

IF I COULD TELL YOU ONE LAST THING

#3 – NEVER STOP GIVING GOD YOUR BEST

Sermon by Todd Lester

September 17, 2017

HOW TO BE THE BEST THAT I CAN BE

LESSONS FROM SOLDIERING (2 Timothy 2:3-7)

LIKE AN EFFECTIVE SOLDIER, I MUST ...

1. Define What I'd _____

John 15:13

2. Sacrifice My _____

2 Timothy 2:3, Ephesians 5:2

3. Eliminate _____

2 Timothy 2:4

Spend your t_____, e_____ and m_____ on things that will last.

LESSONS FROM SPORTS (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

TO WIN THE PRIZE, I MUST ...

1. Be _____

1 Corinthians 9:24, 1 Timothy 6:12

2. Be _____

2 Timothy 2:5, 1 Corinthians 9:25,27

3. Be _____

Hebrews 2:12, 1 Corinthians 9:26, Matthew 24:13

Keep your eyes on the p_____, the p_____ and the p_____.

LESSONS FROM AGRICULTURE (2 Corinthians 9:6-13)

TO REAP A GREAT HARVEST, I MUST

1. Plant _____

Mark 10:29-30

Our one main need is a deep _____ with _____.

A Buncha Bests

Here is your very own Awards Show! You get to give awards to all of the great people and great things in your life! Think of the “bests” in your life and write them down. Choose two or three to tell the group about why these things are special to you.



The best friend I had as a kid was

The best job I ever had was ...

The best meal I've ever had was ...

The best toy I ever had was ...

The best book I ever read was ...

The best movie I ever saw was ...

The best birthday I ever had was ...

The best vacation I've ever taken was ...

The best book of the Bible I've read is ...

The best accomplishment in my life has been ...

The best thing I've done as a parent is ...

The best way I have served God is ...

IF I COULD TELL YOU ONE LAST THING #3 – NEVER STOP GIVING GOD YOUR BEST

Sermon by Todd Lester

September 17, 2017

HOW TO BE THE BEST THAT I CAN BE

LESSONS FROM SOLDIERING

2 Timothy 2:3-7 Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. Soldiers don't get tied up in the affairs of civilian life, for then they cannot please the officer who enlisted them. And athletes cannot win the prize unless they follow the rules. And hardworking farmers should be the first to enjoy the fruit of their labor. Think about what I am saying. The Lord will help you understand all these things.

LIKE AN EFFECTIVE SOLDIER, I MUST . . .

1. Define What I'd Die For

John 15:13 There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.

2. Sacrifice My Comfort

2 Timothy 2:3 Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 5:2 Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

3. Eliminate Distractions

2 Timothy 2:4 Soldiers don't get tied up in the affairs of civilian life, for then they cannot please the officer who enlisted them.

Spend your time, energy and money on things that will last.

LESSONS FROM SPORTS

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should.

TO WIN THE PRIZE, I MUST . . .

1. Be Determined

1 Corinthians 9:24 Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win!

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight for the true faith. Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you, which you have declared so well before many witnesses.

2. Be Disciplined

2 Timothy 2:5 And athletes cannot win the prize unless they follow the rules.

1 Corinthians 9:25,27 All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize...I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should.

3. Be Focused

Hebrews 2:12 We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame.

1 Corinthians 9:26 So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing.

Matthew 24:13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved. Keep your eyes on the prize, the purpose and the payoff.

LESSONS FROM AGRICULTURE

2 Corinthians 9:6-13 Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. As the Scriptures say, "They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever." For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous ... As a result ... they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ.

TO REAP A GREAT HARVEST, I MUST

1. Plant Generously in Faith

Mark 10:29-30 "I assure you that everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for my sake and for the Good News, will receive now in return a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property—along with persecution. And in the world to come that person will have eternal life."

Our one main need is a deep connection with Jesus.

