**Life Group Lesson**

***Principles Of Life Management***

*Life Management Principle Four*

**Icebreaker: in the context of life management and life promotion that we have been discussing; what does it mean to manage something with excellence?**

We are going to return once more to the 25th chapter of Matthew where Jesus told a story about a master with three servants. The master gave to one servant ten talents, (a sum of money) to another 5 talents, and to the final servant two. His expectation was that they would **manage** this money and give him a return on his investment upon his return. I want to talk about the middle servant, the one given 5 talents. I want to talk about him because he did not have the MOST resources or the least. He was right where the vast majority of people are, in the middle of the pack. Upon the masters return this is what happened…

***Matthew 25: 20****And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. 21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant:* ***thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things****: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

Now the first thing I want you to see is the word that is used to describe this servant. **What word is used?**

FAITHFUL

What does this word mean?

I like one translation: *Consistently trustworthy. Performs with consistency.*

What the master is saying here is not, *“Wow, you got lucky, bet all my money on one good horse, made one killer investment, and doubled my money.”* No, he said, you have been faithful, you have performed consistently, and that consistent trustworthiness has paid off. Because of that I am promoting you.

**Management Principal #4**

*When you perform with consistency in an endeavor over time the result is a level managed with excellence, which always leads to promotion.*

There is much to managing a level of life with excellence. But among the key qualities you must develop in your life is the quality of consistency. It is part of the art of life management. An integral part of you becoming what you are destined to be in life is that you learn the value and import of consistency and become consistent in the key areas of your life.

Too many people are banking on the lightning-strike method of achievement.

They think they will meander through life and stumble into destiny. They believe that it is just a matter of time until they are “discovered” or “catch a lucky break”.

Popular culture and modern myths feed this belief and behavior.

- American idol.

- The fixation with lottery and gambling.

- The overnight rags to riches stories of pop icons.

The problem is only half of the story is ever told. A few are discovered, for a few a lightning strike does bring wealth, influence and stature to their lives. But those are the aberrations, not the norm. We only see the highlight reels of life, never the grinding moments that LEAD to that highlight moment.

No one sees the countless hours a Tiger Woods spends on the putting green and the driving range. The whole goal of that time is to swing that club EXACTLY the same way each time, and KNOW what the result will be each time. And it is tedious and monotonous. We just see the spectacular shot in the tournament and him holding the trophy.

Larry Bird would stand in one spot on a court and shoot over and over for hours and hours alone in the gym. We just know about the greatness.

**True greatness is built not bestowed.**

***Mark 10: 35****James and John, Zebedee's sons, came up to him. "Teacher, we have something we want you to do for us."* ***36****"What is it? I'll see what I can do."* ***37****"Arrange it," they said, "so that we will be awarded the highest places of honor in your glory - one of us at your right, the other at your left."* ***38****Jesus said, "You have no idea what you're asking. Are you capable of drinking the cup I drink, of being baptized in the baptism I'm about to be plunged into?"* ***39****"Sure," they said. "Why not?"* ***40****But as to awarding places of honor, that's not my business. I cannot do that for you.*

It is Jesus’ kingdom. He is God. But he told them, I cannot just bestow on you greatness and honor. You have to achieve that for yourself. If Jesus cannot just give away greatness and achievement in His own kingdom there is no other arena of life where it can just be bestowed on you. And as we have seen in recent weeks if it is bestowed it will nearly always fail.

**Question: Where in life are you waiting for greatness to be bestowed instead of working to build it?**

*(Examples: A great marriage, a great family life, a great purpose… etc)*

So since we cannot count on a lightning strike out of nowhere to bring success we have to have a tool box out of which we build achievement and success. One of the essential tools is consistency.

The servant in our parable was no more talented or less talented than those around him. He did not have more resources or less resources. He had the same opportunities as everyone around him, and because he ***consistently*** (faithfully) ***managed*** those resources he;

1. doubled his resources.
2. earned greater trust and responsibility from his master. (was promoted to a higher level)

Consistency:

Doing something regularly with excellence.

Doing a thing in such a way as to be counted on to do it at any given time.

Performing at a high level each time you perform.

