

Preparing for Practice

Matthew 7:24-27

2024 will be a year of practical application.

How do I practice the way of Jesus?

What is observable about my life as I walk the narrow path of kingdom living?

Matthew 4:19 "Follow me," he told them, "and I will make you fish for people."

With the **calling** of Jesus there will be **training** / assumed **obedience** and trustworthy **provision**.

Fishers of men -> drawing men and women into the kingdom.

Remember:

- You can't give what you don't have
- The gap between what we say and what we practice is where we lose people. There is an absolute disconnect.

Upon receiving the gift of salvation we are grace people, good news people and faith people.

All three require focus and practice.

Follow me -> learn to become a strong, persevering servant of the gospel.

Work with me and with the church (your spiritual family) in this world (field) to cultivate and experience new birth and new growth (fruit).

Wisdom or foolishness.

Wisdom

Fears God	Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10
Considers God's love	Psalm 107:43
Slow to speak	Proverbs 10:19; James 1:19
Develops Humility	Proverbs 11:2
Tell others about Jesus	Proverbs 11:30
Listens	Proverbs 15:31
Depends on Jesus	1 Corinthians 1:30

Foolishness

Denies God	Psalm 14:1
Hates Knowledge	Proverbs 1:22
Over Confident	Proverbs 14:16
Sticky Beak (meddler)	Proverbs 20:3
Wastes money (doesn't save)	Proverbs 21:20

vs. 24, Hears and Acts -> Knowledge -> the fusion of truth and action.

What is at the heart of following Jesus?

We must fully embrace with heart (character), soul (conviction), mind (comprehension), and strength (competence / skill) the life and love of Jesus, compelling us to love (have compassion) our neighbor.

vs. 25, Your house is going to get pounded! (rain, flood, wind)

A life of foolishness has eternal consequences.

Are you committed to Jesus?

Are you willing to leave everything you know and be captivated by the Son of God? (Follow me and I will make you...)

vs. 26-27, Foolishness is one who is too dependent on self and too content with the status quo (that is just the way things are).

- We are quick to be comforted by good intentions.
- The practice of religion brings a sense of order.
- Jesus as Savior seems so comforting, but Jesus who requires change (that's too far).
- Complaining is more therapeutic than forgiveness.
- Acceptance is of more value than accountability.

The idea and necessity of practice.

Malcolm Gladwell -> 10,000 hour rule (approx. 10 years).

- Deliberate practice - with a specific goal in mind / "repeatedly stepping outside your comfort zone and trying activities beyond your current abilities." ~ K. Anders Ericsson, Peak Secrets from the New Science of Expertise
- Listening and implementing the coaching of experts
- Two other factors - age and genetics

The number of hours to reach "master" status ranged from 728 hours to 16,120 – meaning some players needed 22x more practice hours than others to reach the same skill level. ~ Fernand Gobet and Guillermo Campitelli (cognitive psychologists)

- Last but not least - emotion, mental practice, motivation

When what we do is connected to purpose and long-term values we will experience sustainability.

20-hour Rule -> it takes 20 hours of deliberate and focused practice to become reasonably competent in a new skill. (The First 20 Hours: How to learn Anything...Fast! By Josh Kaufman)

- Choose the skill you want to learn.
- Break the skill into smaller parts.
- Research the skill.
- Create a learning plan.
- Practice regularly.
- Get feedback.

Foolishness is not our propensity towards sin. Foolishness is a refusal to acknowledge our sin, repent, and experience forgiveness.

Transformation is the result of a house built on the rock.

Self-centered to others-centered

God centered in motivation

Grow in a desire to serve and lead

Question: How many of us really live each day with a confident trust in God to do what he says he will do? How many of us take him at his word and act with the expectation that he will be faithful?

This is the kind of faith that Jesus calls us to practice as we seek to follow him.

2024 is the year...

A decision has to be made, Do I believe a life following Jesus is better? If yes, how am I arranging my life to follow Jesus?

Are you willing to walk towards wisdom?