

**MOMENTUM**



# MOMENTUM

As we enter into this conference season, our theme for this years' conference is MOMENTUM. We will talk a great deal about this in the upcoming weeks, so I won't belabor the point in the introduction. I will say this however, that at Crosswalk we have been incredibly blessed to be able to recognize when the Momentum of the Holy Spirit was present, and by dumb luck, we have been able to act on it.

When I was first learning how to surf, momentum scared me. I was always nervous about the size and speed of the waves. Without being able to harness that power, it was like a wrecking ball heading towards me time after time. The more I surfed, the more I got comfortable with the power that was present, and ultimately, I began to fall in love with the feeling of almost being out of control, yet riding a wave with reckless abandon.

I don't know how it has been for you in ministry over the years, but the same experience is true when we become comfortable with the power of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our ministries as well. It goes from being frightening to being exciting, to being the only way that we know how to do ministry. In fact, when we sense a lack of momentum, we try to rekindle and reharvest what was there before.

This years' conference will be about building, maintaining, losing, and ultimately rekindling that momentum to do ministry. We will have the opportunity to understand how it grows, how to ride it, when you are in danger, and why we need it in our ministries.

Over the years, I have seen ministries grow and fade, others become successful and maintain that success and influence, as well as some that never seemed to be able to get off the ground at all. There are reasons for this.

Often, when we think of ministry, we think that everything that happens is by chance, rather than design. When Crosswalk goes into a new community, we fully expect that Momentum to show up. I don't believe it is arrogant to believe this, I think it means that we are paying attention to the things that God would have us focus on.

So as you read these words, keep in mind our upcoming conference, and if you haven't decided to come, we would love to have you. We want to make sure you have the opportunity to join us, to learn, to share, and to grow together in the Momentum that God has set out for us.

Thank you for always journeying with us.

Pastor Tim





DAY 1

Momentum begins with something tangible. Something moving. Something that we can see, feel, and touch. The Greek word for compassion, *Splagnizomai*, means that something is moving. Something that is getting you up out of your seat and makes you do something, preferably for someone else. It is a way of living that sheds the chains that bind us to the couch, to our comfort zones, to our fear of living dangerously and with purpose. Momentum is what puts us on the road to change, helps us scale and go to places we never thought possible. It is momentum that we have to use in order to get us to the place we believe that God is calling us to.

Without it, everything feels like an uphill slog through wet cement. Everything feels like you are dragging a stone behind you. In order to get moving quickly enough so that stone feels like it isn't even there, we have to learn how to harness the power of the Holy Spirit to help us with that momentum. When we realize that this journey is not ours to take alone, but with a cloud of witnesses, with the Holy Spirit, and with the blessing of God, we begin to realize that is not an uphill hike, rather, it is a wild goose chase, where we follow wherever the Holy Spirit leads. By doing this, we allow the momentum that is beyond our control to take hard parts, the difficult bits, and create a way forward, much faster and farther than we ever thought possible. We could not have manufactured this for ourselves, it has to be something that comes from the Holy Spirit.

With this in mind, we want to begin to build momentum by doing something tangible. Therefore, across all our campuses and groups we will be engaging in an exciting mission sponsorship opportunity. If you are reading this guide at a later time, make sure that you start off by doing something tangible that will help your group build momentum for the journey we are about to embark upon.

The good news about momentum is that once it starts, it is very difficult to stop. This is why we are not simply going to talk about the momentum that God is going to create in our com-

munities, but we are going to experience this momentum together. Whether in a group of 2 or 3 or if we are in a group of 2 or 3 thousand, we believe that God works, the Holy Spirit pushes, and Jesus convicts our hearts to the calling which he has prepared us for.

We are excited for what comes next.

When have you experienced God's momentum in your life?

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Will you be engaged with us in something tangible that will help us with that momentum?

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How can you identify where God is already working in your life?

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## DAY 2

The message bible says some really good things about momentum and the early church. Peterson, the interpreter for that paraphrase like the word momentum as it signified that what Jesus was doing was making change, was creating waves, and was gathering steam in order to make the kingdom of God more widely known and recognized in 1st century Judea.

In Matthew 4, we see Jesus going through the temptations. He had been in the desert and was in a state of extreme hunger. We can all imagine what that would be like. We get Hangry as soon as we are a few minutes late for lunch or dinner. Can you imagine going 40 days and 40 nights without food? I find that hard to imagine at all.

The state Jesus finds himself in is one of disrepair, and this is when the Devil decides it is time to strike. While Jesus had made some strides in his ministry, he was not yet building the momentum he would later build. So at this point, he took a moment to prepare, to fast, and to pray. At his most vulnerable was when the Devil made his move. And of course, we all know the story.

Jesus is tempted 3 times, and each time he overcomes the temptation. These temptations may not seem like much to us, as we can't turn stones into bread. But since Jesus can, these temptations were real, they were tangible, and they were meant to knock him off his ability to build that momentum that he would need later on to continue his ministry.

But what the Devil could not have known is that his temptations were the impetus that Jesus needed to start out of the gate running. His first foray into miracles, that we see at the wedding in Cana, was reluctance. But when Jesus came out of the desert, through the temptations, we realized that he was ready to start his ministry in earnest. And by the time we get to verse 25 of chapter 4 this is what we see: 25 More and more people came, the momentum gathering. Besides those from Galilee, crowds came from the "Ten Towns" across the lake, others up from Jerusalem and Judea, still others from across the Jordan.

Once something begins to roll, it is very difficult to get it to stop rolling. There is no doubt that there were those who would have been happy to not have the ministry of Jesus start off with such a bang. But sometimes, to build momentum, you have to make it through the first obstacle to get things rolling.

For Jesus, that obstacle was the temptations, what is that obstacle for you?

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What obstacles are in your way, but when you overcome them, they will actually help to build momentum?

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What can you do to recognize the help you will need to overcome those obstacles?  
Who can you call on to help?

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## DAY 3

When you study momentum and church, you realize how important it actually is. I think that at times there is a sense that churches are these institutions that don't go anywhere, they don't do a lot, and they just sort of exist. I don't believe that. If we are the church, then we are the living breathing body of Christ, and that means we move, we live, we breathe, and we exist in the world where God has placed us. We must expect that movement is required to stay healthy. I've said this a thousand times, but survival is not a mission statement. I don't know why there are so many churches that are okay with managing their own decline. I don't know why there are so many pastors that seem unable or unwilling to see beyond the current and into the future that God is creating for them. Perhaps they have bought into the myth that things can't get better, that this is all we can expect, and that there is very little that we should expect to happen.

But I live in the Kingdom of God. I want to see it grow, expand, and explode into the world. I think we live in exciting times, where people are looking for more grace, love, compassion and mercy. We live in a world that needs Jesus more than perhaps at any other time in history. We may be coming close to the end, and if that is the case, then the work just got that much more exciting for us. But we know a few things:

Momentum is propelled by a healthy church. Momentum has an ENGINE that is powered by a healthy church. Every church has a soul and in the same way as a strong 'core' is essential to physical fitness, a healthy core is critical in igniting momentum within the life of any church. Typical symptoms of an unhealthy core are indifference, ambivalence, politicking and negativity; which eat away at the health of a church like terminal cancers. I will always try and encourage church leaders not to focus as much on the GROWTH of the church as you do on the HEALTH of the church – because healthy things grow.

A healthy church “prosper and is in good health, in the same way as its soul prospers”. (3 John 2.) When the soul of a church is healthy, the church will be unified and in turn, unity ig-

nites momentum.

Momentum is contagious: Like a magnet, momentum will attract and pull even greater momentum towards itself. If it came with a warning label, momentum would caution of the potential discomfort and disruption it is likely to bring; but remarkably, people are drawn toward momentum. They may have to line up, sit on the floor, or wait for hours, but they are glad to be part of something that is “happening”. Things that would normally be unacceptable to people, suddenly become part and parcel of the ride known as momentum. Over many years of growing Crosswalk, we have enjoyed the blessing of momentum and seen people endure challenging crowd dynamics. Yet, through the challenges it is humbling and exciting that they still are quick to line up for more. Momentum only stalled when we weren't sure which way we should go, and we played it safe.

A wise leader knows the value of momentum and enjoys the blessing it brings, recognizing its ability to attract greater momentum; whilst the “safe” leader becomes fearful, and will attempt to cater to people's comfort, rather than capitalize on their new-found commitment to adaptability!

What sort of leader are you?

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Have you ever experienced that kind of momentum?

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What do you think you can do to help grow the momentum that God is building in our communities?

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DAY 4

As we continue to the conversation about momentum, there are a few more things that we should recognize:

Momentum is susceptible to times and seasons: Momentum has a RHYTHM, and a wise leader recognizes the way it beats in time and gets in sync – using it to his or her advantage.

Every calendar has seasons, and 25 years of experience in the ebb and flow of momentum has taught me to get a bit of a feel for when and how to counter many of these challenges, whilst believing to ride on the back of momentum.

There are only 52 weeks each year and every one of them is too important to be ruled by the vagaries of the seasons. So, instead we must pilot momentum through the ebbs and flows – enabling it to roll on like an avalanche, encompassing all before it and refusing to allow it to be dictated to by an adverse season or a contrary environment.

Momentum thrives in a charged atmosphere: Momentum ELECTRIFIES any atmosphere and a wise leader knows the importance of creating an environment that is friendly to momentum's cause. Funnily enough, it is often NOT the aesthetically perfect, architecturally designed sanctuary where momentum flourishes. It can be an old theater or a disused barn, a small chapel or in the car park volunteer meeting. Certain things – such as empty seats, poor sound, stark colors, or natural light, do not easily lend themselves to a momentum- friendly atmosphere.

Be aware of the atmosphere!  
Some leaders are oblivious to the things that are working against momentum. It may not be a spiritual problem you are facing! It could be something as practical as the aesthetics of the room, the length of your services, or (dare I say it) the monotony of my messages!!

As accountable leaders, we must ask ourselves the hard questions about the potential momen-

tum inhibitors and the things that are limiting our church... Starting with the US!

Can you think of anything that is hindering our momentum as a church or in your group?

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What should the leaders be looking out for?

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How can we target that momentum toward the things that are working?

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DAY 5

Momentum comes from somewhere. Some people would say that momentum is the fruit of Grace and Favor from God. A smart leader recognizes that momentum is less about their talents and how hard they work, but it is also evidence of God's great grace. While nothing is established or sustained without commitment, strategy, and great effectiveness, it is true that not all that hard works always enjoys the fruit of Holy Spirit Momentum.

The good news is that grace is not the exclusive property of a few good leaders; it is available to everyone. The only question we have to ask ourselves is whether we are living in the grace God has given us, or stressing and starving in our own strength, attempting to "make" something happen.

The New Testament words for 'gift' and 'grace' are interchangeable, and momentum will never flow if you are trying to function outside of the grace or the gifts that God has given you. The apostle Paul, (speaking to the Corinthians), spoke of "living within the limits of the sphere that God appointed him" (2 Corinthians 10:12-14.)

That, in fact, is the ONLY place sustained momentum will flow – when we are living in our own God-given 'grace zone'. In other words – BE YOURSELF – and watch what God can do!

But we also have to recognize that momentum has a lifespan. In order to elongate this lifespan, we have to recognize that as leaders we need to move ahead of the wind, make changes that will harness that wind, and then sail as long as we can before we have to make another change. The problem churches often have is that they wait to make any change until the wind of momentum has died down, and then it is often too late.

It feels as if God has left the building, changed addresses, and moved on to other places and things. I have reflected on this a great deal throughout my ministry. As I have consulted with churches who "used" to have momentum and wonder where it went, I inevitably ask the question, "when did you stop pushing ahead?"

You can usually mark on a calendar when they stopped moving, they got scared or safe, when they decided they had figured it out, not that God was still in control. When they began to plan rather than to prepare they were trying to force God into a blueprint that they had for God, and that rarely works out very well for anyone.

When we begin to realize that we can't control momentum, but we can ride it, we begin to see that what is coming from God in the form of momentum is nothing more than a deep and abiding blessing for those who will continue to look forward to what God has planned for them, rather than looking back to the "glory days" of one particular iteration of their church.