**Management Principal #4**

*When you perform with consistency in an endeavor over time the result is a level managed with excellence, which always leads to promotion.*

The next level of life, the life promotion you desire is not as far away as you might imagine. It is no further away than a period of time in which you consistently perform at a high level

**Consistency is a key that unlocks:**

1. **The door to promotion.** ***Matthew 25:21*** *Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.*

*-* Since you have proved to me that you will perform consistently with a few responsibilities, a few resources, I will now put greater responsibility, more influence, in your hands. Too many people are waiting until they get *“their shot”* so they can show what they can do. If you show what you can do in what you have influence over you will get your shot on a larger stage of life. Let me put it another way, **You will never be promoted to do publicly what you are not already doing privately.**

1. **The door to public recognition.** ***Matthew 6: 1****Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.* ***2****Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not* [*F13*](http://bible1.crosswalk.com/OnlineStudyBible/bible.cgi?passage=mt+6&version=kjv&showtools=0#F13#F13) *sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.* ***3****But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:* ***4****That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.* ***5****And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.* ***6****But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.* ***16****Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.* ***17****But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;* ***18****That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.*
* What you are recognized for publicly is a direct product of what you do privately. This is not just a spiritual principle.
* The applause that the concert pianist receives publicly is a product of the countless hours of private practice. Sitting in a room alone running scales, Playing a piece over and over until it is perfected.
* Most people that are people of substance feel as though they have something to offer the world and people around them. ***You will never be allowed to do publicly what you do not do consistently in private.*** David was allowed to publicly fight Goliath. It was a heroic conflict that solidified Davids status and gave him recognition in all Israel. What no one knew was that prior to that conflict David had faced down a lion that had tried to kill his sheep. He had battled a bear that tried to kill his sheep. When David went to fight Goliath it was just a continuation of what he had been doing privately. Private victories proceed public victories and recognition. What you do consistently in private will lead to your public recognition.
1. **Confidence that you can.** When confronted with the violence, strength, savagery, and fighting skill of Goliath David looked back to consistent courage and that gave him the confidence to step out and confront Goliath on the public stage. I know I will not fold in front of this giant because I faced my enemies over and over and did not fold.
2. **The door of completion.**  Most people never finish what they start because they cannot consistently stick with it. They start great and fade. They get a burst then flame out. You have to develop in yourself the ability to take the same step every day, to play that scale the same way every time, to perform at a set level over and over. That is how you achieve a goal, that is how you gain trust and confidence. That is how you arrive at a destination.

You do not get fit with one day at a gym. You go and work out day after day after day and after a long time of consistently doing it….

* Your stamina, strength, coordination, and balance improve. You start working out at a higher level. **PROMOTION.**
* People comment on your new physique. **PUBLIC RECOGNITION**.
* Doubts that you would be able to get fit disappear. **CONFIDENCE.**
* You work out every day, for a long enough period of time, you will arrive at your fitness goal. **COMPLETION.**

All of these things are a product of doing something consistently at a high level. They are the result of ***managing with excellence.***

**Question: What is a life promotion that you feel you are not achieving simply because of a lack of consistency?**

***What you become is a direct result of what you consistently do.***

Fit.

Financially secure.

Skilled.

A leader.

More influential.

Consistency is CPR for a life, a career, a ministry, or a goal. It will breath life into it.

**C**ommitment. You have to commit to doing something UNTIL you see the desired result. We do things and IF we see the desired results we will continue. Consistency is doing something UNTIL I see the result I desire. However long it takes, I will hang with this. That is the kind of commitment that leads to consistency that will ultimately produce change in your life. Commitment is selling out to something. Commitment is determining your course of action beforehand. You already know what you are going to do if things go well, if they go bad, if the plan works, if the plan fails. I am committed to building a church here. If people leave, if it grows fast, grows slow, I have already decided what I am going to do. Stay and build a church. Commitment is determining your course of action beforehand. When people ask you to make a commitment they are asking you to declare what you will do independent of what circumstances may arise.

**P**ersistence. Sticking with it. Trying again. This is a fundamental element of consistency. Before you BECOME consistent you will have to try something over and over and over and there will be a fair number of failures in there. But you keep trying, over and over, and if you will be persistent in a thing you will become consistent in that thing. Ever wish there was something you could do? The only thing standing between you and performing that thing at a high level is your willingness to persist at it.

*Thy prayers have come up as a memorial before me…* Cornelius prayed persistently until God recognized Him…

**R**epetition. And this is the hardest part of consistency. You have to do the same thing, over, and over, and over, and over. It can get boring. It can become mind numbing.

* Endurance bike riding is about every revolution being as close to being a carbon copy of the previous stroke as possible. You practice making the same movement over and over.
* Musicians play scales over and over. It is beyond boring.

But you have to understand that the object is that you do that until it becomes second nature to you, that it becomes your automatic movement.

In martial arts you practice one motion over and over until it becomes second nature.

Commitment + Persistence + Repitition = Consistency.

God’s desire is that you gain greater influence, control greater resources, be recognized for the mastery of your life and what you have to offer. God wants you to be a ruler over many things. The beginning of that happening for you is for you to develop consistency in your life and thereby manage with excellence the level you are at.