

Spend five days this week living with the weekend message.

Prepare to Win! August 25-26, 2007

4 keys to winning in life

1) growing in your skills, 2) continual learning, 3) getting into God's Word, 4) listening to Jesus

I CORINTHIANS 12:27-31 (The Message)

You are Christ's body—that's who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your "part" mean anything. You're familiar with some of the parts that God has formed in his church, which is his "body": apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle workers, healers, helpers, organizers, those who pray in tongues. But it's obvious by now, isn't it, that Christ's church is a complete Body and not a gigantic, unidimensional Part? It's not all Apostle, not all Prophet, not all Miracle Worker, not all Healer, not all Prayer in Tongues, not all Interpreter of Tongues. And yet some of you keep competing for so-called "important" parts.

ROMANS 12:3-8 (NIV)

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. ⁴Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸if it is encouraging, let him

encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

JOHN 15:7-11 (NIV)

"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. ⁷But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! ⁸When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father. ⁹As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

II TIMOTHY 2:16-17 (The Message)

Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us.

Day 1

Read I Corinthians 12:27-31 and Romans 12:3-8

Scripture is very clear that once you trust Jesus as your Savior, you are part of the body of Christ. The Bible says that you are uniquely wired to make the body complete. List one to three spiritual gifts that God has given you. (Not sure what God has poured into you? Take the Northwoods 301 class on September 9.)

How *are* you using your gifts to make the body of Christ stronger? Where *could* you use them?

How long has it been since you took a risk for Jesus? What did you do? Why was it risky to you? What could you do now—to be risky again?

Day 2

Luke 2:52 says: "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

What is the source of wisdom? (Proverbs 2:6) What are the results of growing in wisdom? (Proverbs 24:12)

Look back five years. In what three areas of your life can you see growth in wisdom? What contributed to this growth? List some ways you have grown and spend some time thanking God for growing you.

Day 3

Read II Timothy 3:16-17

How has God's Word been helpful to you in your life? (Re-read the verses and linger in contemplation.)

In this passage it is clear that we are made for a purpose (SEE DAY ONE) and that God's Word shapes us for the tasks He has planned for us. (Ephesians 2:10) What is God currently teaching you through the Bible?

How can you increase your interaction with His Word?

Day 4

Read John 15:7-8

Just as branches get nourishment—actual life from the vine—so do we get that from Jesus. For you, what is involved in staying connected to Jesus?

Verse 8 talks about producing fruit. As you take a look at your life, what fruit do you see?

If you are bearing fruit, what does verse 11 say is the result? Spend some time thinking about what that looks like *for you*.

Day 5

Re-read all the scripture from days 1-4

What are you thinking as you read these scriptures? What stands out in your mind?

What are one or two things that you could do in response to His Word? Be specific.

What specific plan can you make as a next step? Think "action," e.g. "Call South Side Mission to find out about serving Thanksgiving dinner." or "Email Dream Center to volunteer for MetroKidz."

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