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10,000 HOURS

How would you live differently if your perspective of spiritual conviction were that of being coached, not judged?

Have you committed to become excellent in something? What is it? How has that shaped your life?

How do you discriminate between temporary and eternal ambitions in your pursuit of excellence?

2 Corinthians 7:10 – For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death.

I) **Perfect Form...**

Whining, excuses, and complaining are often symptoms of indifference. We have been deceived to believe they are good for our emotional health. Really, they drain us of our agency to create results. Effective agency takes answering a series of questions. How desirable is the result? What are the options to achieve it? Are we willing to commit to what is necessary? Excellence takes repetition, unwavering standards, and the courage to be brutally honest with ourselves. In some things, the price is too high and it's time to quit or accept mediocrity. Others, excellence is worth it. We will do the work to develop perfect form for superior results.

AUGUST 31ST, 2025

♦**Not quite right**: A phrase also indicating indifference is *good enough*. Used correctly, it is powerful. It keeps us from investing more into something in which we do not value excellence. Is it a wedding cake or a first birthday cake? One is worth perfection—the other, not so much. Is excellence in our representation of Jesus worth the price of excellence? If so, good enough isn't. "For godly grief (2 Corinthians 7:10)," is the Holy Spirit communicating to ours that our form is not quite right. We need to try again until we perfect the movement.

♦**Keep working**: How should we respond to the awareness that something is not quite right? We keep working. It may take keeping at the thing we are doing. Others, it's a fresh approach on the next opportunity. Either way, it is not accepting what is not good enough. Godly grief is the motivation that "produces a repentance (v10)," from shoddy performance toward excellence instead. Resisting the impulse to abandon a hard conversation that requires selfless listening to understand. Committing to a genuine smile for the next person you see.

II) For Perfect Results...

We can only pledge unlimited commitment to one, maybe two areas of excellence. Excellence is a standard that consumes all of oneself, leaving scraps and byproducts for any other endeavor. We must give everything for perfect results. We choose our target of excellence at the exclusion of others. This is one reason there are so many famous stories of exceptional performers whose lives are otherwise a mess. So too will ours be if we choose poorly. Sooner or later, perfection in one area requires failing in another.

♦**No more excuses**: Jesus came to free us from the wrong choice. Most of us try to find shortcuts to be excellent at many things. We make excuses when it proves impossible. Some laser in on one worldly thing, sacrificing relationships and integrity to get it, counting that as a virtue because of the results. The choice to commit to being like Jesus "leads to salvation (v10)," the restoration of our identity, purpose, and the divine power to succeed. No more excuses.

♦**Satisfaction**: A common phenomenon among those who achieve excellence in worldly pursuits is the emptiness that follows. Most of these pursuits do not last a lifetime. With everything sacrificed for temporary glory, what's next? What is the sustaining source of satisfaction? Many complain of their regrets of what they gave up for the thing that is no longer meaningful. Glory days gone by. The choice to be an excellent human is lifelong "and brings no regret (v10)." The satisfaction of being well now and tomorrow is worth the sacrifices along the way.

III) Not Futility...

Trophies and awards tarnish and fade. Stories of what we could once do don't interest anyone after a while. None of this comforts us in the distress of illness or loss, estrangement and abandonment. Worldly pursuits come up short. They do not produce the results we realize too late matter most. Loving relationships filled with joy, contributions to the wellness of others, a legacy of justice and mercy. A life pursuing righteousness fills us with contentment, not futility.

♦**Poor process**: There is one overarching process that determines the quality of our lives. The process of becoming. If we commit to worldly results, it will drive us to become bound to temporary things. When they decay or are taken, we will feel "worldly grief (v10)." This is the grief of things unrecoverable that could have been. Because of poor process we have given everything we had in exchange for an identity with no future. The source of imitation life is drained while we are still thirsty.

♦**Poor results**: We may fulfill the dreams we had. The results are everything we thought they would be. The problem is, we didn't think it through enough. What does one do after they put in their 10,000 hours? Having achieved one's dreams there is an ache for something more, something now out of reach. There is no life-giving outlet for this grief. This grief "produces death (v10)." Don't accept these poor results. Live life to the full by committing to a life well-lived, a life for life's sake.