

SMALL GROUPS

Main Point: We need to stop trying and start training to become who God has called us to be.

Key Scripture: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 1 Timothy 4:7-8

Series Review - The Five Spiritual Questions:

1. Spiritual WHO - Who does God want me to become?
2. Spiritual WHY - Why do I want to change?
3. Spiritual WHAT - What habit do I need to start?
4. Spiritual WHAT NOT - What habit do I need to break?
5. Spiritual HOW - How will I train to become that person?

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Difference

1. What resonated most with you from this sermon? Why?
2. Pastor Mack defined trying as "an attempt to change with minimal commitment" and training as "a wholehearted commitment to achieve a specific result." Can you think of examples from your own life where you've been trying vs. training?
3. Read 1 Timothy 4:7-8 together. Why do you think Paul emphasizes training over trying? What does this tell us about the nature of spiritual growth?

Personal Reflection

4. The sermon mentioned that "trying" often comes with an excuse clause built in ("I'm trying to pray, but..."). What "trying" statements have you been using that need to shift to "training" statements?

5. Athletes get the gear and create a game plan. When it comes to your spiritual growth:

- What "gear" do you need? (Bible, journal, app, accountability partner, etc.)
- What does your game plan look like?

6. Pastor Mack said, "You're not trying to become something you're not. You're training to become who God already sees that you are." How does this perspective shift change the way you view your spiritual journey?

Going Deeper

7. Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. Paul talks about running with purpose and disciplining his body. What specific areas of your life need more discipline and intentionality?

8. The sermon addressed our culture's desire for instant gratification. How has this mindset affected your spiritual growth? Where have you quit because you didn't see immediate results?

9. Pastor Mack challenged us: "Stop giving the Lord lip service and telling Him this is what I'm going to do and start committing yourself to do it." That's a strong statement. What commitments have you made to God that you haven't followed through on?

Key Takeaways

✓ Trying = minimal commitment with an excuse clause ✓ Training = wholehearted commitment to achieve a specific result ✓ Winners show up and train, not just when they achieve the goal ✓ Training requires getting the gear AND creating a game plan ✓ We act according to our commitment, not our feelings ✓ God already sees who we can become; we're training to become who He created us to be

Practical Application

Individual Action Steps

Based on who you want to become, how are you going to start training TODAY?

Have each person write down:

1. My Spiritual WHO: (Who is God calling me to become?)
2. My Training Plan:
 - The Gear I Need:
 - My Game Plan: (Specific, measurable actions)
 - Daily:
 - Weekly:
 - Monthly:
3. My First Training Step: (What will I do in the next 24 hours?)

Accountability

- Pair up with one other person in the group
- Share your training plan with each other
- Exchange contact information
- Commit to checking in with each other this week

Group Challenge

The 21-Day Training Challenge:

- Choose ONE area where you're going to shift from trying to training
- Create a specific daily action (reading plan, prayer time, exercise, financial discipline, etc.)
- Check in with your accountability partner daily
- Report back to the group in three weeks

Closing Exercise

Making Room for God

The sermon ended with the song "Make Room." Spend time in quiet reflection:

1. Where do you need to make room for God in your schedule?
2. What needs to be "shaken up" or broken down in your life?
3. What are you holding onto that you need to surrender?

Prayer Time:

- Have group members share one specific area where they're committing to train, not try.
- Pray over each person, asking God to give them strength, discipline, and the power of the Holy Spirit to follow through.
- Pray for a shift in mindset from instant gratification to faithful training.

Before Next Week

- Review your training plan daily
- Connect with your accountability partner at least twice
- Be prepared to share one win from your training (even if it's just showing up!)
- If you missed any sermons in this series, watch them at odysseychurch.tv

Leader Notes

- Be Vulnerable: Share your own struggles with trying vs. training to set the tone for honest conversation
- Avoid Condemnation: This sermon is convicting, but frame it as loving correction, not guilt
- Celebrate Small Wins: Remind the group that showing up to train IS winning, even before results appear
- Emphasize Grace: Training requires discipline, but it's empowered by God's grace, not our own strength
- Follow Up: Check in with group members throughout the week via text or call

"We're not trying to be different people, but we're training to be different people." - Dallas Willard