

USAMPS Weekly Bible Study
10 JAN '12
Without Vision the People will Perish
Proverbs 28:19

How many of us have made New Year's Resolutions and failed? Even more Poignant (spiritually speaking); how many of us have made bold declarations (promises to God) and failed to keep them? We can succeed but things have to be different than they were last time. To succeed we will need to be purposeful, organized, increase regularly of spiritual activity, set reasonable goals, since it takes time to change we must stay focused, bring our lives into proper balance, get rid of some thing that are holding us back, reduce stress, gain knowledge, volunteer to help others and be accountable. To become more spiritually fit this year we must first begin with a Spiritual Diagnostic Fitness Test.

Who are we? Where are we going? How are we going to get there? What do we expect to achieve or get to as a result of our effort?

Sermon-A Letter to the Church "Vision Casting"-08 Jan '12

Top ten New Year's Resolutions

It's a time to reflect on the changes we want (or need) to make.

1. Spend More Time with Family & Friends.
2. Fit in Fitness
3. Tame the Bulge
4. Quit Smoking
5. Enjoy Life More
6. Quit Drinking
7. Get Out of Debt
8. Learn Something New
9. Help Others
10. Get Organize

How many of us have made New Year's Resolution and failed? Even more poignant (spiritually speaking); how many of us have made bold declarations (promises to God) and failed)? We fail because we are spiritually insane.

Insanity is...

To succeed: purposeful, get organized, regularity, reasonable goals, stay focused, it takes twenty-one days to break a habit or start a new one, bring life into balance, take up a new hobby, get rid of things that are holding us back, reduce stress, gain knowledge, volunteer to help others and be accountable

What motivates us to change?

-I joined a health club last year, spent \$400 and got nothing.

Apparently, you actually have to show up.

-I like long walks...particularly when they are taken by people who annoy me.

-two young girls standing in front of a scale. One looks at the other and says, "Don't step on it or it will make you cry."

-man on a kayak nothing but calm and clear open seas-a scene of perfect peace-insert 25 ft killer whale approaching from the rear (caption:

"Motivation; some need it more than others."

-Where there is no revelation (Vision) the people will cast off restraint (perish) but blessed is he who keeps the law. Proverbs 29:18

Acknowledging what they have done in the last three months:

Ministries already available (see bulletin) thanking those who have participated

Childrens Church

Evangeline, Judi, Michelle, Lori, Jody, Jill, Susan, Valerie, Joy, Alicia and Todd

Challenge: there is still more that we could do:

Connections, Home study groups, Community service project-offering assistance to the physical needs of our community, Outreach-addressing the spiritual needs of the community and church website and Facebook

Topics we will preach: Teaching from the Life of Christ (Jan-Feb), Lent (It is a period of 40 days of repentance, prayer, fasting, abstinence and confession), death and Resurrection of Christ

-How do we achieve greater spirituality this year? To become more spiritually fit this year we must first begin with a Spiritual Diagnostic Fitness Test

1. Who we are

Who? -name change (identity)

-Target audience? Specker Barracks complex, Single Soldier dwellings, officer housing, enlisted housing and the civilian workforce here at FLW

2. Where are we going? (destination)

Why are we doing this Christian thing?

What are our goals and personal motivation?

-Faith is more than a single commitment. We believe participation in an intentional discipleship process is as vitally important to the spiritual lives of all Christians, just as basic training is critical within the military.

We become disciples?

3. How are we going to get there? (can we measure our spirituality?)

Disciples, disciplined and discipleship

For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

—1 Timothy 4:8

-godliness gains a higher priority

We engage in being a disciple of Christ to learn who God is and who we are in Christ. Talking about biblical truths gives us the tools necessary to succeed throughout our spiritual journey. Spiritual life needs to be maintained; an ongoing, lifelong experience.

Are you ready to begin the spiritual fitness test?

