



Running Rabid

Balancing the passion to pursue with the pressure to produce.

Bema Prep

Mirror time: making the main thing the main thing

As human beings we tend to be rather short-term focused. It is hard enough for us to focus on short-term goals, much less long-term ones. To make matters worse, as Christians we are supposed to have an “eternal” perspective. I once heard a preacher say the sign of maturity, especially for the Christian, was long-term gratification; *a willingness to sacrifice today for a better day tomorrow*. To make the point he described a baby. If babies are hungry, they cry. If they are wet, they cry. If they want to be held, they cry. I think you get the point. Young children are not much better; if they want something – they want it now! As we grow older we learn some level of patience and a willingness to wait, although at our core I think many of us still struggle with waiting on God’s timing in our lives.

When I read about Jesus in the New Testament I come to a very real conclusion: **Jesus was always about bringing glory to His Father through obedience**. Jesus was not concerned with what He wanted; He was concerned with what God wanted. Jesus was about following God’s Will, as reflected in the following verses.

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| Luke 11:12 | Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. |
| John 4:34 | My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work. |
| John 6:38 | For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me. |
| John 5:30 | I can of my own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. |
| John 9:31 | Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He will heareth. |

The natural transition when discussing the concept of obedience is judgment. One of the most powerful concepts in the Bible is God’s judgment, especially with regards to what happens at the end of our lives. For Believers it is the Bema, the Judgment Seat of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 5:10 (NIV) we read:

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Even Solomon addressed the concept of judgment in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (NIV):

¹³ Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. ¹⁴ For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

To put it bluntly – we only get one shot at this life. All eternity depends on these 60, 70, 80, possibly 90 years we spend on this planet. If a man lives 70 years, he has been given 25,550 days by God. By the time he is 45 years of age he has already spent 16,425 days. It seems like a long period of time, until you start looking at life on a day by day basis. I often think about Jesus and the time span of his ministry. I am not sure whether or not He knew

His ministry would only last 3 years, but think about what He accomplished in approximately 1,000 days. In this period of time He literally changed the history of the world.

This is the last lesson in our series, so I thought it would be worthwhile to review the topics we covered in this series. They are listed below.

1. The pressure of expectations: Little boys dreams: pilots, soldiers, and kings
2. The pressure from society to conform (metrics)
3. The pressure from work to produce
4. The pressure from family to provide
5. The pressure from ourselves to be worthy
6. The power of Truth - learning to trust in God's Word and His plans for our lives
7. The power of me: When I am weak then He is strong; self-reliance versus self-sacrifice
8. The power of rest
9. The power of prayer
10. The power of accountability and the need for discipline and self-restraint
11. Re-prioritizing our priorities: major in the majors and minor in the minors
12. Mirror time: making the main thing the main thing: Bema prep

Remembering that the title of our series is *Balancing the Pressure to Produce with the Passion to Pursue*, I have one question for you: what is the bigger focus in your life: production or passion? Throughout our lives there will usually be a tension between these two extremes; however, when we focus on God and His plan for our lives clarity is provided. As I have gotten older I have learned that I tend to worry about things over which I have little to no control, but I neglect the areas of my life where I do have control. There are times when I sense that God is watching us and waiting for us to realize the He is Sovereign – He controls everything, yet we control so very little.

I hope this series has impacted you. For me it is brought about a heightened awareness of what God wants from me. He wants my love and commitment, reflected in my obedience. He expects me to be obedient and pursue areas where He has called me. God wants you and me to be successful in pursuing Him. We know that because He was willing to send His Son to the cross for us. No greater love could He us. May the Lord compel you and me to do great things for Him and His Kingdom!

Questions for the Week

1. Read 2 Corinthians 5:10. How does knowing you are going to be judged impact the way you behave (or should behave)?
2. Why is delayed gratification so hard? Why are we so easily distracted by short-term events?
3. Read the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30.
 - a. What does this story tell us about how God views His "return on investment?"
 - b. In what areas of your life do you believe God is looking for a return on His investment in you? In other words, what "talents" has He given you?
4. Of all the topics studied in this series, what subject was most interesting to you?