God is creative, and wants us to be creative in the way that we respond to what God is already doing for our churches.

Can you think of a time when something you were involved in stopped growing and using the momentum God had granted it?

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How do you keep looking forward in your ministry in order to continue moving ahead?

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When do you know that you need to change what you are doing to stay with the wind?

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DAY 6

I think that momentum has a tendency to be attracted to wisdom. At the same time, I think it is repelled by foolishness. I know this sounds a little bit like the book of Proverbs, but the truth is that we are often just one foolish decision away from losing our momentum.

The problem is that in our ministries it often feels like momentum is a mystery and is often elusive. Momentum is not always easy to predict. It can elude those you would most expect to attract it and break out where you would least expect it.

There is no ONE right way of doing things and trying to reduce momentum to a formula, is a recipe for frustration.

My counsel to those believing for momentum to hit, is remember that it is contagious by nature. So continue to 'lean in' to momentum and refuse to be threatened by the blessing that others may be enjoying. Go to conferences (that are not your own), rub shoulders with people, soak in the atmosphere, take notes in the lessons and be stretched by the example of others!

When we look to other iterations of the gospel we realize that we actually can learn from the ways that they have captured momentum.

I was recently at a conference where one of the presenters was seemingly very upset that someone would dare to try to replicate what had worked in someone else's ministry. This presenter was adamant that the only way something could work was essentially if it was unique to the context of each particular church. While I agreed with some of what this presenter said, I noticed that their reticence to learn from others seemed to be hampering the ministry that they were involved with. It was as if this person was not interested in Spirit led best practices that could bless anyone when tried. Of course, not everything works everywhere, but we need to lean into the mystery of momentum and watch how others handle the blessing of momentum that God grants other ministries.

We should never be upset that God is working

anywhere, even when it is not our ministry. I don't believe that anyone in ministry is in competition with anyone else. Unless everyone has been saved, then there seems to be more work to do for each church.

The fallacy of thinking that God can't bless more than one ministry in one area is really heresy. We have to allow God to bless whoever God decides to bless, and when it comes our way, it should humble us, and not make us arrogant. We can always learn from others, even if it is just a philosophy of how to deal with God's momentum.

Have you ever been jealous of another ministry that seemed to be blessed more than yours?

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What is your measure of success in ministry?

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How can we bless other ministries with what we have learned?

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DAY 8

1 Samuel 17:48-49

"That roused the Philistine, and he started toward David. David took off from the front line, running toward the Philistine. David reached into his pocket for a stone, slung it, and hit the Philistine hard in the forehead, embedding the stone deeply. The Philistine crashed, facedown in the dirt."

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In 2018 and 2019, when we were working on re-branding the Crosswalk Church and it's logos and messaging, we were trying to find what were the pillars of how we worked and what we promise as a brand/church. It was an enlightening and sometimes brutal look at what we said we were and what we truly are.

The good news is that through that process we found what really matters to us, who we are reaching out to, and how we can better represent the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the Church called Crosswalk.

The three pillars of the Crosswalk brand are as follows: Belonging, Momentum, Aesthetic. These three things we found ourselves valuing in our experience of Church and building the Kingdom of God. We didn't even necessarily plan it that way, we just found that we would try to create communities and experiences of belonging, that would then lead to a greater momentum for the Kingdom. The aesthetic portion is a constant strain throughout our experience. How things look, feel, are experienced, those all matter to us, and we are excited to make cool things, beautiful things, and hope people catch on to the importance of beauty, of art, of design, and of atmosphere in worship.

Throughout all of this, we felt that God was creating a deeper and stronger momentum for the work that he was having us do. Without momentum, it feels like constantly pushing a rock uphill. However, when the Holy Spirit decides to get involved, there is an acceleration of vision, of efficiency, and of simple attitude as we begin to see how quickly things can grow and change with the help of the Holy Spirit.

You can imagine the feeling of inertia when the

pandemic hit. It was painful to experience the whiplash of something seemingly coming to such a great halt. However, we began to see that shift in momentum go from the road we were on to another road that God had prepared for us during that time of isolation and separation. In some ways, there was more momentum moving in this new direction than before. We should know that God is not going to let his kingdom crash and burn, and the church won't fail if God is in it.

So here we are, almost 6 months out of the last big wave (omicron) and as we write this, it seems that we are moving ahead, and that momentum is coming back to the original path that God had sent us on. We are talking about momentum for six weeks before our Crosswalk Conference, and our theme for this year is Momentum. We are excited to think about momentum, pray for momentum, and experience momentum in all of our churches.

Have you ever experienced the momentum of God?

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What did it look like in your life or ministry?

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How can you engage more to help your local Crosswalk Campus experience the Momentum God has for you?

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DAY 9

Zechariah 4:10

"Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand." (NLT)

Talk about momentum! If you read all of chapter 4 of this book you will be amazed by the incredible momentum that the Prophet is speaking about the temple being rebuilt: 7 Nothing, not even a mighty mountain, will stand in Zerubbabel's way; it will become a level plain before him! And when Zerubbabel sets the final stone of the Temple in place, the people will shout: 'May God bless it! May God bless it!'

So nothing is going to stand in the way of Zerubbabel laying that last stone on the temple. Not even a mighty mountain. That is momentum! To tear down a mountain means 2 things: The speed of which devastated the mountain, and the weight of what runs into the mountain is significant. To raze a mountain would take the weight and pace of an earthquake, or a tornado, or both.

But, there is a phrase that begins this text that we should take as a great encouragement. God tells us not to "despise the small beginnings". This is important, as every single thing that God has done and is doing with Crosswalk comes from small beginnings. Whether it is a quick conversation after church with three friends that ends up as Crosswalk Chattanooga, or a short email from one friend to another that ended up in Crosswalk Portland, or that group of 20 people or so that met in Glendora that finally became Crosswalk LA, or an inquiry email from a great group of people in Massachusetts that finally became a transition to Crosswalk Clinton. Even on the first Sabbath at Crosswalk Redlands with 85 people in attendance, we began with small things.

And we can't be mad about the small things that God gives us. As we know, how we steward in the small things will be how we steward in the large things that God gives us to lead. Even massive things start out small. So we need to make sure that we are clear on the direction we are heading, or else we might get caught in the

momentum that sends us in the wrong direction.

How can we be sure we are heading in the right direction? The scripture today speaks to that as well. The plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand is what will keep the line straight.

I remember the first time I saw someone use a plumb line. It was my grandfather, who taught at Walla Walla University and at La Sierra University. He was an Industrial Arts professor, and he was building the house that he and my grandmother were going to retire in. He was working on the foundations, and I was only about 4 or 5 years old, but he had me out there working one hot summer day. I remember him having this weight at the end of a line, and he kept using it to check himself. I didn't really understand what was happening, but I remember how careful he was to use it properly. I remember him saying, "how you start makes all the difference in where you end."

I never could understand those words until I began to do some projects around the house with Sara, my wife. Then I began to understand that measuring twice and cutting once wasn't just a clever saying, rather, it was an important pillar in the work we were doing. As well, making sure we started correctly makes a great deal of difference.

To build momentum, you have to start small, and allow the momentum to head in the right direction. Once you are sure where you are going, then you can begin to pick up the pace, to get some weight behind it, and eventually, you can flatten mountains with the momentum that God gives you!

Have you ever built anything and did it wrong on the first try? Why was it wrong?

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Have you ever seen something flatten something else with the force of the momentum the thing had? Was it devastating?

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How can you build momentum for what God has called you to do in this life and with your gifts?

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DAY 10

1 Samuel 16:11

Then [he] said to Jesse, Are all your sons here? [Jesse] said, There is yet the youngest; he is tending the sheep. Samuel said to Jesse, "Send for him; for we will not sit down to eat until he is here."

When the prophet Samuel came to Jesse's house, the father of David, David was not even thought of. In fact, he was essentially forgotten. In fact, Samuel had to remind David's dad that he was even around. David was the youngest, and was the most "disposable" in his family's eyes. They didn't think that Samuel would be interested in the youngest, smallest and least son.

But David wasn't sad or angry about where God had put him. In fact, later, he used it as a badge of honor and proving ground for the mission that God had called him to do.

1 Samuel 17:34-36

"And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: "And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God."

You may have a much greater mission than what you are doing right now would allow. However, what you are doing right now is the preparation, the foundation for what God wants you to do. In every place that we find ourselves we need to make the most of where we are and what we are doing at the moment. It is quite possible that where we are is where we are supposed to be, even if it is just for a season.

There are only a few constants in our lives. We will find ourselves going from one thing to another throughout our lives. So make sure you know what the constant theme in your life is, and know that you are heading for it, regardless of the scope and volume of what you are doing presently.

Before I came to Crosswalk Church, I was working for a health system, and my job was ambiguous, and the leadership didn't seem to know what my trajectory might be. I wanted to leave pretty badly, but didn't know where I was supposed to go, when I was supposed to leave, and if that even made sense. I was frustrated, probably not doing a great job, and seemed stuck.

I went to a mentor of mine and asked him how I was supposed to be thinking about this, and what I should be praying for in this situation. He basically asked me if I felt called to what I was doing, and my answer was that I did not! Then, he told me something that I will never forget. He said, "then this is no longer your job, it is someone else's. But until you have a new path made clear to you, your job is to steward this job in the best way possible. In this way, you will give the next person, who might be called to this job, a gift in the way that you have taken care of this job for them."

That changed everything for me. I became much more content knowing that I was not staying there forever, rather, I was a placeholder with integrity to make the job better than when I had gotten it. It took the pressure off, and it made the job much lighter to carry. While it took quite a few months until I moved on, those months were not suffering, rather, they were preparation for what God had next for me. The next job was Crosswalk, and without that preparation, I don't know that I would have been ready to lead when I got to Crosswalk.

How is God preparing you for the next thing? What can you be a good steward of in your life right now?

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Have you ever felt like the "least" of your household? Does that disqualify you from the work that God has for you?

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DAY 11

1 Samuel 17:48-49

"That roused the Philistine, and he started toward David. David took off from the front line, running toward the Philistine. David reached into his pocket for a stone, slung it, and hit the Philistine hard in the forehead, embedding the stone deeply. The Philistine crashed, facedown in the dirt." MSG

I know I don't usually use the Message Bible for our scripture quotations as it is a paraphrase, rather than a translation. However, I just love the way it is written in this text. You can see the Momentum spoken of in this text clearly. Remember: Momentum is a moving force that overcomes resistance.

David comes flying out from the front line, throwing himself and all his momentum in the direction of the Philistine giant. Of course we don't know exactly how big Goliath was, and in truth, we don't really need to know how big he was. He was big enough to be called a giant by their standards. And we know that David wasn't that big. So his willingness to throw himself into this battle is pretty impressive.

I don't watch a lot of boxing or UFC matches, but when I see a clip on social media of their first punches, I am always amazed at the momentum they are able to develop in such a small little ring. These are true athletes, phenomenal at their sport, and watching them is like watching the dance of a trained dancer, able to use momentum in a way that at times feels disproportionate to their size and the space they have to work.

David's momentum transferred energy from him standing with the other Israelite to running down to the plain, to finally putting the stone in the sling and sending it into the giant. He seemed too small to make this happen, but his momentum carried him through.

As we know from the story, those around him did not put too much stock in his abilities. Saul tried to give him armor that would have weighed him down. It would have hampered his ability to move toward the plain and to reach down for the stones. Rather, he wanted to be free to use

the power of momentum to charge the trajectory of the stone toward the giant.

If David saw himself in the same way that everyone else saw him, none of this would have happened. He would have stayed tending sheep, not being regarded as worthy of going into battle. His father wasn't sure he was needed. Saul certainly couldn't understand his need for David. Only God could see the potential momentum in this young man.

In order for us to truly experience the momentum that God has for us, we need to make sure we don't allow for the way that other people see us to be the limiting factor in building that momentum. We have to believe that we are the stone, we are the speed, we are the god-given trajectory that can change things. Without that belief, we fall into the trap that others set for us, Low Expectations.