The Army's PT test—consisting of pushups, sit ups, and a run—is designed to evaluate overall fitness. Better fitness equals better job performance. Measuring our spiritual fitness is important. It helps determine where we are today and where we want to be in the future. Our spiritual fitness test is not evaluated by others; it is a personal evaluation, assessing current and future desired spiritual fitness goals. We just have to exercise in order to maintain or get stronger. If we do not spend time with God we become spiritually unfit. Going to church or reading the Bible are not enough. The Word of God is like food to our souls. If we eat it all the time and do not exercise our faith, we are going to become spiritually fat and out of shape. In this state we will find ourselves incapable of doing things which were previously easy for us.

Spiritual fitness consists of three primary events: prayer, Bible reading/study and service/interacting with brothers and sisters in Christ within our Church community are all components to healthy spiritual growth.

1. Prayer, the first spiritual exercise.

Our spiritual life begins with a prayer as we "...confess with our mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in our heart that God raised him from the dead, we will be saved. (Rom. 10:9). This initial prayer is a powerful, life-changing event. It is communicating with God from the very core of our being. The Bible teaches us that communication with God is a frequent activity. God waits for us to include him in our lives. If we ask him, he does not take away the entire weight of what we are carrying but he certainly lightens the load.

In prayer we access God (an additional resource). Dialogue

Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Matthew 11:28-30 NIV

...cast all your cares upon Him; for he cares for you.—1 Peter 5:7

I will lift up my eyes to the hills, from where my help comes. My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; he shall preserve your soul. The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth and even forevermore.
—Psalm 121:1-8

Life without (prayer) means we are carrying the load ourselves.

2. Bible reading and study is our second spiritual exercise.

We read the Bible because it is a compilation of the interpersonal encounters between God and mankind. God's messages are eternal and applicable to all believers throughout the ages. Today, these words encourage us to continue developing our personal spiritual fitness. During regular Bible reading times we find answers to our questions. This happens far too often to be coincidental.

16 All Scripture is God-breathed (inspired by God) and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Thy Word have I hidden in my heart, that I would not sin again you (God). Psalm 119:11

We meditate or ponder God's words, seeking to understand exactly what he is saying to us, and what directions to take in life. Our spiritual journey is sanctification; more like Christ today than we were yesterday. We have a goal, a final destination ahead of us; we want to please our God, Savior and King. God offers us a road map (the Bible), a guide (the Holy Spirit) and companionship (a relationship with Him). Without God we will not reach our spiritual destination!

For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things...For to this end we both labor and suffer..., because we trust in the living God,... be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith and in purity. Give your attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you. —excerpts from 1 Timothy 4:8-16

God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6

Without God (His Word) we will not reach our spiritual destination!

3. Cultivating active relationships with other people within a community of believers is the third spiritual exercise.

Do not forsake gathering together. (Hebrews 10:25) There is nothing new under the sun. Someone else is going through, or has gone through, what we are going through today. We gain strength in numbers. Where do we go when we feel like everyone and everything is against us? In a general sense, we all have people we can turn to who can help us through the challenges of life.

No man is an island. Do not try to go through life or faith alone.

Have you seen how the strength you gain thru one means often bleeds over into other areas of our lives?

God uses life experiences to prepare (strengthen) us for what is ahead

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper. —Psalm 1:1-3

Faith in God is alive and active not cerebral and static. We commit ourselves to him because life is not always fair. Oh yeah, difficult and even dangerous at times but God will always pull us through.

That is why God wants us to cultivate (relationships with others).

Conclusion:

We want to grow to be pleasing to God. We commit to being disciples of Christ because we do not want to be underdeveloped, uninformed or unfruitful.

God gives us the directions for which way to travel and how to get there. On a regular (even daily) basis we hear these directions as we communicate with him. Since God is the source of our faith, his words of encouragement give us strength as we “plug in” to him. He empowers and enables us to live and serve. God will never set us up for failure.

With diligence we seek to learn who God is and who we are in Christ.

Talking about biblical truths gives us the tools necessary to succeed throughout our spiritual journey. Let us all continue the process of learning to become “All we are intended to be.”

To succeed: purposeful, get organized, regularity, reasonable goals, stay focused, it takes twenty-one days to break a habit, bring life into balance, take up a new hobby, get rid of things that are holding us back, reduce stress, gain knowledge, volunteer to help others and be accountable