

# Do Something Great With Your Life

## Session 3: How To Be An Outrageously Successful Disciple

Edited Transcript

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Good morning men. Please turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 1. Let's go ahead and begin by doing a shout out this morning, and the first shout out is going to go to a men's group called the Whitefish Men's Group in Whitefish, Montana. And guys, I'm so bummed because I was there a year ago. I would have loved to stop by and see you. I think I drove right by, well within a block of Malmquist Construction Company.

So, Clay Bradley is their leader. Eight men. They meet on Wednesdays at 7:30 at Malmquist, using the study with us. Clay writes, "We are a group that believes iron sharpens iron." So, I wonder if you would join me in giving a very warm and rousing welcome to the Whitefish men's group. One, two, three. Hoorah.

Awesome. Guys, we're glad to have you with us. And then we've begun giving shout outs to area directors and regional directors. So today, the shout out goes to Wayne Morgret, area director, Northeast Ohio, Cincinnati, and Wayne says, "I am passionate about reaching men because I have seen, firsthand, the destructive force of men in their natural state." Isn't he a good looking guy? Would you join me in giving a very rousing welcome to Wayne Morgret? One, two, three. Hoorah. We appreciate what you're doing, Wayne.

We also have a very special group of men here this morning. We have area directors and regional directors in town for training all week. The graduation ceremony or commissioning ceremony is at lunch today. So, they've joined us, though, this morning. So, if you are one of the area directors or regional directors with Man in the Mirror, I wonder if you'd stand where you are and let us welcome you one and all. So great. Thank you men so much. Welcome. Very glad you're here.

Okay. The series is **Do Something Great With Your Life**. Today, we're going to talk about how to be an outrageously successful disciple. So, let's begin by asking you just to reflect on how do you measure success? Is it in recognition and status as we discussed? For those of you who were here last time, as we discussed about the Pharisees for them, success seem to be tied up in their recognition and being seen and their status. Or maybe it's in the abundance of your possessions. Or maybe it's in who you are, what you have, who your family is, where you're from. All of these are different ways. Maybe it's how many followers you have on Instagram. Maybe it's how many likes you have this week compared to how many likes you had a year ago.

Just a sidebar on this, I actually started a fast, the Facebook Fast, two years ago. Nothing that gets Facebook. We use Facebook all the time. We have great results with it, but the way I was using Facebook is I was basically posting blogs, little mini blogs on there, and then I just didn't like what I was

becoming. I found myself being happy when I had a lot of likes on a post and feeling a little crummy when I didn't. And I said, "This isn't who I am." And so, I decided to go on a six month Facebook fast two years ago.

Christians are not immune to measuring success in worldly ways, are we? No, we certainly are not. And so in fact, Christians can be proud of how much we're sacrificing for Jesus. C.S. Lewis called this the idea of trying to win worship by being so godly and so religious that people look at us and they respect us. We receive their adulation in their praise. And what we're really doing, of course, is creating an idol and robbing God of his glory. So, even Christians are not immune, you see, for measuring success in worldly ways.

And so, if you will, turn your attention to the screen. We're going to answer this question: What is Christian success? What is Christian success?

### **WHAT IS CHRISTIAN SUCCESS?**

Okay. So, I have said here and there and everywhere, in many occasions, in many ways, to be a disciple is the highest honor to which man can aspire. And we mean a disciple of Jesus. To be a disciple is the highest honor to which man can aspire.

Now, let's just say for the sake of argument that all of you are disciples. Maybe some of you are not, but all of you are disciples of Jesus. So, to be a disciple is the highest honor to which you as a man can aspire. So, now you are. Now you're disciples.

All right. Now let me ask you a second question. What is the highest honor to which a disciple can aspire? Isn't this exactly and precisely what the 12 disciples were arguing about on three separate occasions that we know about, who among us is the greatest?

So what is the highest honor to which a disciple can aspire? So, Jesus said, "The greatest among you is the one who serves. I did not come to be served, but to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many. Follow my example."

And so if to be a disciple is the highest honor to which a man can aspire, to be a servant is the highest honor to which a disciple can aspire. Are you tracking with me? Is there anybody not tracking with me? Raise your hands and be ridiculed and judged.

Okay. All right, so to be a servant is the highest honor to which you and I, now as disciples, can aspire.

So, let's look at 1 Corinthians, chapter 4, verse 1, and see the Biblical authority for the statement that I've just made. 1 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 1. The Apostle Paul, who understood what I just said, that to be a servant is the highest honor to which a disciple can aspire, he wrote this. "This then is how you ought to regard us, as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries that God has revealed." He said, this is how you ought to think about us. We're servants of Christ. We're servants of Christ. The highest honor to which a disciple can aspire is to be a servant. "The greatest among you will be as one who serves. Follow my example," Jesus says.