Crosswalk wasn't supposed to be a church of influence. It was failing, struggling to make ends meet. Everyone I spoke to seemed to think that any momentum it used to have was gone, and it was simply languishing, or even sinking, like a stone in water. I am so grateful that God gave me eyes to see what could be. The momentum was there, it just needed some help, a kickstart to begin to roll down that hill and create speed.

Is there something in your life that used to have momentum that feels like it is languishing?

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How can you kick-start it?

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Who can help you get it started?

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1 Samuel 17:44

44 "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!"

This is Goliath speaking to David in this text. I believe that it is fair to say that Goliath was trying to intimidate David in any way he could. He was badgering him about his ability and basically shouting threats across the plain where they were to ultimately meet. It wasn't uncommon for this kind of verbal jousting before a battle. The ancient tribes would often stand across a plain to jeer, shout insults and slights, and basically try to intimidate the other tribe into either walking away, or giving up on the spot.

What we see here is that your enemies will try to intimidate you, they will try to get you to stop building momentum in any way possible. The truth is, most people like seeing something fail as much as they like seeing something succeed. Maybe they even like failure more! Why is this?

Perhaps there is something in each one of us that can't help but feel a little better about ourselves when someone else is flailing and failing. It seems to be human nature, at least a little. It is a tragedy of our fallen nature that we are not momentum builders, but momentum-enders too often.

David, however, would not be stopped by these things that Goliath was saying to him. This is how he answered Goliath:

45 David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. 47 All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands."

Ha!

Goliath had a few words for David, David had a great deal more for Goliath!

But something important is happening here. David knew where his momentum was going to come from. It wouldn't be his feet, his slingshot, or even a sword or javelin. Rather, his momentum would come from God. He makes that plain, and he makes it clear that there is no standing in the way of a momentum that is put in place by God!

My cousin used to windsurf a great deal, and he always wanted me to go with him. I tried to do it so many times, but I could only go one direction. When you sail, you have to learn how to tack in order to use the wind to get back from where you ended up. I was great at harnessing the wind to go out, but horrible at trying to fight against the wind. ( I know that tacking is not going against the wind, but it felt like it to me).

David understood that where he was going he was going to need a lot of wind, and he knew that God would supply it. He wasn't afraid of his enemies because he knew they were also the enemies of God and God would provide all the momentum that he needed.

Where do you need momentum in your life?

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How can God provide it for you?

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What have your enemies said against you?

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How can you harness that wind that God has for you to build momentum for what he wants you to do?

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DAY 13

Zechariah 4:6 says:

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

When we took our trip to Israel and Jordan and Greece in 2019, it was hard to build momentum at first. We all sort of showed up at the gate for the plane at different times, we didn't all know one another, and we were all a bit nervous. Even once we were all in the same bus in Tel Aviv it still seemed a bit awkward.

It wasn't until we had breakfast the next day that things started to click. Perhaps it was because everyone had a good rest, or because we were having a great meal, but we started to talk and connect with each other in ways we hadn't yet. Great questions were asked, answered, and jokes began to surface. You can always tell when a group starts to make sense to one another, because they begin to tell some jokes to each other to feel out each other's sense of humor. Once a rapport is established, things really start to take shape.

But the momentum it takes to make this happen comes from the collective understanding that we have to get to know each other, and we need to become friends if we are going to spend the next 3 weeks together.

Sometimes, we need the collective to create momentum for ourselves. But it doesn't come from simply understanding a need for momentum, rather, it comes from the collective community. This same thing could be said for the church and how it accesses the momentum that comes from the Holy Spirit.

It is never because we have been so clever in what we do that we can create the momentum each community so desperately needs. Rather, it is when we submit to the Community of God that we begin to see the momentum really accelerate the work that God would have us do. It is not by our power, not by our might, nor is it by our ability to get things done. Rather, it is by submitting to the Holy Spirit, which is the current representation of God in the world.

In scripture, it tells us that where 2 or 3 are gathered, the spirit is present. Therefore, the momentum that comes from the gathering of the people of God is a Holy-Spirit driven momentum. We do not create it, we just ride it. Once we have begun to realize that we are not responsible for the momentum itself, but we are responsible for what we do with it, much of the pressure of creating the wave is off, and our goal is to find the right way to ride the wave of momentum that God is creating for us.

I started surfing when I was in college, and I have never stopped. I don't go as much as I would like, but I love it when I do. The best thing about surfing is recognizing the power of the wave. Even the small waves that I ride most often are incredibly powerful and potent. Some just keep going and going, and the ride I can get with them is long and fun. Some waves are almost violent and strikingly fast. Those waves are more dangerous, but the ride is more exciting.

I don't know what kind of wave the Holy Spirit is creating for your community and in your life, but hang on! The ride will be worth it!

Do you play any sports that require harnessing momentum?

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What is it like?

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Have you ever seen God's momentum in your life? How did it manifest itself?

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## DAY 14

## Introduction:

The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

## OPEN

Momentum can be fun and can be scary. Can you think of a time when momentum was fun, and can you think of a time when it was simply scary for you?

Check out this video to see how it can be scary:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZqP-G66arU>

(be careful, each of these examples is a little scary!)

## HEAD

We had a tendency to lean into the story of David and Goliath this week. Are you familiar with this story? How have you experienced this story in the past? Did thinking about the momentum that God afforded David change the way you understand this story? If so, how?

## HEART

In these scriptures, we begin to learn that God can use the “least of these” to build momentum. It is not the size of the beginning that matters, but rather, the size of the God who is pushing and creating that momentum. Jesus was a momentum builder. He did it by healing, by listening, by proclaiming, and by bringing together people who could ride the waves that he was creating. What should we do when we are called into this same kind of work? How is it that God calls you to step into the momentum that he is creating around you?

## HANDS

What builds momentum in your life? Things like grace, compassion, justice, mercy, and hope are great momentum builders, and can be things that, when we act upon them, create a sense of momentum as we live out the calling of God in our lives. As we understand that our job is not to create the momentum, but to ride it, we begin to do things and see things and live things

differently than we might have before this understanding. What can you do today that will allow you to ride that wave of momentum for the kingdom? Everyday, we have the opportunity to connect with what has been laid before us in order for us to be able to enact that love and compassion that God wants to see expressed into the world.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



DAY 15

Speed is your friend. . .

I remember a buddy telling me this when I first started mountain biking. He told me that speed is your friend, because when you mountain bike, you can stay on top of the bumps. If you go fast enough, you don't get into the ruts, rather, you stay on top of them.

But learning to ride with speed is a bit of a dicey proposition. It sometimes feels like you are out of control, like you are just hanging on, and you are not sure how you can slow down. When you first start riding at speed, the world seems to move so quickly that you can't even see what is happening. However, as you get used to the momentum, as you get used to the speed, you begin to really understand that control is different at a high rate of speed. You barely have to turn the handlebars and the bike reacts. A small shift in weight one way or the other, and you are heading in a different direction, which can be exciting, or it can be deadly. Things seem a little more critical when we are moving at such a quick pace.

Churches are a bit like this as well. When you begin to sense the movement of the Holy Spirit, inevitably, we see a "cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1) that show up to move with us. We call this the Ekklesia, or the congregation. It is the community of believers, and when the community gathers together, that weight propels things along. When it is just us and the will of God, great things can happen, but when it is the whole community, the momentum is accelerated by exponential proportions.

If you are wondering why the movement moves so much more quickly with the community, it is actually very simple:

Many hands make light work. This is an obvious statement, but it remains true. At Crosswalk we have always said that Evangelism is not a program, rather, it is an orientation of the heart of each member of the church. When you bring one person into church, and the other 1000 people do as well, things can escalate quickly. Fun happens in numbers. Have you ever been

at a restaurant and there is a big group of people having a great time? When you see them, it is often that we would like to hang out with them. When new people come into a space where there is joy, laughter, fun, and intention, they want to be a part of it. We see this clearly in Acts chapter 2: 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Where two or three are gathered, the Holy Spirit is present. You don't need a ton of people around, but you do need at least the beginnings of a community. When you have that, you begin to see things happen that you didn't expect. You begin to hear the sacred echo in ways you weren't expecting.

Who is your community? And how do you gather?

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How do you find yourselves creating a space that other people want to inhabit with you?

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Have you ever felt the quickening of the Holy Spirit in what you have undertaken? How did it make you feel? Do you want to feel this in your life, community, and church?

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DAY 16

Community can be a blessing, and usually is. But when we create a community of belonging we are making a commitment to be together with people that we might not agree with, that we might now normally hang out with, and that we might not necessarily cross paths with in our daily lives. However, because of this, there is a great deal of energy that can be created through the connecting of opposite poles.

Think about it. The car in your battery is a just a really heavy little box until you connect the negative and positive poles. Once you do that, you have some pretty impressive power. Enough to start an engine, and surely enough to start a fire! The energy is dormant until it is imbued with life from this connection. When this happens, things get interesting, and things begin to happen. Momentum begins to be built by the engine as it thrusts forward and as the car gets up to speed, it becomes clear that without the battery, things just wouldn't have been moving at all.

We have a tendency to want to surround ourselves with people who think and act and feel like us. And there is certainly nothing wrong with this. But every once in a while, it probably pays dividends to be around some people who are different from us, think differently, and even think in ways that we wouldn't. While it can be uncomfortable, a community of belonging has to make space for others.

This means that we have to listen well to one another. We have to create space for differences, and we still have to hold on to our values. In the diversity of the community comes an amazing tapestry of colors and information and thoughts. These things together help to sustain that momentum that we are all searching for and trying to maintain.

But the danger is the fire. Sometimes we become bare wires with one another and sparks can fly. The community of belonging needs to be able to create a safe space where nothing else will catch fire in these moments. We have to be unified, while being different, and really, only God can do that.

Why do we need to be unified? It is what we are called to: "There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:4-6).

So we need to make sure we understand that there is an organizing principle that we all hold to. This is the idea that Christ is all and over all. That when we come together, from our diverse backgrounds and cultures, our different histories and trajectories, we still understand that it is by Christ we have been called and for Christ that we go forth. The accelerant that Christ is for our communities is a spectacular thing. It can burn hot and burn out, or it can burn and sustain itself. When we understand where the fuel for the fire is coming from, from Christ and him crucified and resurrected, then we begin to live lives in community in a different way than we had before. We begin to remember that the church is not just for us, but for those who will know Christ soon.

Have you ever been in a community of belonging before?

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What does it take to maintain what you believe, but also make room for those who might disagree?

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How can we create the space in our communities for dissenting voices?

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DAY 17

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. When the Author of Hebrews speaks about a "cloud of witnesses", he is talking about those who are your cheerleaders, who want you to do well, who are in your corner and who have your back. Without these people around you, it feels like you are fighting your battles all alone. Too many of us have gone on for too long thinking that we are the only ones that feel a certain way, or the only ones that have been here before. The truth is, you are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses.

Back in 2011, a few of us got together for what became known as The ONE Project. While just a few of us had met a few months before, in Denver, there was only 4 other people than myself that I thought really understood what I was feeling about the church, about my calling, and about Jesus. While it had been a cathartic moment for me and a few friends, when we gathered together in Atlanta, with 173 or so of us, I didn't really know what to expect. I wasn't sure if there was anyone else who really felt the same way that we did, and if they were, would they share?

Most everyone came because of a personal invitation. There wasn't a bunch of lights, no cameras; there was just a bunch of people sitting at tables in a room with a small stage. They decided to have me go first, to begin the session. I should have said no. And while I don't really get too nervous when I speak anymore, I was certainly anxious that day.

As I stood up on the little stage to speak, I looked around and realized that most of these people were people I had done ministry with over the years. They were people who knew me, who I believed loved me, and who had supported me. I wasn't speaking to a hostile room of people, waiting to be entertained. Rather, I was speaking to those who I could already call my "cloud of witnesses."

I stood up, and as I began to speak I could immediately see people nodding their heads in agreement with what I had prepared. It didn't take long for the room to be with me, not due to any speaking prowess I might have had, but because they were with me, they were agreeing and empathizing with the words God had placed on my heart.

In those first few moments, we all decided that we would be community for one another, and we have remained so to this day. It was a beautiful and frightening moment for us all. But I am eternally grateful for those who came, who connected, and who became my cloud. They have gotten me through a great deal in my life and ministry.

