

Session 1 – Friday Night

- Video – Chicago Cubs 2016 WS final out -- <https://youtu.be/HOp8w2PgHIM>
- Champion (definition) – One who has defeated all opponents in a competition or series of competitions.
- Champions in the Bible:
 - 1 Samuel 17:4 – “Then a **champion** came out from the armies of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.”
 - Isaiah 19:20 – “It will become a sign and a witness to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the Lord because of oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a **Champion**, and He will deliver them.”
 - Jeremiah 20:11 – “But the Lord is with me like a dread **champion**; therefore, my persecutors will stumble and not prevail. They will be utterly ashamed, because they have failed, with an everlasting disgrace that will not be forgotten.”
- Matt. 16:18
 - Jesus to Peter, “. . . upon this Rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.”
- Ephesians 4:11-13
 - “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets and some as evangelists, and some as pastor and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to **a mature man**, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”
- Leadership
 - In the bible, when leadership was needed, men were summoned.
 - Exodus 18:21
 - “Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who **fear God, men of truth**, those who **hate dishonest**

gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.”

- Acts 6:3
 - “Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of **good reputation, full of the spirit and of wisdom**, whom we may put in charge of this task.”
- Ezekiel 22:30
 - “I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and **stand in the gap** before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one.”
- Questions:
 - What does the mature man of God look like?
 - What is your definition of Christian Masculinity?
 - What does it mean to be a Spiritual Champion?
- Answer is . . .
 - *Jesus!*
- Cultural Context of Masculinity
 - An Ambiguous Definition of Masculinity
 - (U of T Austin) https://twthumbs.washtimes.com/media/image/2018/04/30/University_of_Texas_Masculinity_s878x592.jpeg?41854fdad3ba0d4615d92793c0883d0fb5843958
 - The Lack of Healthy Fathers and Other Male Role Models –
 - Leaving the Feminine to Find the Masculine
 - No Clear Rights of Passage
 - The Challenge of Mid-Life
- Understanding the Myths of Masculinity
 - Men are big, brave and strong.
 - Men aren’t emotional and don’t express affection.
 - Men aren’t weak, they don’t cry.
 - Men are great loves and have an insatiable appetite for sex.
 - A man’s value is determined by what he does.
 - Men are the opposite of women.
- What does the Bible say?
 - 1 Samuel 13:14
 - “The Lord has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, . . .”

- God admired David's *passion*.
 - John 13:15
 - "By this shall all men know that you are my *disciples*, if you have love for one another"
 - Not for your decision-making, or net worth.
 - Galatians 5:22
 - "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."
 - These touch on the affective side.
- Questions:
 - What does the mature man of God look like?
 - What is your definition of Christian Masculinity?
- Answer:
 - We have a pretty good understanding . . .
- Question:
 - How do we get there and stay there?
- Answer:
 - Discipline and Training
- **Training vs. Trying (Hebrews 12:1-3)**
- "Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary *spiritual problem*. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for *deep people*."
 - Richard Foster *The Celebration of Discipline*. 1978
- Hebrews 12:1
 - "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every *encumbrance*, and the *sin* which so easily entangles us, and let us *run with endurance* the race that is set before us."
- More questions:
 - Where is Your Field of Play?
 - Who are your witnesses?
 - What are your encumbrances?
 - What are your sins?
- Two steps:

- Identify
 - Mark 5:9
 - “And He (Jesus) was asking him (the demon), ‘What is your name?’ And he said to Him, ‘Legion, for we are many.’”
 - Enter training
 - Romans 12:1
 - “And do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”
- Spiritual transformation is not a matter of **trying harder**, but of **training wisely**.
 - 1 Tim 4:7
 - “. . . train yourself for the purpose of godliness.”
 - 1 Cor. 9:25
 - “Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things.”

Session 2 & 3 – Saturday Morning & Afternoon

(Session 2 & 3 adapted from Richard Foster’s *The Celebration of Discipline*, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978, 1988)

- Question:
 - How do we tap in to the spiritual energy necessary for transformation?
- Answer:
 - Hebrews 12:2
 - “Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
 - Spiritual Disciplines
- The Purpose of Spiritual Disciplines
 - Freedom
 - From:
 - Self-interest
 - Fear
 - To:
 - Live the way God intended
- Primary requirement of Spiritual Disciplines
 - Longing after God

- Spiritual Disciplines are not:
 - A measuring rod of spirituality.
 - Necessarily unpleasant
 - A way to earn favor with God.

- Inward Disciplines
 - Meditation
 - Creating a quiet space
 - Emptying yourself
 - Filling yourself with Christ
 - Prayer
 - “The willingness to come before God and be changed.”
 - Fasting
 - Abstaining from something for spiritual purposes.
 - Private matter between you and God.
 - Reveals that which controls us.
 - Reminds us that we are sustained “by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” (Mt. 4:4)
 - Helps us keep our balance in life.
 - Study
 - The mind and heart are enabled to move in a certain direction.
 - What to study?
 - Books/Articles
 - People
 - Circumstances
 - Trends

- Outward Disciplines
 - Simplicity
 - Controlling Principles
 - Buy things for their usefulness rather than their status.
 - Reject anything that is producing an addiction in you.
 - Develop a habit of giving things away.
 - Refuse to be propagandized by the custodians of modern gadgetry.
 - Learn to enjoy things without owning them.
 - Develop a deeper appreciation for the creation.
 - Look with a healthy skepticism at all “buy now, pay later” opportunities.
 - Obey Jesus’ instructions about plain, honest speech.
 - Reject anything that breeds the oppression of others.