And what is it that God asks of his servants? Verse 2. "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." Now, it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove successful? No. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove what? Faithful. What is Christian success? It is being faithful. It is being a servant of Christ who understands that Christian success ... Now it is required of those who had been given a trust ... We're servants of Christ. We've been entrusted with the message of the Gospel. That's what it says in the first verse, right? It says, "Servants of Christ." Think of it this way. This is how you are to regard us, servants of Christ entrusted with the mysteries of God." That's who we are. We are servants of Christ entrusted with the Gospel. And now it has required whoever has been given a trust ... And what is a trust? The mysteries of God, the Gospel of Jesus.

And it is now required, what? That you be successful in executing this role as servant? No. The requirement is, is that we be found faithful.

Turn with me to Matthew Chapter 25 verse 14. We're done in 1 Corinthians. Matthew Chapter 25 verse 14. This is the parable of the bags of gold or the parable of the talents. One talent in today's 1,400,000 bucks, right?

So again, and of course it's a parable. There is absolutely, to my understanding, no way you can conclusively draw any implication whatsoever by the exact amount of money, how many talents it was. Jesus, in other words, he's going to talk about five talents. He could have easily said 50 talents. Okay, he's just trying to make a point. Again, somebody might disagree with me, and that's fine too.

Again, yet the Kingdom of God is like a man going on a journey who called his servants and did what? He entrusted them with this wealth. In other words, this is the trust. It's the Kingdom of God. It's the news about the Kingdom of God. And to one, he gave five bags of gold. What's that? 7-1/2 mil? To another, two bags of gold, 3 mil, and to another one bag, each according to his, what? Ability.

It's interesting, this word ability in the Greek is the word [inaudible] from which we get dynamite, or it's also the word power, the power, the [inaudible] of the Holy Spirit. That's what it is. So, this would obviously refer to the spiritual gifts when we're talking about abilities. It would have to mean that the spiritual abilities, the [inaudible] that you have.

And then drop down to ... Oh, okay. So then the master went away. He came back, and he wanted them and to give an account of what they'd done with the money. And then in verse 21, to the guy with the five bags who had doubled them. All right. We don't know how long the master was gone. Was it five years? Was twenty five years. The rule of 72 says that if you divide the interest rate of return on the investment into 72, that's how many years it takes to double it. So in other words, if you could find an investment that returned 7.2 percent, you divide that into 72, that means that five bags of gold will become 10 in 10 years. All right, so was he gone 25 years?

So the point here is not really that this is some sort of superstar Christian guy who did this unbelievable thing, had doubled the money, like overnight. That's not it. It's that he wisely invested it, and the principle of compounding took effect.

Back to the verse, verse 21, his master replied, "Well done, good and successful servant. You have been successful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share in your master's happiness."

So, was the man successful? I would say that was pretty successful. Doubling the money. I mean, that's ... You wouldn't say he was unsuccessful. You wouldn't say he flopped, but Jesus doesn't commend him for the results, the outcome. Jesus commends him for being faithful. And we're going to have a Big Idea today, as always, but we're also going to have a junior Big Idea today. And the junior, first ever, right? The junior Big Idea is this, **God calls us to be faithful, not to produce a particular outcome**, and we know that's true because in the 23rd verse, the guy with the two bags of gold. His master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You've been faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share in your master's happiness."

And so, one man produced five more bags of gold. Another man produced two more bags of gold, and what Jesus commended was is that they were faithful, that they were faithful. He was not commending the outcome at per se. Okay.

Now your table leaders, and this is ... The reason I wanted to put up a junior version because I really think this is a good working definition of Christian success. God calls us to be faithful, not to produce a particular outcome. Does that mean that God is not interested in outcomes? Well, of course he is. But what about the mother and the father who have two special needs children that require almost all of their attention. Not only the mother, but the father too. The father works, and as soon as it comes up, he spends the rest of his time taking care of these two special needs children, and he never wins 10,000 people to Jesus. Is He successful? Well, if he's faithful, he is, because that's what God calls us to do.

God doesn't call us to produce a particular outcome. God doesn't call everybody this to win 10,000 people to faith in Jesus. Sometimes he calls people to minister to one or two. One or two people who have problems that will never be solved. And that's faithful. And that's the definition of Christian success.