Who are your "Cloud of Witnesses?"

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Was there a time in your life when you were able to clearly know who they were and where you could find them?

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Is it time to find your cheerleaders who will help you build momentum in the call that God has placed on your heart?

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DAY 18

Communities help to build, keep, and guide momentum in a few different ways.

Building it: First of all, how do you build momentum? Sadly, it doesn't come easily or quickly. In his #1 best seller, *Good to Great*, author and researcher Jim Collins describes building momentum in an organization. He tells readers to imagine pushing a big, heavy metal flywheel. Lots of energy is exerted, yet because of its great weight, the flywheel only moves a few inches. But with repeated, consistent pushing, the flywheel slowly begins to move, and gain momentum. "Each turn of the flywheel builds upon work done earlier, compounding...invested effort," says Collins. "Then at some point – breakthrough!" He says that momentum will finally kick in, in your favor. The heavy weight now begins working for you.

Collins notes that it is never one big push that brings the momentum, but "all of them added together in an overall accumulation of effort applied in a consistent direction." The key word in building momentum in ministry is perseverance. Never give up on the Biblical principles and passion God gave you. Keep at it, like pushing on the flywheel.

This is what happens when we aggregate our efforts in community. For the first few months it felt to me like I was preaching the same sermon over and over again. That was my turn to work the small flywheel for Crosswalk. I spoke of what we would be, how we would be it, showed them from scripture the precedents, and then explained how it would work in our setting. I thought either I was being redundant or people just weren't listening very well.

Then it happened! I was in the lobby and I saw one of our greeters say hello to someone who was new. The person asked a question that was essentially; "what is this church all about?" The greeter answered the question using words they had finally sunk in beyond the head and into the heart. They weren't my words, but they were a version of what God had placed on my heart. It was a wonderful moment for me, and the person listening seemed to really connect

with the language that the greeter used! I couldn't have been happier.

That aggregate turning of the flywheel creates momentum in ways that we don't really even know. It might not be for a while, but eventually, it will happen. However, the word mentioned before was perseverance, and I still believe that to be a very important word for us to use when it comes to seeing the calling that God has placed upon us becoming a reality. We are blessed to be able to keep turning the flywheel, even if it doesn't seem to be making any difference. I guarantee you that it does make a difference, and eventually, you will see a breakthrough. With many of us turning the wheel, we can get to that breakthrough of momentum even that much quicker!

What flywheel have you been turning that seems like it will never catch on?

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How can the people around catch that same vision?

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What do you think you can do in order to bring others into your experience? Never underestimate the simple power of invitation!

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DAY 19

Once you've built momentum, how do you keep it? The key word here is passion. Passion must motivate through the mundane. Your God-ordained determination needs to keep your people inspired through the routine of ministry. So continually cast and recast vision.

Well-known pastor and author Bill Hybels says that it's relatively easy to keep people motivated near the starting line. You've cast a crystal-clear vision and people are naturally excited. They can see it. And it's also pretty easy to keep people motivated near the finish line, when the reality of the vision is within sight. But the toughest time to maintain momentum is in the middle. That's when the vision is most vulnerable, says Hybels. He encourages leaders to do their best to cast vision and inspire in the middle of the process. This will help keep momentum going. So how do you connect people's passion to the mission you want to see fulfilled when church often seems like we are always in the middle of the process? As you saw in the text from yesterday (Hebrews 12:1) you know that Paul is talking about running a good race. The middle of the race is the hardest part.

When I was a freshman in high school I joined the cross country team. I am not sure why I did this, I don't love running, I never really have. I guess I thought it would be good for me to get in shape for basketball season, which I was really excited about. I made the team, by the skin of my teeth and because we were a small school that needed everyone who tried out! I ended up becoming a decent runner, but nothing to write home about, that's for sure!

My coach had a good system for us to keep us motivated as we ran the longer distances. He would tell us; "just pick a landmark up ahead and run to that! You don't have to think about the finish line, just keep moving the line you need to get to ahead by a few hundred yards and then you will eventually get to the end. Honestly, at first I thought it was a stupid system, as I felt like I was never getting to really end. However, what I began to realize is that I could have a ton of little wins on my way to making it to the ultimate finish line. It took a while for

this to sink in, but when it did, things got easier. We can think about church in the same way. Find way markers that will allow you little wins in your work until the day that Jesus returns and says "well done, my good and faithful servant." It may be a long time coming, but we can see the little wins that we have as we move forward in the work that God has given us. That also keeps the passion going.

We can't always take on the big pieces, but we can always get little wins that make a big difference in keeping our focus, passion, and mission on what God would have us do. If we don't, it is easy to experience mission drift, and then we get distracted and discouraged.

Have you ever experienced "mission drift"?

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Do some tasks just seem too big to make happen? What do you find yourself in that situation?

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How can you cut up what God has asked you to do so you can experience little wins over time?

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DAY 20

The natural tendency for something with lots of momentum is for it to go off track. If a train is moving with too much momentum and it hits a curve, it will derail, and cause mass destruction. The key word here is focus. Churches and ministries that have lots of momentum need well-defined, sturdy tracks to guide them and prevent “sideways momentum.” Sideways momentum is devoured by that big, time consuming, energy sucking project or ministry that many churches spend loads of organizational energy on, yet does little to accomplish the mission. Sure, it keeps staff and volunteers busy, but does it bear fruit? Does it move people to the desired destination?

So create tracks that will help define and guide your ministry. These tracks should always point to completing your mission and fulfilling your purpose. Well defined boundaries will preserve organizational energy and keep your ministry moving in the right direction.

What tracks are you currently on that are helping the momentum stay on track? Where are you currently serving in church or at another place? How is God building that momentum, and how are you staying away from the mission drift we talked about yesterday? How are you finding focus in the work that God has for you to do?

It is easy to get sidetracked. In fact, it seems like everything has been designed to knock us off track, to keep us from focusing, and to turn our attention away from the task at hand. While we often find ourselves “multi-tasking”, are we really just being distracted? And how effective are we when we are when we are being pulled in so many different directions? Is there something that you currently have in your practice that helps you not to get distracted?

The Apostle Paul, when he wrote to Corinth, reminded those that were there that when he was present he “resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” (1 Corinthians 2:2) And in this way he would not be distracted and run off course, or fall off the tracks that God had put him on.

There was little that he could focus on beside Jesus, and little that he found as rewarding as Jesus to speak about as well. For Paul, the organizing principle in his life was Jesus, crucified and resurrected.

What is the organizing principle in your life?

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How do you stay on the tracks that keep you close to God and his call in your life?

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What can the community do to keep you focused on that organizing principle?

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## DAY 21

## Introduction:

The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

OPEN

How does the community help to build, grow, and maintain momentum in your life? We were never built to do life alone, and we certainly weren't built to do faith alone. Your community of belonging matters, and it matters to the pace and effectiveness of the call that God has put on your life. Without the community, it is a long uphill battle, and it is deeply frustrating. However, the people around you, family, faith community, and even co-workers can help accelerate your ability to effectively make that call into a reality.

## HEAD

This week we talked about how we build, grow, and maintain our momentum through community. Scripture speaks about community in many different ways. But the exegesis of the 1st century church that we find in Acts 2:42-47 is perhaps the most profound explanation of what a faith community can actually be. Here it is:

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

These texts bring us to an understanding that there are many aspects of community, but they are all done together, in order to accelerate the power of God in the world. This is the Holy Spirit Momentum working through the community of Christ.

## HEART

Do you feel lonely? Worse, do you feel lonely at church? Do you feel like even though there are a great many people around you, you are still alone in trying to get done what God has asked you to do? We all feel this way at times, and it is important to know that you are not alone, you are never alone when it comes to the family of God. Perhaps you are still a little new to the community, perhaps you need to be the firestarter that begins the conversations, or perhaps people are just not used to being in relationships with those who they go to church and fellowship with. It is time to break that down and figure out what you can do!

## HANDS

“Many hands make light work”. We know this to be true, but we also know that finding the right work, the right people and the right pacing can be hard. There is so much to do, and with the right momentum, the right tools, and the right people, so incredibly much can get done. Our job is to constantly be on the lookout for those who resonate with our calling, who want to pitch in, and who can be held accountable in order to do this work in an excellent way. Perhaps the best thing we can do is begin with prayer in order to help us have clarity in the kind of people we are looking for. Make it a moment today, when you can stop and pray for partners who will help us fulfill the work that God has for us.

[illegible]



DAY 22

Hebrews 12:1 . let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.

Have you ever been late for an airplane, and while you are running through the airport, you are hindered by the bags you are carrying or dragging behind you? Unfortunately, this happens to me more than I would like to admit. It is not because I am late for my flights by any fault of my own. When I have to leave on a flight I am almost always there with a few hours to spare.

This is also why I make sure I have lounge access when I can!

But it usually happens when a plane is delayed for whatever reason. When this happens, I find myself hustling through the airport as quickly as I can. I have some great bags that I take with me, but they are still heavy, and I still have to be careful. While I have never missed a flight when I have had to run, I certainly have had some pretty close calls.

The author of the book of Hebrews is telling us that we have to let much of that baggage go, if we can. And we should be able to. We have a tendency to bring all our old baggage into our new lives, when it is not necessary. I wonder if we do it because we are just comfortable with the old, broken things in our lives.

If you have ever sold a house, you know that you have to fix things up when you are finally selling it. Things that you have lived with forever have to be fixed, and when you begin to look at that old house through the lenses of the new owners, you realize that alot needs fixing, and when you fix it, you also realize that it wasn't that hard to fix afterall. I am always amazed at how little time, but solid focus it takes, in order to get the house ready for the new owners.

In the same way, we need to begin to look at our lives through the eyes of the new owner. And you do truly have a new owner, his name is Jesus. He is about to take over your life, and you need to do a little work to make sure you don't have to take that old baggage, those old and broken things that you carry around. You can finally let them go.

The truth is, when you let go of that baggage, when you seek God's forgiveness and forgive yourself, you will realize that your load is much lighter, and your speed will pick up. Momentum happens when we are allowed to use speed and alacrity to become the words of the day and the desire of our hearts. Without the ability to lose some of those things that hinder us, we can never get the speed we need to create the momentum that needs to happen to fuel our own speed.

What do you need to let go of that is hindering you?

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When was the last time you sought forgiveness from God and for yourself?

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What can the community you surround yourself do to help make your load lighter?

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DAY 23

12:1 " . . . And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,

Running is all about momentum. But everyone knows that, I am sure. Maybe not the running that much of us do on a daily basis. Honestly, there is not a great deal of momentum involved when I go out and do a few miles. There is definitely no momentum when I take my two dogs out with me. I don't run, I can barely walk. It basically is me waiting around on dogs that are much too interested in sniffing the ground, peeing where they can, and generally making a big embarrassment of themselves when there are other dogs around.

But if you have ever watched a 100 meter dash, you know that the movement of the runners arms creates a particular kind of momentum. "While, in all forms of running, the primary function of the upper body is to "take up" reaction to the eccentric leg drive, "counter-balancing" and "following" leg action, in sprinting particularly, the arms may be used to spur on the legs, which speed up and consequently add to their horizontal component of drive; for action and reaction are interchangeable factors." (The Mechanics of Athletics by Geoffrey Dyson)

While that may have sounded like a bit of gobble-gook, I guess what it means is that the arms can drive the legs, and the opposite is true as well. This synchronization is important, especially for sprinters who seem to drive ahead with their arm movements. The momentum comes from all parts of the body, just like it does for a community of believers that is seeking to create a path for the work of God.

The momentum drives us to the end of the race. In a 100 yard dash, you can see the end from the very beginning. This is much more difficult when it comes to marathons, where you can't see the ending. However, the arms are just as important in a marathon, although it takes consistency to make the difference. Even the difference in body types from sprinters to marathon runners is fascinating! One is muscled, and the other is much more lean. While they are different, their outcome is the same; the Finish Line!

