

*D*ynamic Worship *N*ew Insights *A*ppplied Knowledge

The DNA of FlagNaz is relatively simple (see above). We believe there is a collective wisdom rising up out of our shared experiences and interaction.

Inspiration lasts for the moment. Application a lifetime...

★Write down one new insight you received today...

★Thinking...

- What spiritual practices do I use that promote my *wellness*?
- In what ways am I currently spiritually *unwell*? What practices might Jesus be leading me into that strengthen these?
- Over what areas of life have I ceded authority to the Holy Spirit? In what areas am I retaining control?
- What is one recent example of acting in the freedom of *wellness* that comes from blind faith in Jesus's authority?

★Applying...

- Commit to tracking spiritual practices throughout the week
- How many days per week did I spiritually exercise? How much time per day? How many different practices?
- Think, write, or talk out what resulted from observing your spiritual practices

★Praying...

- Pray for help ceding control over your life to Jesus through the Spirit
- Pray that you be pleasing to God as Lord of your life
- Pray for those in your life to whom you will share the Good News of your *Healer* and *Spiritual Trainer*

FlagNaz

*B*elong... *B*elieve... *B*ecome...

June 12th, 2022

Be Healed and Thrive Part 2: Living the Dream

John 8:10-11

Success is not a destination, but the road that you're on. Being successful means that you're working hard and walking your walk every day. You can only live your dream by working hard towards it. That's living your dream.

-Marlon Wayans

I) **Now What...**

Most of us have heard stories of lottery winners whose lives were destroyed. Relationships broken, abused by people they loved, often needing to relocate and break contact with their former community. It is tempting to think *that would not be my story*. If the *Thriving Life* was made possible by external realities, we would be correct. Instinctively, those of us who have been *Healed* sense this is not Truth (Mt 11:8).

♦**Running relocates the problem**: Many are tempted to move on when things get uncomfortable. A change of scenery might give us a better life. New job, new friends, no enemies, away from these conflicts. Experience suggests otherwise (Jonah). Running only relocates our problems. Not long after settling in we have fresh conflicts, complicated relationships, and the same feelings as before. Upon *Healing* us, Jesus says "Go your way... (John 8:11)." He understands our *wounded soul* is not the same as a broken wrist. The broken wrist may have been caused by riding too difficult a trail. It was our engagement with an external force. Avoid that circumstance in the future and we can *Be Well*. But our *wounded soul* is caused by an inner reality, by how we think and feel about ourselves in relation to the outside world (Prov 17:22, Ezek 36:26). Wherever we go carry this source of *sickness*.

♦**Our injury**: A common symptom of our former *wounded soul* is arguments. Especially arguments with those we love. Think back to your last significant argument...was it caused by one of you not getting your way? The deadly injury from which we all suffer is centering life around the wrong person. Usually, it is ourselves. We decide to be our ultimate authority (Gen 3:5-6). We control how we live. We take what we want. We expect others to fulfill our wishes. Our natures tend toward victimization or authoritarianism (we might call this being a control freak). When two of us disagree, our respective victimhood or authority collide in painful ways (Gen 4:6-8). We cannot *Be*

Healed and Thrive if we are constantly at war over who is in charge (Prov 10:12, 2 Tim 2:23-25, James 3:14-16). Jesus reveals the way of *Thriving Life* in saying “from now on do not sin again (John 8:11).”

II) Rules to Live by...

Many have tried to earn health by maintaining the rules. Lose weight by dieting. Relieve back pain by stretching daily. Improve heart health by exercising. The problem with these remedies, these paths to *Thriving Life*, is they are unsustainable for most of us. Suppressing our inner desire to destroy the ice cream carton in the freezer, skip yoga, or to relax rather than hitting the gym shifts the conflict inside ourselves. So how are we going to avoid breaking God’s rules to live by? What does breaking a rule here and there have to do with *wellness*, anyway?

♦**The issue is not the issue:** Most of us who have developed exercise routines have struggled at one time or another. Being responsible only to ourselves, we find unending reasons that justify skipping a workout. The most effective cure – hire a physical trainer. Once we cede responsibility to another, we go along with their plans. Jesus wants to be our spiritual trainer. His command “from now on do not sin again,” is not admonishment – it’s freedom (John 8:36, Gal 5:1, 1 Pet 2:16)! He invites us to let Him be in charge, to be God. Breaking a rule is *evidence* we are *unwell*, that we are rejecting God’s plan and His legitimate authority. Also we deny His power.

