

When I Grow Up

On Sunday, we pondered where we are with work and life, and how we can get “in the zone” in both aspects.

1. Warm up question: Being “in the zone” is sometimes defined as “the mental state of operation in which the person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity.” Tell us about something you do in your own life where you often feel “in the zone.”
2. At work, do you feel like you’re “in the zone”? In your personal life, do you feel like you’re “in the zone”?
3. Our primary Scripture reading on Sunday offered what you might call the Biblical definition of “living in the zone.” Read Ecclesiastes 9:7-10 from the Message Bible – you’ll find the text attached on page 3.
 - a. When you read this passage, how does it make you feel?
 - b. How would you summarize the message you get from this passage for how we should live?
 - c. Do you feel like you’re living the way this passage describes? Why or why not?
4. Living “in the zone” doesn’t come naturally. It takes practice, training, and intentionality. Pastor David suggested that, in Matthew chapter 6, Jesus offers us a great roadmap for “getting in the zone.” The basic idea is that, when we’re living from a spiritually centered place, we naturally find our zone. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus puts it this way: “Strive first for the kingdom of God and God’s righteousness, and all these things [you need] will be given to you as well.” Which of the following six spiritual concepts identified in Matthew 6 do you most want to enhance in your own life?

Alms giving = generous giving & service

Prayer = private time with God where you can share everything

Fasting = making intentional sacrifices for God

Treasure = investing the best of yourself in good things

The Sound Eye = keeping focused on the right things

Not Serving Two Masters = keeping God first

No worrying = trusting

5. To get into the “Jesus zone” in our lives, David especially challenged us to “romance God,” i.e., build relationship with God, by learning to interact with the Bible in a deeper way. Most of us read the Bible “to get all the information we can get,” like we might read a history book. Sister Marcrina Wiederkehr suggests instead we should “open our hearts to be formed by the word of God, listening to the words so carefully

that our reading becomes a prayer.” She encourages us to be attentive to the Holy Spirit as a guide, so we can keep musing on the message we got from God’s word throughout the day.” The goal is to let our lives “be formed” by the word of God. Let’s practice reading a passage that way – slowly, contemplatively, listening deeply, for what God might be saying to our hearts – John 1:35-39.

- a. When you read this passage, what strikes you? What do you hear God saying to you? What wisdom does it speak into your life?
6. David suggested that each of us consider writing a mission statement for our lives, in general, and for our work, specifically, as a way of helping us find our “zone” in both places. By way of example, here are David’s personal and work mission statements.

Personal Mission Statement

To share my love of God, and show God’s love to all.
Encourage and inspire others toward a relationship with Christ that deepens.
Be part of a community who is on a path of spiritual growth and movement toward wholeness.

Work Mission Statement

To be the best Environmental Engineer I can be who works at keeping the environment safe for Indiana.
To interact with the public with integrity.
To be a thoughtful coworker.

What do you think of this idea? For you, what would be some important elements in your personal or work mission statement?

7. In our spiritual community, i.e., LifeJourney, this is the time of year when we encourage one another to prepare an annual Soul Care Plan – to make sure we’re staying spiritually centered and living in the “Jesus zone.” Some of us have already prepared our Plans – others of us are still in process.
- a. As you look at your 2017 Soul Care Plan, what’s the most important step forward you are feeling called to incorporate into your Plan? (Within your Oasis, it would be great to create a list of these items, so you can regularly pray for one another’s spiritual growing edges.)

If you haven’t yet prepared your Soul Care Plan, you can do it online at:
<http://lifejourney.church/soulcare>

8. If time permits, to close tonight’s conversation, let’s go back to the Ecclesiastes passage we read earlier. Let’s read it through the way Sister Marcrina suggests – contemplatively, seeking to let our hearts be formed by it.
- a. What do you hear God saying to you? What wisdom does it speak into your life?

Ecclesiastes 9:7-10 (Message Bible)

Seize life!
Eat bread with gusto,
Drink wine with a robust heart.
Oh yes—God takes pleasure in *your* pleasure!

Dress festively every morning.
Don't skimp on colors and scarves.
Relish life with the spouse you love
Each and every day of your precarious life.

Each day is God's gift.
It's all you get in exchange for the hard work of staying alive.
Make the most of each one!
Whatever turns up, grab it and do it. And heartily!

This is your last and only chance at it,
For there's neither work to do nor thoughts to think
In the company of the dead, where you're most certainly headed.