We run the race that God has placed before us in order to accomplish the goals that he has for us. We do this not for the prize, because the prize is the ability to run the race with God, not just for God. The idea that the prize is only at the end means that we forget that the whole race is a time for us to commune with God, to feel his presence, and to connect with his love for us. While a prize would be great, we run because we love him, not only for a reward.

What are you running for today?

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How are you using everything that you have in order to build momentum?

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Is there a particular race that you need to run today? What is it, and can you see the finish line?

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I hate carrying my bags with me on flights. I do it, because I dislike waiting for my baggage even more. But there was this one flight I took a few years ago that might have been the best flight I've ever taken. We were in Finland for a ONE project event, and I got a call from the Danish Union president who wanted to have a conversation with me about a possible church plant in the city of Copenhagen. I told him that I was in Finland for a few extra days if he wanted to fly me over to Denmark. He said he would buy me a ticket for a morning arrival and an evening departure, all I had to do was get on the plane! It was the first and last time that I flew with nothing on me but my Passport and wallet. It was sort of amazing. Watching everyone trudging down the walkways with baggage and carry-ons, and I had nothing in my hands. It was beautiful.

However, the strange part was that I felt the whole time like I was missing something. It is so amazing how we become so used to carrying all that baggage that hinders us that we feel like we are at a loss without it. But I can tell you from experience that it was the best feeling. It was freedom, and lightness, and the trip was super easy because of it.

While we have been talking a lot about the burdens that we carry that hinder us on our journeys, we reiterate rate this again and again because we have a savior who has told us: "Then Jesus said, 'Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.'" Matthew 11:28 (NLT)

Because of this promise, we are to remind ourselves that we can lay those burdens down again and again. It is not a one-and-done-deal. It is something that has been promised to us and it is a recurring promise that we can lean on in times when it feels like that baggage is getting heavier and heavier.

As well, you have to remember that we often pick the baggage that we have left with Jesus back up, and that is on us. We have a tendency to go back to what we have done time and time again because it has been comfortable for us.

That baggage we carry becomes familiar and it becomes what we are comfortable carrying. We almost feel like we are naked without the comfort of that baggage, no matter how much it weighs us down.

The good news is that regardless of how we feel about that baggage, Jesus is willing to carry it for us. Actually, I think that is the wrong language, I think that Jesus doesn't carry it for us, I think that Jesus gets rid of it for us.

Have you ever needed someone to come in and help you get rid of stuff from your house because they don't have the same kind of attachment to it that you do? Those people are necessary in our lives or else we would keep carrying around everything that we ever acquired. The crazy thing is that when we let it go, we don't even really think about much of it again. Make sure you surround yourself with people who can help you with this, and make sure you know that Jesus is willing to take over what is burdening you.

What is burdening you today?

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Do you have that friend who helps you get rid of things?

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How can you help someone get rid of the things they carry in their lives?

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DAY 25

What is a roadblock that you might have for creating momentum in your life?

Roadblocks are a pain. Especially when your GPS doesn't show them to you as you are on your way somewhere. I think we have all been in a situation where we were on track to getting somewhere, and there was a roadblock that your GPS system didn't tell you about. Usually, the detour is not too bad, but every once in a while, it might be pretty significant.

I can remember one time, I was driving around in New York City, which we could argue was a bad idea to begin with! We were trying to get somewhere, I can't even remember where, but there was a road blockage. We tried to go around, but it turned out the President of the United States was in town and was traveling through Manhattan. It was a mess. We were probably stuck in traffic for a solid 4 hours before we could get around, or they might have opened the road back up, I'm not even sure. It was frustrating, to say the least.

However, we have been told that things won't always go as planned in our lives. In John 15:18 It states: "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first." So we should not be surprised when things get in our way, when there are detours, or even when people we think should be helping us will stand in our way.

That last one is the hardest one if you ask me. People who are supposed to be in your corner seem to make things worse at times. They don't understand your calling, they don't understand that they are standing in the way of the momentum that God is creating for you. They will be roadblocks, and they will be the ones that make you question your calling the most. Why do they do this? I have a few ideas on that. . .

They do it because they are scared things are going to change between you and them. They are not on the same journey you are on, and often, we don't invite our friends as we don't think they will understand what we are going through. Make sure to always invite them along for the journey.

I think they may not understand how we are making the decisions we are making. Sometimes, when God calls us we make decisions that don't make sense to the people around us. That is okay, but make sure you take the time to explain to them your new rubric for making decisions in the kingdom of God.

They are simply not in the same place you are spiritually. And that is okay. Always invite, always be kind, always know that they are on their own journey, and your job is to help curve their orbits around Jesus just a little closer each time you are in contact with them.

We can always get around roadblocks, the destination is not necessarily a linear trajectory. We will have roadblocks, detours, avalanches, mistakes, and wrong turns. The good news is that God is with us the whole time, and he knows the way. He's been there before, so the road is easy to see.

Have you ever had someone close to you become a roadblock to what God is calling you to do?

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How can you circumvent these issues?

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What is the best thing you can do when a person stands in your way?

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DAY 26

Have you ever researched how they design cars? It's pretty fascinating. The thing that really is amazing to me is when they begin to do the wind tunnel tests on vehicles.

Here is a little video you might be interested in to see one of these tests.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebITb6zs-Lqs>)

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vVim-m3y4lg>)

I don't know a great deal about cars, but after watching these videos, it is pretty clear that there is a lot of thought and design that goes into them so there is the least amount of drag possible.

What is Drag? It is the obstructing force acting on a body, such as a car, moving through a fluid, such as air, parallel and opposite to the direction of motion.

So the question today is a simple one, what causes you drag in your life? This is different from carrying baggage. These are the things that don't seem like they would slow you down, but as your momentum increases, so does the weight of the drag that you are fighting. It is not simply heavy and burdensome things, rather, it is the way you design your work to eliminate the drag of everyday living.

When you see those cars, you realize that they are incredibly fast, but they are designed specifically for that reason. You couldn't help your friend move in a car like that, but you sure can get to where you are going in the least amount of time. When they put the smoke on top of the car, you can really begin to see where the drag becomes an issue. And to be truthful, at 25 miles an hour, nothing is an issue, but at 200? Things get a little dicey.

We want to make sure that our calling is feeling the momentum that will push us to 200 miles per hour! But that means that we are going to have to make sure that we design these callings with the least amount of drag possible.

How do we do the work God is calling us to do? Are we intentional? Are we thoughtful? Do we move toward excellence? One of the things that has set Crosswalk apart, I believe, is that we have a constant mantra that we will become better next week in our execution of what God is calling us to do. Whether it is with our weekly free medical clinic, our worship services, VBS, youth, kids programming, preaching, or even greeting at the door, we are going to constantly be trying to design a better experience for the congregation, and for the visitor who might happen upon our door.

We have tried to create the least amount of drag that we can for the user experience. And when it works seamlessly, it is a beautiful thing. We don't want to do anything that will hinder the process of someone becoming familiar with the God that loves them dearly. And so we work at it. We do wind tunnel tests to see if people are really connecting with what we do.

My hope and desire for you is that you can spend some time designing how you want your calling to be designed in order for you to be able to feel that momentum, without the drag that so easily can slow us down.

What texts do you think speak to this particular issue?

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How have you designed your ministry/calling?

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What would be a key indicator that you have made some strides in your ministry?

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DAY 27

Every good gardener knows that the way to see continued and continuous growth in certain plants or flowers is to make sure that you prune them consistently. Many ministries have not been pruned in a very long time, if they ever have. John 15:2 states that “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.”

With this in mind, we need to take a look at our calling and ministry and see where we might be able to achieve better momentum and better growth by pruning. Now, this is hard, as we are not talking about simply branches, but people. Sometimes their hopes and dreams are just not going to come true. Sometimes, they got involved with very little time on their hands to make it happen, or they simply don't care. Perhaps they don't have the gifts and skills to make it happen for this ministry. Of course it doesn't mean they are bad people, and it doesn't mean that they can't be deeply useful for God in another context.

Pruning can be the hardest and best thing that we do in order to continue to build our ministries in the momentum that God has for them. We are prone to not wanting to tell someone no, to not firing people, and to not having honest conversations due to the fact that we are Christians, and Christians are supposed to be nice. We don't often see these conversations as being nice. And I guess they are not. However, they can be compassionate and honest.

Without the authenticity of real conversations, we sometimes hamper the work of God by not being willing to prune those branches that are not really producing fruit, or creating momentum.

I think the way that we have to treat everyone is that no one is disposable, but no one is irreplaceable, at least in the ministry context. I know this might sound harsh, but I also know that we have a lot of churches and ministry that are stuck in a rut, unable to grow, to move, or to harness the momentum that God has for them because of one or two difficult people, or people that have simply found focus somewhere

else. While these are difficult conversations, there are times when NOT having these conversations is worse than having them.

We have to remember that our goal is KINGDOM IMPACT. This can be done in the context of Church, ministry and of personal mission. Because of this, we sometimes have to make decisions that are difficult on an individual level, but better for the kingdom work that we have been given.

If you have ever been moved on from something you hoped would work out in church, you know how hard this can be. However, it might mean that you were freed to minister in another capacity that better fit your skills and your situation in life. Of course we know that God can use anyone, but there are times when God wants to find new places for you to minister. Above all, I want to thank everyone for hearing a call and trying to serve God in the best way possible.

Have you ever had to prune?

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Have you ever been pruned? How did it make you feel? Could it have been handled better? Did it turn out to be a blessing?

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How can you begin to audit your ministry to see if there is a place where pruning would be appropriate?

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Introduction:

The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

OPEN

What baggage do you carry that hinders your journey? This week we looked at part of Hebrews 12:1. . let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. We posed the idea that we all carry baggage that is difficult to carry and hampers us as we make our way toward the calling that God has for each of us. In our quest for momentum, we have to recognize that we are sometimes our own worst enemy when it comes to what we carry with us. As well, we spoke of how we design our ministries with the least drag, with the most ability to gain momentum, and we spoke of our ability to prune what needs to be pruned in order to continue to grow. It was a busy week, and it leaves us much to think about

HEAD

There are a great many different things we can think about. But perhaps the most important thing to put our minds to is how we are designing the ministries that God has called us to be involved in, and how we design them for momentum. Are they lithe, are they flexible, are they sleek and moveable? Or, have we created monoliths that cannot be moved, cannot grow, and create a sense of stasis in our churches and communities of belonging? What do you do with texts like: Luke 10 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two[a] others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. 2 He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. 3 Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. 4 Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. 5 "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' 6 If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not,

it will return to you. 7 Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

These texts speak of a ministry that is movable, that does not carry baggage along with it, and that is clear about its effectiveness. How can we put these principles into place in the work we have undertaken for Christ?

HEART

It is possible to feel that we are trying to approach ministry in a more businesslike fashion, and that seems to leave the heart of our ministry and calling behind. Nothing is further from the truth. In order to create and maintain effective ministry outlets, we have to use every part of our giftedness in order to create the most effective processes to bless people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In the end, the Gospel is transferred between two people. Ministries are meant to accelerate the opportunities that we have to share the Good News of Jesus Christ to all who we come in contact with, at the appropriate time in their lives. This is truly the Holy Spirit led as we build and design the systems of opportunity to share. How does this make you feel when you think about ministry in this way?

HANDS

In order to make these things a reality, it is good to whiteboard all your ideas. Whether you do it on an actual whiteboard, or if you do it on a piece of paper, spend some time today thinking about the process of shedding baggage that hinders, creating systems that allow other people to shed their baggage as well, and how you can design and develop ministries that draw people together and under the influence of Christ for no other reason than to create systems of opportunities to share the Good News that Jesus is Lord!

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Hebrews 12:1b. . . and the sin that so easily entangles.

Sin is a constant problem for most of us. The author of Hebrews mentions that it “so easily entangles.” Sin trips us up on our way to be effective ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not that we can’t be effective, even as sinners, rather, it is that we get tangled up in the mess that sin often creates in our lives. The hard part for us to often understand is that sin has no place in our lives anymore, because we have died to it. The book of Romans makes this clear time and time again, but nowhere more clearly than Romans 6.