♦**I read an article:** Some of us stubbornly hold on to the notion that not only are we in charge, we know best. We hire physical trainers then debate whether the exercise program they provide is effective. *I read that interval training is the best way to lose weight...* This is the strange phenomenon of believing ourselves to be as skilled and knowledgeable as the experts we hire. The power of our desire to be in control is insidious (Deut 8:17-18)! In part, it stems from a factual reality – people let us down. Nobody is both totally dedicated to our *wellbeing* and powerful enough to do whatever our *wellness* requires. Not our parents, teachers, doctors, counselors, leaders...they have all failed us at some point. God’s Word declares that He loves us beyond measure and possesses power over all creation (Josh 1:9, John 3:16). Having *Healed* us, He offers us His path of *wellness*, His plan of Hope, His inheritance of eternal *Thriving Life* (Jer 29:11, 1 Pet 1:3-4). Jesus invites us to exercise obedience as a means to test His faithfulness.

III) Once Bitten Twice Shy...

One might think, *I have tried and failed time and again to obey.* Hiring a personal trainer was effective for a time. Then it wasn’t. I rescheduled once or twice. I canceled last minute for some crisis. Then I broke things off to “take a break.” Reality is, we did not cede responsibility, we added accountability. When we lost interest in being responsible, no amount of

accountability inspired us to work for our *wellness*. How is this time any different?

♦**Don’t overthink things:** As citizens of the Information Age, we have access to more data, more information, than anybody for all time. This is an incredible resource, but one we often mistake for incredible power. We believe citing some data makes us experts at a field. So, we apply ourselves to thinking through everything and deciding for ourselves the best course of action. We demand interval training because of what we know about it. We reduce our personal trainer to a hall monitor there to ensure we do whatever it is we choose to do. Jesus has no interest in being our hall monitor (John 12:47). He invites us to truly cede all authority over our lives to Him (Isa 9:6, John 20:28, Rom 10:9). Then Jesus reveals His divine understanding of our true condition, the depth of our *sickness*. He commits to send us an Advocate, a Helper, Who will assist us in letting go (John 14). The Holy Spirit is like the world’s best nurse, One who intimately shares life with us and constantly reminds us to follow the *Healer’s* orders. One who testifies to the greatness of our *Healer*, that He has a 100% success rate for those who follow His prescription for *Thriving Life*.

♦**Sit back and enjoy the ride?:** If we cede authority over our exercise routine to our trainer, and we have a wonderful nurse who motivates us to arrive at the gym faithfully, there is not much for us to do. If we can only get someone else to perform the exercise, we can coast our way to *Thriving Life*. At this point we learn that our role, the very thing we were made for, is to live life. A *Thriving Life*. Obedience is a form of *active proximity*, not passive compliance (Ps 16:8, 73:28, Jer 23:23). Our physical trainer tells us to be *well* we must perform a set of exercises. Our Spiritual Trainer tells us the same. Only He says *Follow Me* as He leads the way in performing them. Obedience is the work of staying close to a God on the move.

♦**I want what she has:** A month or two into our faithful obedience of our physical trainer, we notice clothes getting looser. This gets our attention, awakening us to the fact our back pain is less frequent and severe. We’ve been waking faster with a bit more energy, too. Wow, our trainer really is leading us to *Thriving Life!* As we stay close to God, there comes a time He Rests. Resting, we may notice ways in which we have grown *Healthier*. We have not had many angry outbursts. Fewer outbursts have led to more Peace, more Kindness. This has produced a bit more Joy, which has led to greater Self-Control (Gal 5:22-23). We are more than *Healed*, we are *Thriving!* Others may not notice at first. Jesus leads us into encounters in which people must take notice. *Wow, you were so Calm when... I can’t believe you said that Nice Thing to so and so...* As our spiritual training leads to spiritual vitality, we become attractive, welcoming, and comfortable to the *sick* around us (Acts 1:8). *Being Healed and Thriving* reshapes us into the best brand advocates for Jesus.