So our table leaders, we have a job description, and it's a one year commitment. Basically, we fire all the table leaders once a year. Not really. In most of the informal organizations I've ever been involved with, there's no exit strategy for leaders whose callings have changed. And so, what happens is, is that a leader's not really fully engaged anymore, but he doesn't have an exit strategy. So, he starts backing off from 100 percent to 80 percent and then to 70, 60. This happens over two or three years. And then meanwhile, leadership's talking about that person behind their back about how they're not really getting it done. And so they're not happy. The leadership team is not happy. And then one day finally the person quits, and everybody's mad at everybody for the next 10 years. I decided I didn't want to live like that. And so I wanted to create an exit strategy so when a man's calling change, we could celebrate that and say, "Awesome. I'm so glad that God's called you to be an elder in your church. I'm so glad that you're starting a small group over in Mineola." Where's Mineola? Right there.

And so at the end of the year, each table leader has nine major responsibilities, and each leader is asked if he wants to renew his commitment for the next year to rate his success and his performance in these nine areas. And if he doesn't produce results, you're out. Actually, what it says is that leadership is a privilege and a responsibility for which God holds those who accepted accountable. It has a price to which I agree to pay. The question on the final exam is were you faithful?

So dropping down, if I was a leader last year in the space before each responsibility ... So, before each of these nine responsibilities is a blank space. If I was a leader last year, in this space, before each responsibility, I have rated ... It's a self assessment. I have rated my faithfulness last year and pledge myself anew by God's grace to be faithful in each responsibility. Four, the numeral four in the space, means very faithful. The numeral three means mostly faithful. The numeral two means somewhat faithful, and the numeral one means not faithful.

Well, as you might imagine, every now and then we get some ones and twos. So, that's my cue. This is all honor system, [inaudible] I'm just not that guy that's micromanager in anything, right? But I'm deeply interested in having systems in place that help us have a robust Bible study.

You know, we're 33 years old, this Bible study. You know, why we're still here? Because of the leadership. We have no ... The pejorative word would be deadwood. We have no deadwood in leadership. All of our leaders are really engaged in the deal, and when they decide that they're not, then we celebrate them leaving.

But if we do have a leader who has some ones and twos, I get together with him, and we talk it over, and most of the time it's just, hey, I had this work project. It took me out of town for six months. It was a season, but I'm in the deal, and I really want to renew and that's fine. Maybe a couple of occasions ... We've actually had two occasions. We actually have had leaders whose callings changed. Well, more than two, but two that I can think of.

#### **HOW TO OPERATIONALIZE "FAITHFUL"**

And so, the idea here is, is that ... The Big Idea here is this, God calls us to be faithful, not to produce a particular outcome. Now, what we need to do is we need to figure out, okay, well how do we operationalize Christian success? How do we operationalize Christian success? And I'm going to give you a question. We had a question last week. What does the master need? I'm going to give you another question. This is a question that we ask around Men in the Mirror all the time. I've been asking it for many, many years, and it's all based on 1 Corinthians, chapter 4, verse 2. Now I would just required that whomever's been given a trust be found faithful. Here is . So, you have been given a trust of some kind. It might be particular abilities. It might be two special needs kids to be taken care of or whatever it is, a business to run, employees to work with and, or a company to be faithfully for helping them fulfill their mission. And this is Christian success. But then how do you execute it? How do you operationalize it? You ask the question, if it's required that you, who have been given a trust, be found faithful, then ask the question, what does faithful look like?

What does faith look like? That's the Big Idea for the day. Well, **what does faithful look like?** So, let's operationalize this. So, how would you this? How would you go about this specifically? I mean you, personally. Well, first of all, you would figure out, okay, what are the bags of gold with which I've been entrusted? I mean you actually want to intentionally think through, okay, what are the bags of gold with which I have been entrusted? And then, you want to ask the question, the Big Idea, okay, well, what does faithful look like in my marriage? What does faithful look like with my children? What does faithful look like in my vocational call? Whatever you think is your bag gold. What does faithful look like with my colleagues? What does faith will look like with my customers? What does faithful look like with my vendors, my enemies? What does faith will look like with the poor? What does faithful look like with my friends? What does faithful look like at this Bible study?

Our focusing idea in the Bible study this year ... Every year we have a focusing idea of the leadership team, and it takes a while to get traction on it, I think. But this year, the focusing idea is aggressively faithful to engage the next generation of Christian men. And so, we're gonna take it out for a spin with some quarterly events. The first one is the event with John Rivers that's coming up. And then yesterday, I made a deal for a second quarterly event, and I'll tell you about that at the time. But anyway, we have a very awesome speaker lined up for the second one.

But the idea is it gives us a way ... If we want to be aggressively faithful to engage the next generation of Christian men, well what does that look like? What does to be faithful look like? Well, one is, is creating opportunities to engage them. So you see how it works, or you see how it might work.

### **WHAT FAITHFUL LOOKS LIKE IN ACTION**

All right, so now let's wrap it up with this. What faithful looks like in action. What faithful looks like in action. Tim Tebow was born in August of 1987. William Borden was born in November of 1887. Bill Borden was born exactly 100 years before Tim Tebow, and William Borden was the Tim Tebow of his generation.