Romans 6:11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

What I think is so great about this text is that it doesn’t just leave us in a state of death to sin, but rather reminds us that we are alive to God, through Jesus Christ. This is very much in line with the theology that the Apostle Paul espoused in all of his writings. While we are put to death with Christ through baptism, we are resurrected through the act of coming out of the water. Of course, this is symbolic, but it does have significant meaning for us. It means that we are able to live as if we have a risen savior and as if that sin no longer has mastery over us.

Now, that does not mean that we will not sin again. Obviously, we will still struggle with the sin that entangles us, but it no longer defines us. Nor is it to have victory in our lives anymore. Because God has forgiven us of this sin, so are we to move on from the focus on the sin in our lives, and we are to move on to focusing on the amazing work that our savior has given us to do.

There is beauty in all of this. It is the beauty of not having to carry that baggage of previous sin around, and not having to simply focus our lives on “not sinning” any more. To be truly freed from sin means that we are not having to focus on that sin anymore, and that we can let that focus of our lives go. Focusing on only “not sinning” is still giving sin mastery over our lives. We are to live lives that go beyond simply not sin-

ning. We are to live lives of purpose, of ministry, of calling. When we focus on these things, we begin to realize that sin matters little when we live for the victory of Christ on the Cross and Christ resurrected in our lives.

I know it almost seems wrong to say that sin doesn’t matter to our lives, but there is a kernel of truth in that. If God has forgiven us of it and has given us a calling, why would we return to a focus on that sin? God does not want sin to have that much real estate in our heads and hearts, rather, he wants us to clear the way to fill our hearts with ministry, calling, and hope. So we need to not go back to where our focus is sin.

Sin trips us up, it entangles us, as the text says. But if we are focused on what God has called us to, their is truly very little time for sin to take hold in our lives. We will make mistakes, we will fall into bad habits, but with forgiveness, we know these things will not define us, they will not create a lasting impression on us, they are the difficult parts of the journey that we have to go through as well.

How can you let go of the sin that entangles you?

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Is there a particular sin that you are having a hard time moving on from? What can you do to change your habits so it won’t be part of your life anymore?

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Does victory over sin mean you have to stop all sin, or does it mean that Christ has taken care of that for you?

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DAY 30

ROMANS 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.<sup>13</sup> Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. <sup>14</sup> For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

As we are continuing our discussion of the sin that entangles us, we continue to read from the 6th chapter of the book of Romans. Paul is making the argument that while Christ has given us victory over sin, we are not to simply allow it to reign in our mortal bodies. We are to move on from the more venal ways of living, and move our minds into the ministry that Christ has given us to do.

This is why we always say that we were not “Saved to sit,” rather, we are “Saved to be sent.” This allows us to keep our minds, our hearts, and our bodies focused on what Christ has for us next. It is often too easy to allow ourselves to wallow in the past, in our mistakes, and in our frustrations, rather than to live in the future that God has created for us and has called us to. When we allow ourselves to pine after that which we were rather than to lean into what we are becoming, we have a tendency to move backwards and not forward in Christ.

In verse 14 we are told that “sin shall no longer be our master.” That means, we are no longer bound to the sin that defined us for so long. It entangled us, and it stays with us if we do not shed that baggage.

I think of it like how I think of getting a new computer. Apple always gives the option to plug in your new computer into the old one and transfer everything from the old computer to the new. It is a pretty awesome feature for transferring files from the old to the new.

However, I never do this! All of my old files that I need are on the cloud and can be accessed. However, I don't want the old computer and its

random junk that it acquires to be transferred to my new computer. Inevitably, I will end up making some mistakes with my new computer and load something I shouldn't, but I don't want to bring all the old viruses to the new computer.

When my father died, I went through his computers and was amazed by a few things. First of all, the sheer number of articles, papers, presentations, and class notes he had was overwhelming. He was truly a prolific writer and influencer.

The second thing I realized is that he had been transferring old files and old software for the last 10 years. In 2017 he was still transferring software from his Palm Pilot (that's right, early 2000's) from one computer to the next. He brought his old baggage to the new operating systems, and they didn't even work anymore!

We are in danger of doing this with our lives when we can't let go of that which we were saved from!

When you get a new computer, how do you set it up? Do you bring old software to new operating systems?

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How can you be sure that God has forgiven you, and that you are no longer a slave to sin?

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What is the greatest thing that God has given you through his forgiveness?

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Romans 6:15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! 16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

When it comes to a discussion of sin, staying in Romans chapter 6 is an important thing to do. This portion of the chapter leads us to understand that we are truly not governed by sin any longer, and we have given our allegiance to a new master, and that master is Christ and his righteousness.

Righteousness is an interesting thing. We have a tendency to think it is something that we work toward, in order to get some sort of reward (heaven). However, the argument that Paul has so thoroughly made is that Christ's righteousness is imbued into us through his sacrifice on the Cross and our acceptance of his grace. We are given this gift out of his deep love for us, and it is completely available to us. All we need to do is accept the gift of grace and his righteousness is given to us as well.

It is that simple, and that makes it hard to believe. We always think that harder must mean it is better. However, in regards to our salvation we are given this gift without regard to our deserving or how hard we work for it. When this is the case, we assume that it will be easy for us to take it for granted. But the opposite is true. When we recognize what a massive gift we have been given, how our new master is not death but life, we are hard-pressed to take it for granted.

I believe we take it for granted when we stop focusing on the amazing gift that it is and we begin to think that either 1) we deserve it, or 2) we have to earn it. Neither of those things are

true. But the moment we begin to navel-gaze, and focus on ourselves is the moment we begin to devalue the gift and therefore begin to take it for granted.

This is why it is important for us to be intentional about the work that God has given us. It should take up our mental real estate, and it should create in us a quickening of our hearts as we think about the effectiveness we can have for the gospel.

I have a friend who loves to put together those massive lego kits. I'm talking about the Ferrari's and the Lamborghini's. Those kits have thousands of tiny pieces. Amazingly, this friend does these kits in order to relax! I can't imagine, my palms sweat just thinking about it. The truth is, his heart is quickened when he thinks about this project and how it will come to fruition.

We can have that same sort of reaction when we realize what Christ has done for us, that we are no longer slaves to sin, but under the auspices of Jesus, and that he has a project, a ministry, a work for us to do. This is when we begin to live kingdom lives that are focused on the work and ministry that God has given us. Sin has no place in these spaces because there simply isn't room for sin any longer. And that is a great place to be!

Is there a project/hobby that you love? Can you incorporate that into your ministry?

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How can you focus on your ministry and not your former life of sin?

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Is it possible to give every part of yourself over to your new master? If so, how can you do it?

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## DAY 32

John 8:36 So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.

I love this promise. But I don't know if we really believe it. I don't know if we really live it.

My youngest is about to get his driver's license. In fact, by the time you read this, he should have it. I can remember getting my license and the sense of freedom that comes with it. When I got home from my test, license in hand, I took my little Volkswagen Jetta down to a fundraiser that my school was doing at a local yogurt shop. This was the 80's so TCBY's was a thing. (look it up if you don't know what that is!). I remember pulling up in all of my 16 year old cool, no one else in the car but me, and I stalled the engine in front of all my friends! (I know some of you may be confused, but at that point we could still by cars that were manual, so they had to be shifted with a clutch)

Needless to say, I was embarrassed, and was made fun of appropriately. However, that incident could not dampen my excitement at the freedom I had obtained by getting my license. I am so looking forward to seeing that same sense of freedom on my youngest child's face in the next few months. It's pretty exciting.

Are we as excited about the freedom we receive in Christ? Truly, that freedom should be all the accelerant that we need in order to live our lives in a different way for Christ. We are so lucky to be able to have a God who is willing to give us this kind of freedom. Why do you think we go back to living in chains whenever we can? Where is the momentum in that?

There are not a lot of places or things that offer true freedom. Perhaps there are some places in the world where you feel truly free. My place is Africa, in the Masa Mara. There, it feels as if we are so far away from everything that we are not held by anyone's laws, and we are free to do the things that we love to do. To run, to see nature at its best, to be kind.

I guess that is part of the equation; what do you want to do with your freedom? The question of

freedom always come with the caveat: Free to do what?

So what will you do with your newfound freedom in Christ? I have heard some preachers lately say that their freedom means that sin cannot have a hold on them anymore. They even say that their sin is what makes their freedom make so much sense. And while I understand their sentiment we need to be careful. Paul asks the question: Should we sin more so that grace may increase? (Romans 5:20)

Paul's answer to this is a hearty "hell no!" And yes, he uses a curse to make his point. Of course not, it is often translated. To sin more in order to prove the power of grace is a fool's errand, and it is often a justification for the sin that people have committed. While forgiveness is free, the wages of sin are not. And while we are saved from death through the grace of Jesus Christ, the damage that sin does to us is all too real and prevalent in the world. We should never use grace as a means to justify sin. Rather, grace is the salvation from sin, and it should humble us, not make us arrogant in our previous sin!

Have you ever had your sin lead to arrogance? Or your forgiveness?

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What can we do with our freedom? Make a list and share it with others.

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How can we encourage one another in the freedom that Christ has granted us?

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But, as it is written, What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love Him. These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

(1 Corinthians 2:9-12)

So how do we understand the gift that God has given us through his grace? It is by the working of the Holy Spirit that we are able to even comprehend the freedom and joy that God has given us. This is why there is an admonition to us not to set ourselves again under the yoke of slavery to sin.

When we sin, we are allowing ourselves to be pulled away from the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We are allowing our focus to change, and we find ourselves becoming narcissistic and selfish in the way that we live. The Holy Spirit keeps our focus on the work that God has for us, it allows us to remain in Christ and not be distracted.

We live lives that are so distracted most of the time. Whether it is with emails, text messages, entertainment, or what have you, something is always grabbing our attention, and focus remains very difficult. This is where the Holy Spirit can really work in our lives. But this takes time to focus on what the Spirit is doing and what it is showing us about God's grace and goodness and mercy in our lives.

Have you ever fallen into a book that was so compelling you didn't want to put it down? I have had that happen a few times in my life. One of those books was *Into Thin Air*, by John Krakauer. I picked it up and read it all night until I finished it the next morning. I didn't eat, I didn't sleep, and I didn't even talk to anyone. I just wanted to read that book.

So it can be with the work and revelation of the Holy Spirit in our lives. If we wake up in expectation and awe of what God is going to do with our freedom, with our lives, and with our ministry, we will see the exponential growth that God has for us come to fruition. I really believe this to be true. We just don't look around to see what God is really doing most of the time, and that is because we are often distracted.

How can you focus on what the Holy Spirit is revealing to you today?

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Has God ever given you any insight to the way your freedom is to be used?

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What can you get rid of in your life to create space to hear the Holy Spirit?

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Freedom in Christ

5 So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.

I have mentioned this text before, but we want to delve into it a little deeper today if we can. Paul was writing in Greek to Gentiles living in Galatia. The word he uses, *eleutheria*, means "liberty" or "freedom," according to the New American Standard Bible. *Eleutheria* comes from the Greek word *eleutheros*, which according to Strong's Concordance means "free, i.e., not a slave or not under restraint." As Paul goes on in that passage to indicate we should stand firm and not allow ourselves to be burdened by the yoke of slavery, this meaning appears to be clear.

In Christ, Paul is saying, in essence, we have freedom, so we should never again be bound or chained by the ropes or other structures that once held us tight. It means that we have been freed FROM something, as well as having been freed FOR something.

What are you freed FROM?

But what is Paul referring to by "yoke of slavery"? The word "yoke" in Greek is *yugos*, which is used to describe the means by which oxen or other work animals were bound together and forced to carry heavy loads.

Farmers and other livestock workers often put a wooden pole over two work animals, usually curved to fit around their necks, so the two could be fashioned into one unit, unified so together they could pull their loads evenly and efficiently.

In Scripture, the term "yoke" is often used as a metaphor for any bondage God's people endured. For instance, in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, and elsewhere in the Old Testament, God reminds His people He has delivered them from their former captors, the Egyptians.

The Egyptians had placed a yoke upon them, but they are not yoked together anymore. As God proclaims in Leviticus 26:13 "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt so that you would no longer be slaves to the Egyptians; I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with heads held high."

