

# ***Made for More***

Preview Week

February 13-14

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Last weekend was the Super Bowl and there is no bigger spectacle in sports than the Super Bowl! People who don't watch football any other time tune in to see who will win the big game! Even the commercials are great in the Super Bowl. The Super Bowl is fun to watch! But could you imagine playing in it?

In 2007 our family had a few of my daughter's friends and their parents over to celebrate her birthday. One of her friend's father happened to play for the Pittsburgh Steelers. He and I are also friends and played basketball together and worshiped together at the same church during that time. Now my daughter's birthday party happened to fall on Super Bowl Sunday 2008.

I thought, "This will be great!" We can celebrate her birthday and have a Super Bowl party! It is like a 2 for 1 party! So, after we opened the gifts and had some cake, I looked at some of the other Dads and gave them the sign that it was time to slide over to the living room to watch the game. It was then that I noticed that my friend that actually played in the Super Bowl the year before didn't come over. I mean he had no interest at all!

I thought that was interesting, so after a few minutes, I personally invited him to come and watch the game with the other guys in the living room. I was looking forward to hearing the stories of the year before and to get an inside scoop! I was surprised when he declined. He told me that after playing in the Super Bowl the year before, he couldn't stomach watching it. He wanted to be there again! He wanted to be on the field and not in my living room! That is because he was made to play in that game and not to watch it!

Just like my friend, we too are made for more than watching. As we prepare for the Made for More campaign, I hope you see that God wants every follower of Jesus to play an eternal role in a spectacle that is far greater than the Super Bowl. We are made for more than just watching and the good news is that God can use anyone who is willing!

Over the next 6 weeks we are going to be studying the book of Ephesians and will see what it looks like to get **More of Jesus**. You will learn that God has uniquely handcrafted you to be a part of His mission on this earth. You will see how God wants you to experience **More of His love** and how you can share it with others. We will learn how we need **more people on mission** and how to live our faith right where we live, work and play. We will end this journey as we prepare for Easter and experience **more victory**. It will be a spiritual battle to reflect Jesus and on Palm Sunday we will see how God has already defeated our enemy on the cross.

Friends we have a great journey ahead and I encourage you to set aside some time this season as we do this together. There are three ways to engage over the next 6 weeks and I would encourage you make time for all 3! First, commit to join us at worship weekly (in person or online); second, join a Life Group (weekly in person or online); and third, practice daily devotions (“Made for More” books are available at our campuses or on the link provided online).

**You are made for more!** The book of Ephesians opens with a reminder of who we really are. **Ephesians 1:4** *“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight and v7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us.* In other words, God wants us to live a life of eternal significance. This isn’t based upon your ability or skill. You don’t have to prove yourself or earn a spot. You are made for this; he created you for it and he chooses you. All you have to do is respond.

A couple of years ago I had a car that was made to go fast. When you drive a car enough, you can begin to find the sweet spot in how the gears work. There is usually a highway speed between 55-85 mph where the car wants to ride. This particular car really handled and drove well around 75-80 mph. As a matter of fact, when you were going this fast, it actually felt like you were going 40mph. It was smooth. The problem was when I got pulled over. Police officers didn’t care how the car was geared, they just wanted me to slow down! ☺

Just like that car we are created to run at a different pace. In Hebrews 11, we see that **Faith is fuel to experience more of God.** **Hebrews 11:1-2** *“Now faith is the confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what is visible.*

If we want to find more, we are going to have to take steps into the unknown. Faith at times looks risky, but these steps are not blind because we ultimately trust the one who is calling us. Only on the other side do we realize that we have found more right here and will have more in eternity.

**God will use anyone for more if they are willing!** Randy Alcorn, in his book Unlikely Heroes writes, “(Christianity) is not an elitist faith. It is God’s invitation to ordinary people to dare to do the impossible: to enter into relationship with the living creator. With faith as your stylus, you can engrave your name here.”