IF I COULD TELL YOU ONE LAST THING - #3 NEVER STOP GIVING GOD YOUR BEST

Sermon by Todd Lester

September 17, 2017

Icebreaker/Introduction

The 'A Buncha Bests' activity ties to Todd's theme of giving God our best. Encourage group members to finish some of the sentences in the list but emphasize that they don't have to do them all and to make sure they get down to some of the bottom ones as they are a bit deeper (they can also feel free to add their own idea for a 'best'). Take time to have people share a few of their responses.

Ask if there was anything from this week's message that stood out – either a point that was made which really resonated with them, or perhaps a question or difficulty that came up for them.

Todd said that the greatest tragedy is not death, but a wasted life. Can you think of some examples of a wasted life? How do you evaluate a life?

Todd shared that the question "Do you always give your best?" really affected Jimmy Carter. Do you think about that as well? Why do people not always give their best? Is it possible to give your best in everything (ie. is 'good enough' okay sometimes?) What about people who are perfectionists and beat themselves up for thinking they could do better?

HOW TO BE THE BEST THAT I CAN BE

LESSONS FROM SOLDIERING (2 Timothy 2:3-7)

LIKE AN EFFECTIVE SOLDIER, I MUST . . .

1. Define What I'd Die For

Focuses on John 15:13

Can you recall the 3 things (all beginning with 'f') that Todd said some (soldiers) would be willing to die for? (freedom, family, faith) Are these things you'd be willing to die for? What are some others?

Todd said that laying down our lives is the greatest expression of love – does this seem unlikely or grandiose? What are other, perhaps more practical expressions of love? How do they compare with this 'greatest expression'?

2. Sacrifice My Comfort

Focuses on 2 Timothy 2:3, Ephesians 5:2

What sacrifices have you made in order to help others? What sacrifices have you made in order to follow Jesus?

Discuss Todd's statement that it's always easier to do what's wrong than what's right. (he talked about it being harder to be kind, forgive, be unselfish, forgiving or truthful)

3. Eliminate Distractions

Focuses on 2 Timothy 2:4

Do you think relaxation and 'down time' are important to good health? How does this relate to activities that may be considered 'distractions'?

Is there one thing in your life that you could label a distraction? How difficult would it be to give it up? Do you think it would free you to (as Todd said) give time to things that matter more, like loving or serving?

Spend your time, energy and money on things that will last.

LESSONS FROM SPORTS (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

TO WIN THE PRIZE, I MUST . . .

1. Be Determined

Focuses on 1 Corinthians 9:24, 1 Timothy 6:12

What were some of the key words Todd used in describing determination? (effort, goal, intentional, seriousness). He asked us 'how serious are you about what God made you to be?'

What are some specific ways that we can live a more intentional/determined life? (setting goals?)

2. Be Disciplined

Focuses on 2 Timothy 2:5, 1 Corinthians 9:25,27

In what ways are you able to say that your life is disciplined?

Discuss Todd's statement that "the pain of regret is always greater than the pain of discipline." Todd also asked us 'how would your life be better if you had been more discipline (in some particular area) earlier in your life?'

3. Be Focused

Focuses on Hebrews 2:12, 1 Corinthians 9:26, Matthew 24:13

Recall what Todd said are 2 of the payoffs in serving Jesus. (1. Happiness (abundant life), 2. Treasure in heaven) Would you agree? Can you think of others?

Keep your eyes on the prize, the purpose and the payoff.

Looking back over the 3 points for athletes, can you see a correlation with the 3 points for soldiers?

LESSONS FROM AGRICULTURE (2 Corinthians 9:6-13)

TO REAP A GREAT HARVEST, I MUST

1. Plant Generously in Faith

Focuses on Mark 10:29-30

What are some ways that we can 'plant seeds of generosity'?

What do you think it means to 'store up treasures in heaven'? Is there a danger of making our serving self-centred if this becomes our only motivation?

Read and discuss [Mark 10:29-30](#). Why do you think Jesus adds in the word 'persecutions'?

Our one main need is a deep connection with Jesus. What is one thing that you could do to improve your connection with Jesus?