But in the New Testament, this yoke of slavery typically refers to the bondage God's people were in before Jesus Christ came and laid the path to salvation through His death on the cross – the bondage of sin and God's Law.

What are you freed FOR?

That is simple. You are freed for the work that God has given you. Of course, we know that in some respect it should include "going into all the world. . ." Matthew 28:19-20, or the great co-mission. But you should also know that this doesn't mean jumping on a plane and ending up somewhere you have never been before. It actually means that we are to witness with our with-ness to those we are around. We are to live this life Christ has given us in season and out of season, in order for us to be able to fulfill the sending that he has given us as we are saved through faith in Christ.

What have you been saved from?

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What have you been saved for?

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How can you make your With-ness your Wit-ness to those around you?

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## DAY 35

### Introduction:

The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

### OPEN

This week was about freedom that leads to momentum. It was about moving on from the sin that we were saved from and living in the freedom that Christ affords us through his grace and death on the cross. Through his resurrection we have been given all things, and the Holy Spirit reminds us of all of this as he reveals what Christ would have us do in this world. It is a tall order, to be sure, but we are all up to the task if we have faith, stay focused, and breathe in the breath of God.

### HEAD

A seminal text from this week is: Galatians 5:1 So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.

This text has always been important to me in that it reminds us that we are not to go back to the way things were before. For some reason, as Christians we believe that we are saved by the grace of Jesus Christ, but then we go right back to living as if we were never saved at all. We don't allow freedom to win the day, rather, we go back to worrying about our sin, and we become selfish and narcissistic once again in the way we live. We need to agree that God's grace is sufficient for us, and in this truth we need to find our freedom. When we finally do this, we are freed to do the work that God has called us to. As well, we can build momentum because we are not constantly looking back from where we came. We can simply move forward in the grace that has been given to us each and every day!

### HEART

Why is it so hard to grasp this truth? Is it because we are so used to failing, so used to falling short? This is why we need the grace of Jesus to get us through. We find ourselves working so hard to be approved of by a God who has already given us everything we need, when we weren't even his friends, in order for us to move ahead in momentum and grace and find the work that he would have us do. We don't always "feel" saved, but that really shouldn't have anything to do with it at times. We are saved, that is a promise and a fact, and it does not disappoint. How can we find the truth in these promises and live by them? How can we encourage one another to live in the reality that is the grace of Jesus Christ?

### HANDS

In order to make these truths real, we have to live these truths out in our lives. We have to find a way to share these truths, this freedom, and this grace. We have to live differently than we did before we met Jesus, and we have to accelerate the way people understand these truths as well.

One of the best ways to do this is to have intentional and crucial conversations with people about why you believe what you believe. However, you cannot force these conversations. Rather, to have them once people have recognized that you live differently than other people they have met will be the best way to do this. So, in essence, we have to begin by living differently, by creating the space in our lives that allows for people to see the difference in the way that we have chosen to live our lives. If you do that, there may be a moment when you get to share the impetus for such different living.

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1 Corinthians 2:1 When I first came to you, dear brothers and sisters, I didn't use lofty words and impressive wisdom to tell you God's secret plan. This week, we will be thinking and learning about how you focus your momentum, and what we should be focusing our momentum on. Taking a look at another Pauline Epistle, the book of 1st Corinthians, we will see what the Apostle Paul thought was the best way to maintain the momentum that his understanding of the Gospel led him to.

We can see from this first phrase that Paul was not interested in impressing the Corinthians with his knowledge of scripture, or his homiletic ability. He was not trying to put on "airs" as it used to be said. He was more interested in introducing the Corinthians to the person who had saved him. Paul was not impressed by much, but he was deeply impressed by the person of Jesus Christ and had committed his life to following up on the work that he was called to do for Jesus.

However, his approach was not to overwhelm the Corinthians with sparkling language, with big words, or with too much theological conversation. Rather, he had decided that to keep up the momentum that was granted to him by the Holy Spirit, he would simply keep introducing them to Jesus.

This is not a novel approach, in fact, this is probably the best thing that we can all do. Rather than try to get fancy in the way that we talk about God, the best way to introduce people to Jesus is like introducing him to them as your best friend.

I always loved mafia movies when someone would be introduced as a "friend of ours. . ." This meant that you were being vouched for by someone who was "connected." That someone had our back and wanted to introduce us to the rest of the crew. Now, I understand that we shouldn't want to be involved in organized crime, but I loved that idea of being an insider in a group of people. This is what happens when you introduce someone to Jesus. You are vouching for both Jesus and for them and let-

ting them know that they might be able to be in a great group together.

Maybe not the best example, but you get my meaning. We are looking for ways, like Paul, to introduce people to Jesus, but not to overwhelm them with every single thing they will come to know in time. Paul figured that building momentum was best when keeping the message simple, not giving them too much baggage, and allowing the rocket fuel that is the message of the Good news to ignite in their lives and hearts.

What do you want to tell people about?

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How do you go about doing that?

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How can you make sure you do not burden them with too much other baggage?

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DAY 37

1 Corinthians 2:2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Is this the dumbing down of the Gospel, as some have opined over the years. There are times when people think that preaching a simple message of Jesus is too elementary to be effective. At times, they are even frustrated that we are not willing to give people the “weightier” things of scripture.

I would argue that when we give people the acelerante of Jesus in their lives, they hunger for more information, more mystery, more discovery, and more questions. We have a tendency to fill them up with every single bit of information that we might have, and they have no time to digest it.

Have you ever eaten WAAAY too much at Thanksgiving? What do you feel like doing once you have eaten? You certainly don't feel like going outside and playing football or basketball. In fact, that makes you sick to think about when you have eaten too much. Your pants are tight, you just want to lie down on the couch, and you don't want to move.

So it is with the way we give the gospel. We either move in the momentum of the Spirit who always prompts us to speak of Jesus, or we weigh the hearer down with so many facts and figures and chain-references that they couldn't even imagine actually going out and telling someone else. They are full! And it is going to take a while to digest everything, and even then we can't guarantee that the previous momentum will return to their hearts.

So here is my suggestion. Do what the greatest preacher and evangelist since Jesus said we should do. Preach nothing but Jesus and him crucified. Why would we be interested in improving on a pretty powerful and effective strategy?

I have heard people tell me that it is all too simple, too light, and too easy. My answer to that has always been “YES!” you finally get it! While I know they are not as excited as I am by

my response, I stick to it. We are gospel givers, and in turn, people want to build churches. But if we preach church first, it is a very weak foundation. Churches are built by people who have witnessed and experienced the momentum that God is building in their hearts.

To build a church is difficult, it takes a long time, and it grows much slower than you would like for it to grow. However, when your heart is filled with Jesus, you have unrelenting reserves.

When did you first meet Jesus, and how did it make you feel?

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Were you inspired to go and tell the world? To build Churches? And to disciple everyone you met?

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How can you feel that momentum again? (Hint; it has a lot to do with rediscovering the simplicity and beauty of Jesus)

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DAY 38

1 Corinthians 2:3 I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. 4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power,

Paul was willing to humble himself in order for God to use him more profoundly and with more momentum. But Paul had to recognize that it was not he who was building that momentum. It was by shedding all else that hindered, burdened and created resistance to the message that the momentum could build.

But Paul also realized that it took a great deal of personal sacrifice to allow the clear message of Jesus to come through. Paul, of course, had a significant amount of knowledge about God, theology, church structure, proper behavior, and other things that he could have taught others about. However, he had decided that he would shed himself of those things in order to divest his personal wants and desires and lean into the simple Gospel of Jesus and him crucified.

He wanted it to be known that it was not due to his personality, his hard work ethic, or his wisdom that this momentum to his message was being made clear. What he wanted people to know is that it was simply by God's power that everything was happening. That churches were growing, that people were being saved, that the message of Jesus was going around the known world, and that lives were being changed. By acknowledging that it was by the power of God, that momentum became ever greater than it would have if he tried to control it.

Now, this is one of the hardest things that I believe Paul had to do. If you know anything about Paul, you know that he had a difficult time getting his ego out of the way. He seemed a bit sure of himself, perhaps even a little arrogant. As well, he was very happy to tell other people what to do at any given moment.

But for some reason, when he went to this particular community, he let it all go, and became the servant to the message and the messenger of Good News. This was a powerful moment for him, and I believe that it changed the way that he did ministry from then on.

Can we do the same thing with our lives and our witness? How can we continue the work that Paul did?

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When did you divest yourself of any ego so that you could get out of the way in order for the good news to come to others?

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Do you think you could do as Paul did?

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What do you think stops you from this same sort of attitude?

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1 Corinthians 2:5 so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

All of this is done so we would have an understanding of where our faith should rest. I think this is particularly important for those of us who have grown up in the Seventh-day Adventist tradition. Our emphasis has often been on the knowledge of how we understand God to be, and how we are to worship God. Particularly, our faith has rested on the importance of one day over another, on the desire to understand the mysteries of God so well that they no longer tend to be mysteries.

While there is much to admire about a curious mind, and I would never want to stop anyone from searching the scriptures to find even more truth about God, the truth is not to prop us up, rather it is to understand God. When we make an idol out of our knowledge, we have a tendency to depend on that rather than to depend on God as the author and sustainer of our faith. It is our faith IN God that makes it faith, not our understanding of how God works.

I understand that this is a nuance that is, at times, difficult to tease out. Paul is struggling a bit to do it here. But he is reminding the Corinthian Christians that their faith does not come, does not grow, nor is it more robust and dynamic because of their understanding or wisdom. Rather, it is because of the power of the God they believe IN that their faith is possible at all. We don't originate our faith, just like we don't originate our righteousness. Both of these things, and truly all of what we have has been given to us by God. Therefore, we are not to boast in our knowledge, in the depth and breadth of our faith, or in our understanding of God. All of that is a gift that God gives us as he reveals himself to us over our lives, our study, our worship and our prayer.

Whenever we make an idol out of something, that thing becomes more important even than the thing that it represents. Paul, again in the book of Romans, speaks about elevating things above God in our lives (Romans 1:20-22). Paul reminds us that there was a time when people gave up the worship of God in order to worship

idols that were made out of the stuff that God created (wood, etc). How silly does that seem? How strange is it that we would want to give ourselves to something that is at least twice removed from that which made the thing in the first place?

But we do this when we decide we will elevate even knowledge or doctrine above the God that the doctrine is supposed to be speaking about. It simply doesn't make sense. But we are guilty of it, often in fact.

How can you make sure you don't elevate your knowledge of God over your love for God?

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How can knowledge be an idol?

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What saves you?

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Even those who have followed Christ for a long time can find it difficult to stay focused on Christ. What teachings does the Bible offer to help us stay focused?

In Matthew 13, Jesus gives the parable of the sower that includes insight in this area. In explaining the parable, He shares, "As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful" (v. 22). The "cares of this world" and desire for wealth can cause people to no longer be focused on Christ.

The cares of this world can include a wide variety of competing activities. Many of these activities are even good, but when given the wrong level of priority can take away from focusing on Christ. For example, it is important to work to take care of family needs, but being consumed with work can take the place of serving God.

The same is true with the pursuit of wealth. Money is necessary for many of life's activities, but Paul clearly states, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs" (1 Timothy 6:10). It is the love of money, not money itself, that is sinful and distracts our focus from Christ.

To stay focused, we can learn much from the example of Scripture. First, Luke 9:23 teaches, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Each day we are to deny our personal desires and follow God's way. Christians are not given a day off or a vacation from following God. It is a daily pursuit..

Second, realize we will endure suffering. Many people stop following Jesus when times are tough; this comes from wrong thinking that we are not supposed to suffer as Christians. Yet Scripture is clear, "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12). Certainly Jesus suffered greatly. All of the apostles faced great suffering on behalf of their faith. We should expect that

life will sometimes be difficult when we live for Christ.

Third, we can stay focused by regularly learning from God's Word. Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." When we are weak, it is often due to not spending adequate time focused on God's Word. This may require time alone with God, time meditating in prayer, or other forms, but the overall focus is that time in God's truth lights our path and keeps us focused.

Fourth, we can stay focused on Christ by spending time with other believers. Hebrews 10:24-25 shares, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." Time with other believers allows us to be encouraged and grow in good works, while also allowing us to encourage others.

