

Series Slide

Watch Olympics- in awe of what you see.

You don't think "I'm like that person".

Instead, we are typically thinking- THAT PERSON IS ON A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT LEVEL THAN ME.

And likely, you're right.

But maybe for the wrong reason.

In 1989, Daniel Chambliss a professor and sociologist at Hamilton College published a study on Olympic swimmers called "The Mundanity of Excellence".

The title gives away the study's conclusion.

Though we often expect Excellence to just be something you have or don't have.

The truth is-

"Excellence is mundane. Superlative performance is really a confluence of dozens of small skills or activities, each one learned or stumbled upon, which have been carefully drilled into habit and then are fitted together in a synthesized whole. There is nothing extraordinary or superhuman in any one of those actions; only the fact that they are done consistently and correctly, and all together, produce excellence.

Each of those tasks seems small in itself, but each allows the athlete to swim a bit faster. And having learned and consistently practiced all of them together, and many more besides, the swimmer may compete in the Olympic Games...the little things really do count."- Daniel Chambliss, *Mundanity of Excellence*

There is a reason why we want Excellence to be simply God-given talent.

Same reason we want leadership reserved for some special class of people.

If we can put it in some category that you either HAVE or DON'T HAVE- well- that means we don't really have to try if we "don't have it".

Right? If being an Olympic athlete or leading a group of people is MOSTLY about some God-given ability- then there's no point in working to become better. Best I can do is just be a regular person.

LEADERS as PARENT

We're talking about leadership today- we call Pillars.

True leaders- Pillars- don't exist for themselves. They live and lead to bring flourishing into and out of the lives of others.

A basic concept of this the idea of a parent.

In fact- the word Parent is derived from a Latin word that literally means "Bring Forth"

Parents- BRING FORTH- in terms of birthing kids into the world.

Which is a great way to describe what a leader, or a Pillar is.

Someone who Brings Forth flourishing in a community or a people.

“Be Fruitful and Multiply”

But we also know there is more than just helping children exist.

There is also BRINGING FORTH there potential as a human being.

Pillars Pray to Cultivate. Full of Grit.

(Cultivate- to bring Forth. And its not an easy job)

Cosby Show

A good portion of how I learned to be a parent came from the Cosby Show- in the 80s.

Episode 1

Theo gets a D on report card.

Assures Cliff its no problem, he'll just be a “regular person”- Gas Station, Bus Driver

Cliff runs experiment using Monopoly money. Theo ends up with zero money at the end of the month... that's when a frustrated Theo gives this speech with ends with raucous applause from the studio audience.

Theo: You're a doctor and Mom's a lawyer, and you're both successful and everything and that's great! But maybe I was born to be a regular person and have a regular life. If you weren't a doctor, I wouldn't love you less, because you're my dad. So rather than feeling disappointed because I'm not like you, maybe you should accept who I am and love me anyway, because I'm your son.”

This is often the way we understand God's grace. If Salvation is by Grace alone- that's exactly what I should always expect from God. A lot of Awwwww shucks- kid- anything you do is ok with me.

But see- Theo's problem isn't that his Dad isn't treating with love or grace. Its that he doesn't recognize what his father HAS given hi- invested in him. and provided for him, if he'll actually get out of his fear...and start living his calling.

So his PARENT speaks to BRING IT FORTH.

Cliff: Theo....that's the DUMBEST thing I've ever heard in my life! No wonder you get D's in everything! You're afraid to try because you're afraid your brain is going to explode and it's going to ooze out of your ears. Now I'm telling you, you are going to try as hard as you can. And you're going to do it because I said so. I am your father. I brought you into this world, and I'll take you out!”

Theo thinks Grace comes without Grit. He thinks there are talented people, smart people, and regular people.

And he's not gifted.

Cliff tells him- everything I put in your hands- I am calling you to use...BECAUSE I love you! Not in order to earn my love.

Grace/Grit/Gray slide

Today I want to introduce you to another Leadership dichotomy.

Title Slide- “Form & Fire: How the Mundane Builds Pillars”- Psalm 1

Form and Fire.

Form is practice. Fire is the game.
Form is sitting down to write as a discipline. Fire is when the Great American Novel comes out.
Form is ordinary. Fire is Extraordinary.
Form is mundane. Fire is Excellence.
Form is simple obedience. Fire is Love.
Form is the wiring. Fire is the electricity.
Form is getting in the pool at 5 am everyday. Fire is getting in the pool at the Olympics.
Form is stacking the wood. Fire is when it lights up.
Form is the Rocky musical montage. Fire is knocking Ivan Drago out.

Today- I’m going show you something very ordinary. Mundane. Boring.
I’m going to show you the form of becoming a Pillar.
If you want to know where to start. Here it is.

