

Own It

Listen to Him

Your life, your marriage, your kids, your finances, your happiness and contentment can greatly improve this year. I believe that you have control over enough variables and the most important variables in your life to overcome every outside influence. You have the ability to be as successful as you desire to be.

Concerning your own life, you can make excuses. Or, you can Take Charge and Own It. I refuse to allow other people or things out of my control to determine the results of my life. Your life is too precious to let other people or things control your outcomes also. Let's Take Charge.

Success for you and me are defined differently. You define success for your own life. Let's agree to this: "success is a life well lived."

Luke 10:38-42

In ancient times as well today, one expression of hospitality would be to get your house ready and to prepare a meal. According to this passage, Martha was distracted with much serving, perhaps preparing a meal in order to serve Jesus as their guest. While she's doing that, Mary, her sister, is described as sitting at the Lord's feet and **listening to His teaching**.

Martha is the distracted one, the one who is focused on many different little deeds and duties and things that need to be taken care of in order to meet the practical needs of the moment. While Mary is depicted as contemplative, as simple, as focused on **one thing and one thing only**. She's sitting at Jesus' feet, and she's focused on him. Mary is simply listening to His teaching. Mary is completely absorbed in Jesus' words. Then, Martha comes up to Jesus and basically bosses him around. She says, don't you care that my sister is leaving me by myself to do everything, tell her to help me. Martha not only comes off as active and anxious, but so bossy that she tells Jesus, who is supposed to be her guest, what he needs to be doing. Notice, she doesn't rebuke her sister. She could have gone to her and asked, "Could you help me?" Yet, She rebukes Jesus and tells him what he should be doing; commanding Mary to help. Martha was focused on all the distractions of life, but Jesus says there's only one thing necessary, and Mary has chosen that one thing. Jesus says Mary has chosen the good portion and it won't be taken from her.

What is the one thing necessary? Mary is sitting at the feet of Jesus and listening to his teaching. Thus, Jesus is saying that the most important thing in life is to **Listen to Him**. The one thing really necessary in life is to be attentive to Jesus, to be focused on him, to sit at his feet, which was a standard Jewish metaphor for putting yourself in discipleship to a teacher. A disciple would sit at the feet of a master in order learn what that master had to teach them. The one thing necessary in life, according to Luke 10, is to be a student of Jesus, to listen to Him, and to be a genuine disciple.

We need to follow the model of Mary, who shows us that spiritual growth is the most important thing.

Spiritual growth is the process of becoming more and more like Jesus. When we place our faith in Him, the Holy Spirit begins the process of making us more like Christ, conforming us to His image. *What in your life will not be better, if you become more like Jesus?*

Spiritual Disciplines

One of the ways to become more like Jesus is through practicing *spiritual disciplines*. These are behaviors that can enable us to mature in our faith. A *discipline* is defined as "training expected to produce a specific character or pattern of behavior." This is what Paul had in mind when he spoke of taking off the "old self and putting on the new," in **Colossians 3:9-10**.

Turn off the world & Turn on Jesus

In this season, we are finding ways to fast, deny our flesh, in order to focus more on seeking God's will and way for our life. Perhaps you need to turn off talk radio, Fox News or CNN for a while. Perhaps instead of starting your day with the Today Show or Good Morning America, you should be "seeking first the kingdom of God?" Instead of binge watching Fixer Upper or something on Netflix, you should read through the Gospel of John, Ephesians or the Proverbs?

Scripture Reading

- Ephesians 6:17
- Joshua 1:8
- Proverbs 4:20-22

What are some practical ways you can make time to read your bible more consistently?

- If possible, read at the same time everyday, make it part of your regular routine and it will become habit.
- Write it into your schedule and then treat it just like a daily appointment. On average, it can take around two months before a new behavior to become automatic. And how long it takes a new habit to form can vary widely depending on the behavior, the person, and the circumstances.
- The truth is that it could take you several months to build a new behavior into your life.
- Interestingly, researchers have found that "missing one opportunity to perform the behavior did not materially affect the habit formation process." Thus, you can still form a positive habit even if you miss an opportunity to read your Bible every now and then.
- Building better habits is not an all-or-nothing process.
- DailyChapel.com; Right Now Media (text your name & email to 660.324.1816)

Prayer

- Our prayers are a spiritual communion with God through means of thanksgiving, and confession.
- When we pray, God comes alongside us to lead us into a deeper relationship with Him that is driven by His love.
- Prayer changes us. Prayer changes lives. Prayer changes history.
- Prayer is a time to speak honestly to your Heavenly Father because He knows your heart anyway. It's also a time to ask for the protection and health of other people.

Don't be afraid to make your requests known to God. Then take time to be quite and listen to His response.

- Choose a specific place to pray away from distractions so you can concentrate.
- Pray out loud sometimes. When we pray out loud we have to form intelligent sentences. We have to concentrate more on what we're praying about.
- Speak to God frequently throughout your day. Sometimes my best prayer times with the Lord have been on a walk or driving in my car.
- Change the pace during your prayer time, variety and a change of setting are often useful.
- Keep a prayer journal to keep track of what you prayed for and when you prayed for it. Write down anything that you hear from God!

Written Goals

Conclusion

- Let's stop making excuses about being "too busy" for spiritual disciplines.
- This year we are Taking Charge of our own lives. We are going to Own It.
- Prayer and Bible reading will provide us with the abundant life that Jesus promised.
- **In 2017, lets choose to live our lives with less fear and more confidence, less anxiety and more peace, less criticism of other people, more thankfulness, and increased mercy and compassion!**

Confession

I will take time every day to sit at Jesus' feet and listen to him. I will attend to God's Word daily. His Word is life and health to my flesh. Attending to God's Word will make my way prosperous and will lead to good success. I will seek God and His will in prayer every day. I will walk in peace and joy and purpose every day. Amen!