Staying focused on Christ is difficult, but is an essential part of the Christian faith. When we seek to daily grow, anticipate suffering, spend time reflecting in God's Word, and spend time with other believers, we can better focus on Christ and a life committed to Him.

Are any of these suggestions helpful?

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How can you structure your life in order to add these practices to your life and maintain momentum?

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Is there someone in your life you could be accountable to in order to keep up these practices?

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DAY 41

Matthew 14:2 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, 24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. 25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. 27 But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." 28 "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." 29 "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" 31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" 32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

We all know this story, and we know that when Peter took his focus off of Jesus he began to sink. He began to focus on the wind and the waves, and of course, he began to get a little scared. We all would. This is actually what happens to us all the time. We focus on everything that is going wrong around us, and then we find ourselves sinking in the waters of our own frustration.

When you can't change anything, you begin to realize that maybe you need someone who can change the wind and the waves. Without this kind of power, we always kill our momentum, as we are going to stop and wait to make a decision that we perhaps think we can control. Those decisions ultimately lead us to stop the momentum that God had started in our lives and ministry. Without being able to trust that God has this, and therefore focus on him in the worst of times, we may be sinking.

How is focusing on Jesus a momentum grower in your life?

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Does focusing on Jesus lead to Joy?

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What do you think you can do in order

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## Introduction:

The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

OPEN

We spoke of focusing on Jesus this week. And that focus is not always the easiest thing to do. We often get stuck on other things, and somehow lose the momentum that Jesus gives us in this process. Here are a few things to think about and do in order to help us keep our focus on Jesus.

## HEAD

## The Supremacy of the Son of God

Colossians 1:15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of [g]your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— 23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

I am giving you this text in order for you to ponder why it is important for us to keep focused on this Jesus who is over all and above all and before all. It is less of an exercise and more of a meditation. I go back to this text time after time in order to remind myself that we are serving

and focusing on a Jesus that is much bigger and greater than we often give him credit for.

## HANDS

How can you build momentum for your life and your ministry in Jesus? I want you to sit down and write a few things that might give that momentum a chance to grow in your life, in your relationships and even in your spiritual practice. Whether it is asking God for opportunities to share, auditing your life to see where those opportunities might already be happening, or simply committing to sharing the Gospel with others, take the time to be intentional about where you are and what you would like to see happen.

It is never easy to ask God to give you those opportunities, but it does help us focus on God in order to make those opportunities become a reality in our lives and in the lives of others.

Pray that God will keep that momentum happening in your life today.

[illegible]



DAY 43

As we build toward our conference on October 21-23, I wanted to spend this last week talking about what you can build with momentum, and how to get there. We have been talking about what momentum is, how we can harness it, but this time we are going to speak about how to build it and with it. Each day will have one point to ponder.

Lesson 1: Momentum Picks Up With the Third Movers

Everytime something new begins, there needs to be a catalyst that sparks change. In science, a catalyst is an agent that sparks the initiation of a change. Your role is to recognize that God is moving and begin to move your life towards that. You are the second mover in God's movement. This can feel isolating. Many people will question your motivations and in some cases, your sanity. My encouragement to you is to sit in the presence of God, receive clarity in how God is moving, and join that. Recognize that those in your organization who will join you first are the leaders. Your role is to serve them.

At Crosswalk, we always want to recognize our order in things. It looks a bit like this:

God is the first mover. God was moving in the hearts of students. They felt empowered to do something in response once they saw it. (John 1:1-In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.) God is always at work, always beginning the work, and always making sure the work is finished by those who would follow his call. But let us be clear, the work never starts with us. It ALWAYS begins with what God is doing, how he is doing it, and what direction God wants it to go!

Leader as the second mover. Every leader has a moment when the recognize the call of God, and realize that this call is specific to something. God's call is never just "lead." It is; "Lead this group over there. . ." or something like that. It is always a specific call. Even Abram, when he was called by God to leave Ur had a specific call. He was to follow God to "the land God would show him." (Genesis 12)

As you find your purpose and calling, God will bring around you those who can see the same vision and understand that they are being called as well. We call thee, the **THIRD MOVERS**.

Third movers build inertia. Those handful of people who catch that early vision, those early adopters become the core of your ministry. They help to build that momentum by their excitement, their movement, and their Joy. You can tell who they are in ministry in that they don't go home when they should. They volunteer for too long, are too invested, and they are just the best! When you recognize that you have a critical mass of these people, things will start to happen quickly.

Jesus went to find these people, and he called them his disciples. Once he had critical mass (12) he was ready to go. Each ministry will have a different critical mass than the next, and that is okay. You will begin to see that things that used to hard are much easier than they were before.

Do you know the specific Call that God has on your heart?

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Do you know who you would like to have jump in and give themselves over to this ministry?

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Who are your third movers?

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Lesson 2: Testimony From the First Wave Builds Faith for the Following Waves

Often, when beginning a ministry it will seem like there is not a great deal of traction to begin with. The attendees are small, and things don't always feel like they are moving. Remember, numbers are irrelevant at this point. What you are looking for is how you can build an experience that will connect with those who have come. Remember, whoever God brought to you in those early iterations of your ministry are exactly the people that should have come.

We often second guess God's attendance list for our ministries. However, we need to be careful with that. If we think that God didn't bring the right people, we might just be questioning God's wisdom outright. And that is not something that we should probably be doing at all.

I once heard a story of a megachurch pastor, (3000+ in attendance) who couldn't get more than 9 people in the first iteration of his church, in his garage. For years, he was stuck at less than 10 people in his church. However, when that ten finally became 20, then exponential growth began to happen. I heard him tell the story, and he was grateful for those years because they taught him to be patient and wait on the Lord. He was faithful through those years, and that faithfulness was the best training ground for the growth God had for him and his ministry.

When people come to a ministry, it is our job to help create meaning, purpose, and community with them. Sometimes, that is with 100's of people, and sometimes it is simply with 1 or 2. Again, those numbers don't matter because it is exactly who God decided should attend.

Now, it might sound like we don't have to do the footwork so that people will know about what God has called us to be a part of. That is certainly not true. We still need to do the work that we have been given. However, once people come and have that experience of community, of belonging, of momentum and of joy, then they will be the best ones to speak about what

God is doing with you and your ministry. Nothing makes good marketing like phenomenal word of mouth.

Those who give testimony to what God is doing through your ministry will be the ones who create that exponential momentum because of what they say to other people about what God is doing through you and your third movers!

Have you ever been to something that wasn't well attended, but was still amazing?

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What did you say to people about it?

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How can you create that same sort of experience?

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Lesson 3: The Leaders You Need Are Not the Leaders You Have

This was a hard lesson for me to reflect on. Our first leaders were not the ones that carried things forward to the end. In fact, some of those leaders don't even attend anymore.. I recognized that each stage of building requires different people to take the lead. Studying social movements throughout history, I have noticed patterns that repeat. Each stage is led by a certain profile of a leader.

The Starters - That first group of students had energy and a genuine carefree attitude. They were not afraid of hard work and potential failure. They did not think they would fail. They were quick to change tactics when their ultimate goals were in jeopardy. And they became bored when things started to become routine.

The Refiners - This group of people usually sit back to watch the starters get something going. They can identify several ways to make something run more smoothly. They differ from the "shiners" in that they have patience for the "starter" type person. They like being part of the second wave of things. They are a very important group of people to identify as you build your second wave of momentum.

The Shiners - This group has the ability to build capacity in things. They move beyond making the system better. They make it shine. One thing I have noticed is that this profile and the "starter" profile is that they tend not to get along very well. These two profiles are polar opposites. While one group is always looking to start the next thing, the other group is busy making the old thing better.

The "Institutionalizers" - You see this throughout several movements in history. What has begun to happen is so important that it becomes institutionalized. I notice this as it comes to Crosswalk too. The change that took years to come to has now become familiar and comfortable. When this happens, people begin to make everything formal. Formalizing things may be what is required. It is important to recognize that it will also make it difficult to adjust in the future.

We can't become too institutionalized, but yet we need systems in place to make things run in perpetuity as well.

What sort of person are you?

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Do you know someone who fits into each one of these roles?

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How can you attract and make sure you know who is working in what capacity in your ministry?

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# Lesson 4: Learn How to Linger

Leading new endeavors is challenging. I have noticed that many leaders become impatient in the early stages of a new project. They don't like to wait for things! Their impatience threatens the building process required for the project to succeed. I have learned there are seasons we need to stop building. Leaders need to linger with the people in the season they find themselves in. They need to pay attention to what is going on in the hearts of people before they move forward.

When I first came to Crosswalk, it sometimes felt like we weren't getting much done. Some days, it felt like all we were doing was hanging out with each other, and simply talking about what the ministry "could" be. When I think back to those days, I find myself nostalgic for them. While we have made much progress, those hang out sessions were exciting, thinking about the possibilities of what can be done.

I've often wondered if Jesus did this with his disciples at the beginning. I wonder if they just sat around the fire at night and talked about what could be, what the kingdom of God might be like, and how they could get there.

I don't know if they have a particular strategy, but they did have hopes and dreams. Those things need to be vocalized, not simply through sermonizing, but through conversations so that everyone has a bit of a say and everyone can get on board. What is beautiful about these sessions is that they don't have a point other than to simply help build momentum and get excited about what the next steps might be. They are when you get to iterate around the concepts that you have been praying and dreaming about. Sometimes they are successful and fruitful, and sometimes they are just fun. Either way, they are important.

Matthew 13:24 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; 25 but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. 26

But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. 27 So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' 28 He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' 29 But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." ' "

31 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 32 which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." 33 Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three [c]measures of meal till it was all leavened." 34 All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, 35 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world." These are what Jesus sounded like in those sessions. Pretty exciting stuff.

Have you ever had these kinds of opportunities with those you are doing ministry with?

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How can you make these conversations actionable?

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What do you think Jesus would say if he was hanging out with you all?

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Lesson 5: Give Leaders the Keys to the Building  
(and Go Home to Your Spouse)

The leadership principle is “good leaders leave”. In those middle stages where momentum was starting to pick up, there were weeks that I left early. I handed the keys to one of the other leaders, patted them on the back and took off. Momentum took off when I started doing this more. At the time, I was upset that things were better when I left. What did that say about me and my worth? In hindsight, I realize that I had created a necessary leadership vacuum for others to step up.

You cannot build a church on one personality. Of course, there will be some residual effect of that first leader. But it shouldn't be the whole infrastructure your ministry is built upon. It should help the momentum, but without being able to prop up other leaders, the ministry will only last as long as that leader is vital to the ministry.

In other words, you should always be looking for ways to duplicate yourself, to give others opportunities and to make sure you hire well. I have an adage I like to live by: “I try to make sure I am always the dumbest person around the table. . .” What I mean by that is that I should always surround myself with people who are gifted, talented, brilliant, and don't really need me. In this way, we can create a longevity to the ministry that far exceeds my vision and hopes and dreams.

Jesus did this by leaving his wisdom to his followers. Either his words or with the Holy Spirit. Those who were gifted were able to extrapolate the wisdom and make it their own. Those who were charismatic were able to allow their own voice to give rise to the words that Jesus left. Through this multiplication of effort, the Gospel spread far and wide in those first few centuries after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

In that same way, we need to be leaders who can multiply our vision to our people, and then allow them the space and opportunity to make it happen in their own way and in their own lan-

guage with their own vision. While we often believe that God gave us the vision, what is to say that he hasn't give someone in our ministries version 2 of the vision that we got simply the first version of?

Who do you think should follow you as leader of the ministry? Answer this even if you haven't really gotten started yet.

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Why is it important to multiply our vision/efforts?

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How does this build momentum?

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DAY 48

Today marks the beginning of the  
CRSWLK CONFERENCE: MOMENTUM

With all of this learning under your belt, we are excited to see you worship, learn, and find joy with us this weekend.

Whether you are joining online for our worship services, can be with us in person, join us for the worship night tonight, or at our block party on Saturday Evening, we are excited about the momentum that God is building through Crosswalk and through your ministry as well.

As Always,  
LOVEWELL

Pastor Tim and the Crosswalk Team



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