

Last week, we were challenged to use this bookmark to read through the Bible in the coming year and some of you got started. That is exciting. If you didn't get a bookmark last week, there are more on the back table.

This week, you're getting another bookmark and it's for those of you who just can not see yourself making a one-year commitment. The bookmark you got today is a 28-day reading plan. It's like a trial offer. It takes you through the book of Matthew ... which is a great start if you're not ready for the whole Bible. So ... now you have two options. Gerilyn and I are developing a way for those who are reading to talk about it online, so watch for that. I need to warn you that I have a goal. My goal is that every person who is a faithful part of Mosaic will pick up a Bible this year and start reading ... because only you can make yourself grow spiritually.

We learned this last week from Wayne Cordeiro ... that **80%** of the stuff we do every day, *anybody* can do. Just about anyone can read our newspaper, hang out on our Facebook page, drive our cars. Another **15%** of what we do can be done by anyone with a little coaching. With a little help they can respond to our texts, fill out our paperwork and accomplish the same things we've learned to do over time. That leaves **5%** ... and that 5% is stuff only *you* can do. And Cordeiro says *that 5%* is the important 5% of our lives. It is what we'll be held accountable for, and so it is where our emphasis should be. Last week, we said that only you can grow yourself spiritually.

Today, we're talking about dreams. Only we can fulfill our dreams. If you'll take out the insert in your worship flier and turn to the blank side, I'd like you to write the following on your sheet: **God's will** → **God's grace** → **My faith** → **my gifts**

I've been playing around with this formula this week as I've been thinking about how to discover and live God's dream for our lives. Here's what I'm seeing. As I seek God's will for my life, I experience God's grace. And as I trust in that grace, I find confidence to exercise my faith and claim my gifts. So the bottom line is this: If I want to live out God's best for me ... if I want to live out *God's* dreams and *my* 5% ... it begins with knowing God's will.

This is what Paul prays over the Colossians, who were missing the mark on God's will. The Colossians had this great come-to-Jesus time under the ministry of Paul and a missionary named Epaphras, but for whatever reason they couldn't quite find their peace with Jesus alone. They kept mixing in Greek philosophies and Jewish rituals and angel worship. As someone has said, they were trying to push Jesus into their lifestyle rather than pushing their lifestyle into Jesus. So Paul wrote (Colossians 1:9-10) - *For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God ...*

What Paul wants for these people is a holy focus. There's this sense they are sort of flopping around in shallow water, hoping they can hang out in an 80% lifestyle and still somehow achieve their dreams. Paul tells them it doesn't work that way. The fullness of life comes as we seek God's will, with all the wisdom and understanding that the Holy Spirit gives. That's the good life. So the secret is this: seek God's will.

Carl Medearis is a missionary who lived in Lebanon for twelve years. He tells some amazing stories of doing Bible studies with leaders of the Hezbollah and prayer meetings with

parliament leaders in a number of middle-eastern countries. He talks about this one guy ... a leader in Hezbollah ... who allowed Carl to come and meet with him one morning. Carl talked with the guy for a while, then asked if he could pray for him. The guy said yes, so Carl prayed in the name of Jesus. The next time Carl met with this guy, he was getting up to leave and the guy said, "Aren't you going to do that thing you do?" And Carl had no idea what he was talking about. The guy said, "You know, you did that thing where you prayed and I got this great feeling." Carl was sort of stunned, and he said, "Well, you are a good Muslim. I know you pray all the time. What do you think was different?" And the guy said, "I don't know, but it was something you said. And when you said it, I felt it and I want to feel it again." So they went through all the words Carl might have prayed, and when Carl mentioned the name Jesus, the guy said, "That's it! That's what you said! Pray like that again!" So Carl prayed again in the name of Jesus, and this guy began to weep as the Holy Spirit touched him when he heard the name of our Lord.

And Carl says he has learned over many years of being with Muslims and sharing scripture and praying and loving and talking, that Jesus all by himself is enough. Jesus is how we get to the 5% which is the good stuff. He is enough to change lives and change the world. And I don't know ... maybe because most of us in the west have been inoculated with this mild form of religion, we have a hard time believing that ... so we add a little of this and a little of that (a little Greek philosophy and a little angel worship) and we end up sort of flopping around in the shallow end ... and Paul is saying to the Colossians and to us that if you will ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will, you will please God, bear fruit and grow.