He was born into an extremely wealthy family in Chicago. His mother became a Christian, and they started going to Moody Church in Chicago, and at the age of seven, young William Borden was convicted of his need for Jesus and received Jesus as his savior and Lord and immediately turned to a life of devotion.

He graduated from high school at the age of 16, and his parents, who, as I said, we're very wealthy, gave him a gap year. And so he literally traveled on a steamer around the world. He started in San Francisco, went to Japan, China, India, Turkey, Greece, Switzerland, England. I'm probably forgetting a few places where he went. And everywhere that young William Borden went, he was shocked at the effects of the lack of the gospel, that people didn't know the Lord, number one, but not only that, but the conditions in which people live. And he was particularly drawn to the Muslims who lived in China. And so, he began to get the inklings of a call, if you will, to help these people.

When he returned, he went to Yale University. He was an outstanding athlete in every area. He was also very smart. In his senior year, he was the president of Phi Beta Kappa, and then from there he went on to Princeton Seminary. His calling to the mission field was becoming stronger and stronger, and his professors ... This book, right here, written by ... This is the way that you would have done it a long time ago, Mrs. Howard Taylor, instead of Geraldine Taylor, her name or whatever it is. I think it's Geraldine. And this is biography, Borden of Yale, and in this book, she outlines how the professors had this incredible respect for this one of a kind young Tim Tebow of his age. He was a phenomenon. In fact, by his senior year at Yale, he had 1,000 of the, 1,300 students involved in Bible studies around the campus.

But he was also interested in specific people. So, one of his mother's friends ... They were visiting one of his mother's friends, and their butler was given to drink, and he spilled some ice cream on his mother's friend, and he was dismissed. And William Borden was profoundly interested and concerned by this, and so he made arrangements to go see the man and lead the man to faith in Jesus who properly developed pneumonia, and two weeks later, died.

So, the time came when young William Borden was going to get his training to go ... And, uh, by the way, he applied to China Inland Mission. He was actually a director of China Inland Mission. So because of his father dying, he had a lot of business interests to attend to as well, and he got invited on all kinds of different boards, including the Moody Bible Institute. So here's a young man in his early twenties, he's on the board of Moody Bible Institute, he's on the board of China Inland Mission, which is now ... What is it today? OMF, whatever it is. Overseas Mission Fellowship. That's what it is today. He's on the board of that in his early twenties because of the incredible wealth that he has at his disposal. And he decides to abandon everything so that he can go be a missionary to the Muslims, the 3 million Muslims, that have lived near Kano in the northwest part of Nigeria.

He decided he wanted to learn Arabic and so he traveled to Cairo, took a couple of weeks to get to Cairo and settled into the routines there, started living with a Syrian family so he could learn the Arabic language and so forth. And he contracted cerebral meningitis and died. William Borden was 25 years of age.

Tim Tebow. Imagine if Tim Tebow, who's now in his early 30s ... Imagine if Tim Tebow had died at 25. What would have happened? It would've been one of the most widely reported events of the decade. Yes? Well, that's exactly what happened when William Borden died.

So, his biographer says that with William Borden there was a no reserve, no retreat and no regrets. No reserve, no retreat and no regrets. He left his fortune in today's dollars, \$25 million, that was his share of the inheritance, left it all to charities, and you can go ... And every newspaper in the world, every newspaper in the United States for sure, many around the world were carrying articles about Tim Tebow of 100 years ago, about William Borden.

There were memorial services held literally throughout the world. In Peking, a declaration of appreciation was made in the name of William Borden. He's buried in the American cemetery in Cairo, which had fallen in disrepair. In 2016, somebody decided to fix it up, and here's what it looks like today, and this is part of the epitaph on the tombstone. Apart from Christ, there is no explanation for such a life. And then no reserve, no retreat, no regrets. You can go there today and see it.

William Borden, by worldly standards, people would've thought he was a nut. Certainly would not have thought of him choosing a life of success, but he chose to be a man of faith. He chose to ask this question, what does faithful look like? And because of that, William Borden is remembered today as an outrageously successful disciple, and there's no reason that you and I can't be remembered that way too. Let us pray.

Heavenly father, thank you so much for your word, for this message that focuses really on one word, the word faithful, which really is the essence, being faithful, the essence of Christian success. Lord, help us to embrace this idea that we are not called to produce a particular outcome, but you are calling us to be faithful. In that vein we would ask in really every situation first, what does the master need, but then also this question, what does faithful look like. So, whatever bags of gold you have entrusted to us who are in this room and online, Lord, we pray that you would help us to take those bags of gold and then double them by being faithful. In Jesus' name I pray for these men. Amen.