Quotes:

“By coming as a servant, Jesus was not disguising who God is, but revealing who God is.”
-John Ortberg

Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant [...] **Philippians 2:5-7**

But grace was given to each of us, according to the measure of Christ’s gift. **Ephesians 4:7**

And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers. **Ephesians 4:11**

To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. **Ephesians 4:12**

Until we all attain to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. **Ephesians 4:13**

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Week Six – Staying Power

Do you agree that money is a spiritual issue and affects our relationship with God?

Read aloud **Proverbs 3:9-10**. Do you believe this verse to be true? Why or why not?

What are the obstacles you face in using your money to grow as a follower of Jesus Christ?

What step do you need to take to connect your finances with your spiritual growth?

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.” What are your thoughts on this quote?

Scripture/Quotes:

*Where your treasure is, there will your heart also be. **Matthew 6:21***

Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house; and thereby put me to the tests, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the window of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflow of blessing.

I will rebuke the devourer for you, that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil; and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the Lord of hosts.

Malachi 3:10-11

Honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

Proverbs 3:9-10

*Jesus said, “Sell your belongings, give alms and provide money bags that don’t wear out, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven, that no thief can reach or moth can destroy.” **Luke 12:33***

“He is no fool, who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.”

-Jim Elliot