Paul says this to the Romans, and what he's really saying here is, "Don't assume you have it all figured out. Don't flatter yourself." He says (Romans 12:3-8) - ³ *For by the grace given to me*

I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. That first phrase says a lot. Paul says (Romans 12:3a) - *For by the grace given to me ...* Paul leans on God's grace for every word. Here he is living out his purpose as a leader of this new movement of people who follow Jesus, and he knows that the path from God's will to our giftedness runs through God's grace. The same grace that saves also sanctifies. This is what the Colossians struggled to understand. They thought they could find truth on their own, apart from Jesus, but apart from Jesus we have nothing. Living your dream is not a matter of self-effort. It is a matter of grace ... of divine empowerment. We can not expect to live in the natural and somehow do supernatural things. In other words, anyone can teach, but only Spirit-empowered teaching transforms lives. Anyone can raise children, but only Spirit-empowered parenting will transform your kids into God's best for them. Following Jesus is a walk of grace.

Paul says (Romans 12:3d) - *... For by the grace given to me I say to everyone ... to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.* In other words, my faith is not about me. It is about God. My faith is an expression of God's grace. God gives us faith like he gives us bodies. Our bodies are all different shapes and sizes and our faith is all different shapes and sizes. So You can complain because you don't have a body like Arnold or like a Victoria Secret model ... or you can exercise the one you've got. Same with faith. If you want more faith, exercise what you have. And how do you exercise your faith? Walk with Jesus. Ask yourself where he would be, and go there. Follow him.

This is what James is talking about when he says (James 2:15-17) - *Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food.* ¹⁶ *If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?* ¹⁷ *In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.* Faith in Jesus goes where he goes.

Let's go back to what Paul tells the Romans. He says (Romans 12:3) - *For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.* That means being honest about the spiritual gaps.

There's a story of a time when Martin Luther King was just coming into the center of the Civil Rights movement. He got there by working with people in his community and before he knew it he was on the national stage. But that came with such a cost. He was getting thirty or forty threatening calls a day, and that was not what he'd signed on for. Late one night, he got one more threatening call, and it threw him into a crisis of belief. He made himself a pot of coffee and sat down at the kitchen table. He was trying to figure out how to get out of this without looking like a coward. And then, he heard a voice within. He said, "Something said to me, 'You can't call on Daddy now, you can't call on Mama. You've got to call on that something in that person that your daddy used to tell you about, that power that can make a way out of no way.'"

Martin Luther King heard that voice and then he prayed a prayer of confession and surrender. He confessed that he didn't have it inside himself to lead these people who were looking to him. He was afraid and he felt alone and he was in deep need of the kind of courage he couldn't muster up on his own strength. He prayed that kind of prayer, just telling God how he really felt. And then King heard that same voice, saying, "Martin Luther, stand up for righteousness. Stand up for justice. Stand up for truth. And lo, I will be with you. Even until the end of the world." And then, King said, "I heard the voice of Jesus saying still to fight on. He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone..."

This is what happens when we confess our weaknesses. Paul tells us that it is in our weakness that he is made strong. When we get honest, God begins to move. So deal with your shortcomings, but claim your strengths. Paul says (Romans 12:6-8) - *Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.*

In other words, we are not all made for the microphone ... amen all by myself. But we are all made for something. In this room is an amazing pool of giftedness. I get excited when I think about the power in this room to change our community. And I know this ... that it will happen as we shift our priorities from the 80% stuff to the 5% stuff. Let me give you three ways to get started:

- 1. Block out time for yourself to dream and plan.** Last week, we talked about how time apart is like fishing with a net. When you throw a net, you have to give it time to sink down beneath the surface. That's what spiritual time can do for you. It gives your spiritual net time to sink down and catch the bigger fish.
- 2. Get a journal.** Or a notebook or a blog or get some way to record what God is doing in your life. It will help you mark your progress.
- 3. Surround yourself with other dreamers.** I'm not talking about people who can sit around and complain with you, but people who will challenge you to grow. Problem-solvers, not problem-messengers. This is that small group of people who will inspire you to dream God's

dream. Beginning in August, I want to begin meeting with 12 people who are ready to live in their 5%. I am looking for twelve people willing to learn how to become disciple-makers ... twelve people ready to become spiritual leaders. If you are ready to seek God's will, trust his grace, exercise your faith, admit your shortcomings and claim your strengths, then I want to invite you to follow Jesus ...