In **Hebrews 11**, we see a section of scripture that some call “the faith hall of fame.” Sometimes we are enamored with heroes on this list like Moses, Abraham, and Noah, but in reality these are ordinary people. Some on that list made huge moral mistakes. Others lacked skill and the ability to do the job that God called them to do. They were ill-prepared, ill-equipped, and often average. But what they did have was faith. They trusted God; they took steps and they experienced more!

**How can we live like this? Hebrews 12:1-2** *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.*

First, **throw off all that hinders and entangles.** Championship coach Pat Riley says that most teams don't repeat as champions because they focus on the wrong kind of “more.” The players want more. At first, that “more” was winning the championship, but once players have that championship, it's no longer enough. The “more” becomes other things like more money, more TV commercials, more endorsements and accolades, more playing time, more plays called for them, more media attention, etc.

As a result, what was once a cohesive group of hardworking men begins to fray. Egos get involved and the mental attitude of the team changes. Their perfect chemistry becomes a toxic mess. Players feel entitled to ignore the small, routine tasks that actually win championships, believing that they've earned the right to not do it anymore. What they don't realize is what they were trading. They were no longer able to focus on the nitty-gritty of basketball.

The same can happen to us when we get distracted by the wrong kind of more. Whether it is a distraction that hinders us or sin that really entangles our lives. We need to do the same thing. Throw it off!

I realized this last month as I began pursuing a resolution of a better diet. I changed many of the things I was putting into my body and was surprised by the result. As I began to live in a way that was healthier physically, I began to notice that my emotional health was also improving. I had more energy and focus. I know that I am starting to sound like an infomercial, but I had no idea how much my diet was hindering me.

There are patterns and behaviors that we can fall into that hold us back. Sometimes they are not even immoral. Personally, I just liked to eat junk food, but these things can hold us back. Other times we know what we are doing is wrong. The bible calls it sin and it tangles our life. The Bible says that we should throw these things off. Maybe you need to tell someone or find a way to hold yourself accountable. For me this is a daily decision. For each day that I eat well, I put a little thumbs up in my calendar. This little trick has helped me fight temptation for the things that hinder me!

As we prepare the journey ahead, is there something in your life that you know is holding you back? Make the choice today to throw it off.

**Fix your sight on Jesus.** As we prepare for the Made for More Campaign, it will be helpful to free ourselves from the things that limit us. That is not, however, the entire goal. If we want More of God, we need to make sure that we are focused on the right things.

My family has rescued 4 cats. I know that is a lot of felines. When we first rescued these cats, they were a little jumpy but now they are living a great life. My wife actually has this mug that says, "I work so my cats can enjoy a more comfortable life." One thing that I have noticed is the ability my cats have to focus on something if they find it interesting. They will go from completely asleep to just locked in on something in a second. It's actually startling when they are looking at something behind me. I can't tell if there is an ax murderer behind me or just a fly on the wall. It is the same focus! This is the type of focus that God wants us to have! **Hebrews 12:1-2** tells us, *and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.*

If we want to live for more, we need to do more than just take off the things that ultimately hurt so we can focus on the one that gives us more life! That is why we are asking you to set aside time to focus on Jesus. By making worship a priority online or in-person, participating in a group where you talk about what God is teaching you, and spending time daily with God, you can focus your heart and mind on the one who gives more. How about you? Is there a chance that you could use a little more of Jesus right now?

This past year, it has been easy to get entangled in emotions and thoughts that hinder what God wants. Is there something in your life that is holding you back from experiencing more of God? Do you know of something that has tangled you? Something that is controlling you in a way that is destructive?

Will you commit today to throw those things away? If you need help or prayer in these areas, please let us know in the communicator card today. We will pray and reach out to you, if you like.

Finally, commit to **fix your eyes on Jesus**. We naturally seem to find more of whatever we focus the most on, whether that is good or bad. Why not focus on the one you are made for? Take a moment right now to quiet your heart before God. Confess anything to Him that has drawn your attention away from Him. Prepare for the journey ahead as we fix our sight on Jesus.