



DOCTOR'S ORDERS

RECUPERATING FROM LIFE'S INJURIES

WEEK 3 – PHYSICAL THERAPY

CHECK-IN

How are you? Where have you seen God working in your life in the last week? And... when have you done something you weren't supposed to? Not in a legal sense, (we'll keep your alibi safe, promise,) but in a "I had no business running a 5k with no training" sense. Ready, go!

OPENING PRAYER

God of Creation, remind us to be patient with our soul recovery.

INTRODUCTION

Pastor Mike: That's kinda been the story for me of the last 2 months: doing things I probably shouldn't, things I was probably not ready to do. But I'll come back to that. Welcome to week 3 of our series, "Doctor's Orders." And if you're just stepping into this series... lemme catch you up. Two months ago, I had a kidney removed to donate to my father. And in the time since, we've both learned some things about ourselves while we're recovering. I've learned that the source

of my bad jokes does not lie in the kidneys. And dad learned that major surgery does not get you out of doing what my mother tells him to do. We've also learned that a lot of the things we were told to do to give our bodies the best chance of healing, were a great analogy for things we can do in life when we're recovering from any struggle. My doctors orders helped me heal from the surgery. God's orders help us heal from spiritual and emotional pain. Today we'll look at the next step in that recovery, and how it might not requires steps at all, but rather the patience to not do too much.

Set-up Question: Last week, we talked about utilizing your Care Team to help you through the recuperation of your soul. Were you able to rely on your Care Team this past week? Did you let people support you through a difficult situation... or any situation?

SCRIPTURE

Quick recap. For the details, go back and catch up on the first two reflection guides. So, week 1, we looked at the first of these "Doctor's Orders." My primary instruction was simply,

1. GET SOME REST

My body had gone through major trauma, it needed an extended period of doing nothing. Likewise, when we've gone through a shock to our mental, emotional, or spiritual system, our souls need time to

recover, too. Okay, but *how* do we do it? Well, in my recovery, one of those doctor's orders was...

2. TRUST YOUR CARE TEAM

The only thing worse than not being able to do stuff, is not being able to do stuff *for myself*. My doctors knew that if I was going to heal, I would need a team of people helping to care for me. And that's an axiom that's not just true for me and the last month and a half, this is something that is true for our spiritual lives as well. Learn to admit you need help, accept that help, and build a team around you to rely on such that they can handle some of the burden while your soul is recovering. Today, we move on to Doctor's Order #3...

3. DO YOUR PHYSICAL THERAPY

My body had just undergone major trauma and to get back to a normal level of functionality, I was going to need someone help me rehab physically. Lucky for me, I'm married to one. Unlucky for her, I'm a horrible patient. I still find myself doing more than I should be doing. Instead, if I were doing it right, I would be following my therapist's orders and rehabbing in the right way. From the very beginning, God built into us the right way to approach soul recovery.

Read Genesis, chapter 2, verses 1 through 2.

Usually when I preach on this, it's about the importance of the Sabbath and that seventh day of rest. But there's a slightly different point in there, one that's hidden in the text, that can help us as we seek the orders that will help us recover from the spiritual injuries in life.

Question 1: Consider this passage and the Creation story. What stands out to you about this passage? What does it say about God? What does it say to you?

REFLECTION

The repeating trend for the last two has been... get feeling better, do things I used to do before the surgery, overdo it, pay the price, rinse, repeat. If I were following this doctor's order correctly and following the physical therapy I'm supposed to do, I would be doing two things... and the first is this:

DON'T TRY TO DO TOO MUCH TOO SOON

Now, here's where I ran into a problem. I listened... at first. I didn't lift more than 10 lbs... that anyone could prove. I rested. I let others carry things... mostly because Livian wouldn't let me. But then I started feeling better. And when I was feeling better, I started to do more stuff. And when I started to do more stuff, I started to push those limits. And then I would push a limit... and I would pay the price. Three and a half weeks after getting out of the hospital, we

planned a trip to Seattle where I would officiate Teri's nephew's wedding. We hiked 40 miles over the course of the week, including multiple hikes the NPS labeled as "strenuous," and capped the week off with a half-mile run through the Minneapolis airport to catch a connecting flight that would ended up delayed an hour, negating the need for the run. Oh well. I can't seem to help but do too much too soon because my default is to start with activity. We tend to do the same thing in life when we go through a struggle. We're out of the fire, we're out of the valley, so we think, we're good, let's just go back to life as normal. And in some respects, that's okay. But if we do too much too soon, we prevent ourselves from healing the right way or possibly injure ourselves even worse.

Question 2: Are you the kind of person who tends to do too much too soon? Do you push and push even to your own detriment? Do you ignore your own physical, mental, or emotional pain to just power through? If so, where do you think that comes from?

God has a different "doctor's order" for us. Today's scripture says, "on the seventh day" God rested. But that's from God's point of view. For God, the day of rest was the last day. But what day is "rest day" for humans? We were created on day 6... so, kinda of a half-day. That makes "rest day" DAY ONE for us. I don't believe that's an accident. That's an intentional bit o' information with an intentional message. For us, rest should not be the last thing we do... we should *come from* a place of rest. God created us on day 6, so that *our* day 1 would be the day of rest. But we don't treat it that way. We treat rest like it's a

reward for a job well done. We treat rest like it's the afterthought or the prize for busting our butts, doing too much too soon, fighting so hard, that by the time we get to it, it's not rest, it's collapse.

And so, when we are coming out of the difficulties in life, spiritual or emotional injuries, our temptation is to think, I'm ready to go back to life, "full steam ahead." And rather than starting from a place of rest, as God has prescribed for us, we say, "I'll rest when I get things done," and we just injure ourselves worse. We don't deal with the spiritual and emotional trauma, and it comes out in painful and difficult ways. Start with rest... start with taking it slowly, start with easing back into life. Don't do too much too soon. Begin by being patient with your recovery. Take time to rest or grieve if you need to. Let your Care Team handle some things so you can do what you need to do to heal. The other way to start from rest? Make your day of rest a day of rest. We pack our Sundays (or whatever day should be your Sabbath) so full, you enter into the week exhausted and wonder why you're toast by Tuesday. Start from a place of rest.

Question 3: What would it look for you to start from a place of rest? Do you have a good balance in life, able to take days off to recharge? What would it take to make rest a primary part of your life?

CLOSING

The second premise for my physical therapy was the flip side of the coin... when it's time to start PT, yes, you don't want to do too much too soon, but you also don't want to just do nothing... you have to do

the right things, so that your body heals in the right way and you don't develop bad habits. I've been making the mistake of thinking if I just get back to doing what I was doing before, if I just plow ahead like nothing happened, I'll be fine. Well, I sat on my butt for a month and a half... not to mention, I'm 46... I can't just go hike 40 miles and run through the airport, and not expect to pay a price. If I'd have been doing what I was supposed to, and doing stretching and exercises and working my way back into shape, I wouldn't be on this rollercoaster of feeling good, overdoing it, paying the price.

The same is true in our spiritual lives... what are our spiritual exercises... what's the stretching that will help us heal the right way? For that, you gotta come back next week for the last of our Doctor's orders. For this week, if you're coming out of a spiritual valley, remember not to overdo it, don't do too much too soon... because that just leads to setbacks, more exhaustion, and greater injury. Instead, as humanity did from its very inception... start from a place of rest... In the bigger picture, it's okay to say you're not ready to get back to full steam ahead. And in the immediate picture, remember to START your week with the day of rest.

**Take some time to share prayer requests or celebrations
and close in prayer.**