

Rhythms of Grace - 1 Timothy 4:7-8
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

Well, its that time again, the New Year, the season of making promises to be different in the coming year. Its natural for us to do, seek to turn over a new leaf as we start 2025. For the next two weeks it will be almost impossible to find an open piece of exercise equipment at a gym, but by the second week of January the place will clear out and there will be treadmills and stationary bikes galore. There is really nothing wrong with getting a fresh start, making a plan for better, well, whatever it is that you want to improve. The problem normally lies in the fact that it takes discipline over a period of time to create an entrenched habit. You won't lose that 50 lbs with a two week burst of eating kale, nor will you get out of debt by putting credit cards on a shelf for a couple weeks. Yet, those two weeks can be the start of something. Similarly, spiritual growth and discipleship does not happen with a couple promises and a two week burst. A plan does not guarantee growth. On the other hand, no plan will almost certainly guarantee that you won't grow and develop. The path then, actually involves two things. The first is to develop a plan for intentional rhythms to implement for your growth as a follower of Jesus. But this has to be followed by a longer season in life with somewhat consistent action in those rhythm so that they become more entrenched habits that are entrenched into the way you do life.

The development of these rhythms is so vital because spiritual growth, or what the Scriptures call godliness is of utmost importance. As Paul tells Timothy, "For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way (1 Timothy 4:8). Paul is reminding Timothy that spiritual growth in some way mirrors the training of an athlete. It takes intentional, disciplined rhythms and habits to develop deeper lives of faith and love in the Gospel. At the center of these rhythms of grace is what, for many has been called a "quiet time." The idea is to find a consistent daily time to get quiet before the Lord, entering a conversation with Him by spending some time reading the Bible and in prayer. There are all kinds of ways to implement Bible reading. You might try to read the whole Bible in a year. Or maybe you use the reading plan we put on this sheet each week, or choosing some other plan to read a chapter a day. Or you might choose an even smaller passage each day while giving more focused attention. There are also all kinds of ways to include prayer in this time and in your day. The point here is to develop a plan that works for you, your life, and the way you are wired. Of utmost importance is to set aside a specific time each day that works for you. Our busy lives already don't have time for this, so it will need to be intentional each day. Maybe you wake up 20 minutes earlier and get at it first thing in the morning. Or maybe last thing at night before bed. There are also lots of options in between. The key is to choose a time that works for you and keep it consistent. You might even set a daily alarm on your phone or watch as a reminder. Then do it, stay with it, be consistent. Turn your phone over, your TV off. Get alone. Use music if it helps. But spend that daily time with Jesus. Remind yourself that the goal is relationship, not box checking. So listen to Him, and then spill your heart out. Do it daily, and be consistent, and in time it will become a habit. This sort of time with Jesus is by far the single most important thing you can do to grow as a follower of Jesus. You also might consider partnering with another person or small group, maybe read the same passages and discuss daily or a couple times each week.

There are many other disciplines and rhythms we can implement. These include

Bible study, Scripture memorization fasting, generosity, silence and solitude, singing and worship, reading theology, service and ministry, and sharing your faith with others. Our encouragement is to develop a spiritual life plan for the coming year, and then find ways to start these rhythms so that in time they will become habits that will help you train for godliness. If you have not picked up our Spiritual Growth Plan sheet you can download it from the Sunday Worship post or the Family Worship post on the Genesis Blog or Koinonia.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Isaiah 11	Isaiah 12	Isaiah 13	Isaiah 14	Isaiah 15	Isaiah 16	Isaiah 17

Reading from this past week: 1 Timothy 4:7-8

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Hebrews 7:11-28

Family Worship

Song - *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*

https://youtu.be/TXsBp16hsL0?si=cp_3w9nKOfltqVK9

Gospel Project

Unit: God Delivers His People

Story: Moses Led the Israelites

Big Picture Question: Why does sin separate us from God?

Answer: Because God is holy, sin has broken our relationship with God.

Scripture: Exodus 17-18

New City Catechism

Question 1: What is our only hope in life and death?

Answer: That we are not our own but belong to God

Verse: Romans 14:7-8

1 Timothy 4:7-8

- Why are our New Years resolutions so hard to keep? What is needed for greater success for spiritual goals in the coming year?
- How can you train yourself for godliness in the coming year? Why is this training more important than getting in shape?
- Do you have a daily time with the Lord? If so, what habits do you need to incorporate to keep growing? If not, what is the best time to do this, and what steps can you take to start?
- What other rhythms need some intentionality as we start the New Year?

Prayer

*Pray for our international partners on mission: The International Mission Board, Nick & Lorraine Mosca. Dave & Brenda Meyer

*Pray that you would incorporate good rhythms of grace in 2025 and that it would be a year of personal and corporate spiritual growth.