- Shun anything that distracts you from seeking first the kingdom of God.
 - Solitude
 - See and hear.
 - Find or develop a “quiet place” designed for silence and solitude.
 - Take advantage of the “little solitudes” that fill your day.
 - Every once in a while, try to live one entire day (or part of a day) without words at all.
 - Submission
 - To God.
 - To the Scriptures.
 - To our family.
 - To our neighbors and those we meet in our daily lives.
 - To the body of Christ.
 - To the broken and despised.
 - To the world, not worldliness.
 - Service
 - John 13:15
 - “For I have given you an example that you also should do as I did to you.”
 - Service is not a list of things that we do.
 - The service of small things.
 - The service of guarding the reputation of others.
 - The service of being served.
 - The service of common courtesy.
 - The service of hospitality.
 - The service of listening.
- The Corporate Disciplines
 - Confession
 - Giving of a confession
 - An examination of conscience – opening yourself up to the “gaze of God.”
 - Sorrow – an abhorrence at having committed the sin.
 - A determination to avoid sin.
 - A desire for repentance.
 - Receiving a confession
 - Live under the cross – remember that each of us are “chief among sinners.”
 - Keep things privileged.
 - Pray for an increase of the light of Christ within us.
 - Listen in quietness.
 - Announce forgiveness.

- Worship
 - Practice the presence of God daily.
 - Have many different experiences in worship.
 - Prepare for the gathered experience.
 - Expect something to happen.
 - Absorb distractions with gratitude.
 - Learn to offer a sacrifice of worship.

- Guidance –
 - Matt. 18:19-20
 - The selection of Deacons (Acts 6:1-6)
 - The calling forth of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1-3)
 - The resolution of conflict (Acts 15:1-28)

- Celebration –
 - Celebration brings joy into life, and joy makes us strong. Celebration is central to all the Spiritual Disciplines.
 - Without a joyful spirit of festivity, the Disciplines become dull, death-breathing tools in the hands of modern Pharisees.
 - Every Discipline should be characterized by carefree gaiety and a sense of thanksgiving.
 - Benefits of Celebration:
 - It saves us from taking ourselves too seriously.
 - It can be an antidote for the periodic sense of sadness that can darken the heart.
 - It gives us perspective, and frees us from an inflated view of our own importance.
 - It tends to move us toward more celebration.
 - Joy is the result of the Spiritual Disciplines' functioning in our lives.
 - Singing
 - Dancing
 - Shouting
 - Laughing
 - Partying.

Session 4 – Sunday Morning

- “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.” – Hebrews 12:1

- “Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” – Hebrews 12:2
- “For **consider Him** who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” – Hebrews 12:3
- Questions:
 - How does one transform?
 - How does one create positive change?
 - How does one surrender to God’s will hour by hour, day by day?
 - How does one “consider Him?”
- Answer:
 - Establish positive rituals.
- “Ritual” is often a bad word in Christian circles.
 - Rituals are not intrinsically bad. We need rituals – they are objects or actions upon which we hang meaning.
 - Rituals help us to create structure in our lives.
 - Rituals create boundaries – clearly delineated opportunities to renew and refuel but also to take stock and to prepare for the next challenge.
 - Rituals serve as anchors, insuring that even in the most difficult circumstances we will continue to use our energy in service of the values that we hold most dear.
 - Rituals provide a level of comfort, continuity and security that frees us to improvise and to take risks.
 - Rituals provide a stable framework in which creative breakthroughs often occur.
 - Survey of business executives and entrepreneurs:
 - “Where do you get your best ideas?”
 - Shower
 - Lying in bed
 - Listening to music
 - Outdoor exercise (hiking, cycling, jogging)
 - Meditation/prayer time
 - (No one said “at work”)
 - They can also open-up time for recovery and renewal, when relationships can be deepened and spiritual reflection becomes possible.
 - When do you have your best and most meaningful conversations with your wife, significant other, or kids?
 - Non-demand situations.
- Positive rituals are powerful on three levels.
 - They help us insure we effectively manage energy in the service of whatever mission we are on.

- They reduce the need to rely on our limited conscious will and discipline to take action.
- Rituals are a powerful means by which to translate our values and priorities into action – to embody what matters most to us in our everyday behaviors.
- Consider:
 - Luke 4:16
 - “And He (Jesus) came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and ***as was His custom***, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath . . .”
 - Gospel of John
 - Jesus “went up to Jerusalem”
 - Daniel 6:10
 - “. . . he entered his house . . . and continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.”
- Question:
 - What do we rely on when we are stressed?
- Answer:
 - Old habits.
 - Daniel 6:13
 - “Daniel . . . pays no attention to you, O King, . . . but keeps making his petition three times a day.”
- Doing vs. Not Doing
 - Not doing something requires continuous self-control.
 - Regularly put yourself in a situation in which you can practice what you are trying to achieve.
 - High School Basketball Coach
 - “The way you practice is the way you play the game.”
 - Military
 - “Rely on your training.”
 - Patience
 - “Longest check-out line at Wal-mart.”
- Basic Training
 - Chart the course –
 - Chart the Progress –
- Falling Short?
 - Is the ritual grounded in a value or vision that is truly compelling to you?
 - Is the goal that you set simply too ambitious and need to be implemented more slowly and progressively?

- Could it be that the ritual you put in place is faulty and needs to be restructured?
- Concluding Exercise –
 - Go back to your list of “encumbrances.”
 - Ask God to reveal to you, one or two items to work on.
 - Determine what Spiritual Discipline might help you to “lay aside” this encumbrance?
 - What “ritual” do you need to establish to engage in this discipline?