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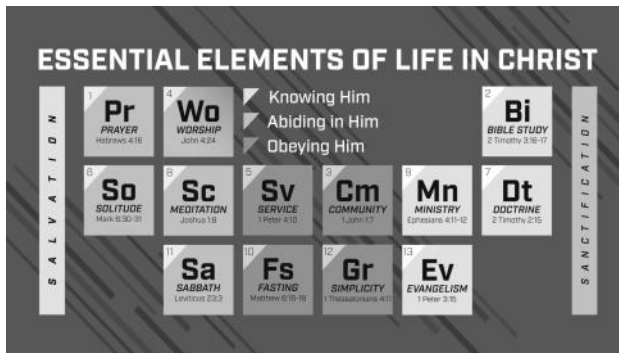
Ron Fields
Pastor of Senior Adults & Care Ministries

New Year, New ROUTINE

Wade Allen
Lead Pastor

One of the highlights for me personally in 2021 was the study that we went through on the Essential Elements of Life in Christ—a study about the various disciplines of the Christian walk. In that study, we concluded that a regular routine of spiritual disciplines is needed to be able to live the life that God wants us to live. With the arrival of a new year, I want to encourage you to evaluate your daily, spiritual disciplines and determine what new routines you need to start to be able to live for Him.

There is a company that specializes in helping people find work-life balance in their daily lives. As part of their research and development process, they spent a few years analyzing the daily routines, meal plans, sleeping rituals and workout regimens of over fifty Olympic and Paralympic athletes with a combined total of over 100 medals. Here is some of what they discovered from their research:



- Lesson #1: 10,000 Hours – In order to set yourself apart from amateurs and the rest of the world in a particular sport, they determined that you would have to dedicate at least 10,000 hours to practice.
- Lesson #2: The Entourage Effect – In simple terms, this tells us that athletes who spend time with and train with other elite athletes are more likely to excel in their sport.

When it comes to gymnastics, elite gymnasts train for thousands of hours and their events in the competition are over in just a matter of minutes—all of it done to win a prize, an Olympic medal. Everything they have worked for—all

that training—culminates in just a few short moments of their life. The pressure is tremendous, but they are able to perform under pressure because of the thousands of hours they disciplined themselves leading up to that moment.

In much the same way, that is what Christian, spiritual disciplines do for us too. You see, the disciplines are not the test of our faith—they are preparation for the test. As we discipline our lives

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Life Goals—TRUST

David McEven

Pastor of Family and Worship

Happy New Year! It's hard to believe but this month marks my one year anniversary as your Pastor of Family and Worship at Temple Baptist Church. This and the arrival of the new year have me reflecting on what I would like to do differently in 2022. Perhaps some of you are doing the same thing.

When Jesus spoke in the Sermon on the Mount, He had a few words to say about what our pursuit in life should be. He said, "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." (Matthew 6:24) In other words, He says that pursuing God—not materialism or any other "-ism"—should be our primary goal in life.

The people listening would naturally begin to question, "What do you mean I'm not supposed to pursue money? How will my needs be met otherwise?"

To these thoughts, Jesus reminds the people of God's deep love, understanding, and care for them and His commitment to provide for all their needs. He then calls them to place their trust in the Lord, saying: "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33)

As we look to the possibilities of the coming year, let us take these words to heart. May we make the pursuit of the Lord and His ways our primary goal and trust that God will be faithful to care for us and supply all our needs.

Undivided ATTENTION

Ron Fields

Pastor of Senior Adults and Care Ministries

The packages have all been opened, the Christmas meal has been decimated, and it is time to restore order out of chaos.

We look forward to Christmas with anticipation. There are parties and programs. There are last minute gifts to find. Necessary decorations are put in place. The menu is planned.

But now it is over. Company has come and gone. The wrappings need to be cleaned up. Leftovers are refrigerated. Decorations must come down. For many there is a sense of sadness. Maybe not all wishes came to pass. Maybe there was friction in the family. Maybe the wrong things were celebrated.

The second chapter of Matthew tells of wise men from the East following a star to Jerusalem.

There they inquired about a new born King of the Jews. Pointed toward Bethlehem they renewed their journey and rediscovered the star. Verse 10 says, "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."

With the coming of a New Year, perhaps this "King of the Jews" should claim our full devotion, our undivided attention. While some see Him as the enemy, or as a person to be ignored, we who have put our faith and trust in Him as our Savior should prioritize our relationship with Him. Let our response to the after Christmas let-down be to "rejoice with exceeding great joy!"



Who Will You Be WITH in 2022?

John O'Connor

Pastor of Community Engagement

About six years ago, Wade encouraged Laura and I to go to a marriage conference called “Weekend to Remember.” It was an awesome time, and I encourage anyone at any stage of marriage to go to this. “Weekend to Remember” is a 3 day/2 night retreat held in dozens of locations across the United States

One of the things that has stuck with me from that retreat was the session on Relationships Matter. When I read it, at first I was like “well... duh. That’s why we are here, right?” The session focused on the actions we should be taking to show that Relationships Matter, mainly spending quality time together, not quantity. It’s really not about the number of hours together, but the quality of time spent together.

As we look at Jesus life, we are obviously not able to see every moment Jesus spent on this earth, so we cannot know all the inner workings and details of the time the disciples had

with Jesus; but the way we see Jesus’ ministry unfold in the gospels is that He spent quality time with His disciples—teaching them (Mark 4:23), teaching others (Matt 23:1), finding time to rest and relax with them (Mark 6:31), talking to them (Mark 8:27), and just being with them.

Consider this, the disciples were not just men to Him. The disciples were His students, His friends, His children. Jesus didn’t just spend a lot of time around them, he spent time ‘With’ them. I encourage you in the year 2022, to spend time ‘With’ people growing deeper in your faith (your friends, children, spouses, neighbors).

Obviously, a great place to spend time ‘With’ people is in a community group, don’t stop there, go deeper. Have an inner circle and be intentional in that relationship. Let’s make 2022 a rebirth of spending time ‘with’ people, not just around them.



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according to God’s Word, we are preparing for whatever it is that God has in store for us. When we face that trial... that difficulty... that undeserved persecution... the work that we have put into our relationship with God in daily disciplines will be revealed by our reaction to the pressure. The big difference is that we don’t know when that test is going to occur—we must always be ready!

Paul addressed this in his letter to the church in Corinth, just a short distance from the city of Athens, where the original Olympic Games were held. He said, “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable... I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.” (1 Corinthians 9:24-25, 27)

Our “Christian Walk” refers to everything that happens in our lives after salvation that leads to sanctification (or a holy life). Sanctification occurs in a believer’s life through the application of these essential elements (or spiritual disciplines).

- What does your daily routine of spiritual disciplines look like?
- What are the daily rhythms that exist in your life that are preparing you for your next spiritual test?
- What are your “holy habits”—the things that you do regularly to help you to live according to God’s Word?
- One author refers to this as “sacred rhythms.” Sacred referring something dedicated to God and rhythm referring a strong, regular, repeated pattern. What do these sacred rhythms look like in your life?



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