Psalm1

**How happy is the one who does not
walk in the advice of the wicked
or stand in the pathway with sinners
or sit in the company of mockers!
2 Instead, his delight is in the Lord's instruction,
and he meditates on it day and night.
3 He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams
that bears its fruit in its season
and its leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.
4 The wicked are not like this;
instead, they are like chaff that the wind blows away.
5 Therefore the wicked will not stand up in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
6 For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.**

1) You will be mundanely formed. Are you intentionally counter-forming for happiness?

Psalm 1:1

Happy- Blessed- this is the fire. This is what so many of us are chasing.

Blessed as happy- “I feel so lucky”- Eugene Peterson

A gift in a place you least expected it- GRIT
A sense of surprise- unexpected good fortune

Finding Extraordinary in the ordinary

Blessed- happy in the Beatitudes- Unexpected.

First 4 are grace- spiritual poverty

Second 4 are grit- operating out of spiritual wealth

Matthew 5:3-10

3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit,

for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

4 Blessed are those who mourn,

for they will be comforted.

5 Blessed are the humble,

for they will inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,

for they will be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful,

for they will be shown mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart,

for they will see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers,

for they will be called sons of God.

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,

for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Psalm 1:1

Notice- walking on a WAY. In other words- a goal.

Going somewhere. Movement.

ashrei- could be a pun on ‘ashurim’- which means “step”

But look at the formation happening.

Descent

From Standing in the way- note- supposed to be walking

First they walk with you- appearance of going the same way
Then they invite you to stand
Then you sit. Judgment. Critique. With no movement

This is the epitome of the Gray. Arm chair quarterbacks. Eating pizza rolls while they criticize the Olympic Athlete that got silver instead of Gold. Scoffers.

Consuming. Fill yourself with what you think happiness is. REGULAR PEOPLE. Don't risk. You could get hurt. Play it safe.

2) Read → Chew → Pray → Praise → Obey → Cultivate Flourishing

Psalm 1:2

Meditate- HAGAH- to chew. Like a dog on a bone. Meditate

Isaiah 31:4a

**For this is what the Lord said to me:
As a lion or young lion growls over its prey
when a band of shepherds is called out against it,
and it is not terrified by their shouting
or subdued by their noise,**

notice the focus- Not even distracted by an attack. FOCUSED. LOCKED IN.
knows what nourishes...Will not be distracted. Can you even do this with a phone?

Think about the difference in that picture of the people along the way that distracts the Un-happy man.

Think about the consumption and scoffing that comes through your phone.

Psalms 1:2

Psalms 1-2 are a preface to the...Book of Psalms-
dwell on this- then here are the prayers to pray

The books of Psalms in itself is FORM & FIRE
Read a Psalm- this is coming from a passion.
Now- systematically work your way through these in planned moments of worship
proof of this? Instructions for worship leaders

Psalms 150- Ends in fire- SHEER PRAISE

Psalm 150

Hallelujah!

**Praise God in his sanctuary.
Praise him in his mighty expanse.
2 Praise him for his powerful acts;**

praise him for his abundant greatness.
3 Praise him with the blast of a ram's horn;
praise him with harp and lyre.
4 Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and flute.
5 Praise him with resounding cymbals;
praise him with clashing cymbals.
6 Let everything that breathes praise the Lord.
Hallelujah!

What about OBEY?

John 14:15-17

15 "If you love me, you will keep my commands. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. 17 He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive him because it doesn't see him or know him. But you do know him, because he remains with you and will be in you. --

Form- Listen to his commands. Obey them.
Fire- LOVE; Holy Spirit- comforter

Galatians 5:16 & 22-26

16 I say, then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Psalms 1:3

3 He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams
that bears its fruit in its season
and its leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.

It's the Word of God that is the flowing stream- and the end is the fruit of obedience.
No matter the drought- or the circumstance- we get a picture of a steady non-anxious organism that prospers others.
ITS FRUITFUL and MULTIPLIES

This is a Pillar a leader.

Psalms 1:4-6

4 The wicked are not like this;
instead, they are like chaff that the wind blows away.
5 Therefore the wicked will not stand up in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
6 For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,

but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.

Pillars have weight. Trees with giant roots- hard to bring down.
Chaff- THEY GONE. don't keep promises. Not rooted. Nothin keeps them committed. They can't be counted on or relied on- they provide nothing for the flourishing of others.

Watches over- Embraces- KNOWS- intimacy.

I am WITH YOU ALWAYS.

3) Grace gives Grit. Fire fuels Form.

John 14:1-7

"Don't let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.

2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? 3 If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also. 4 You know the way to where I am going."

5 "Lord," Thomas said, "we don't know where you're going. How can we know the way? "

6 Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you know me, you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

Way in Psalm 1- that brings life.
John 1- Jesus Way Truth and Life
He doesn't just tell you about the way.
HE IS THE WAY

Psalm 2 is paired with Psalm 1
Meditation on Scripture ultimately leads to trusting the Messiah
not just life hacks.

Jesus is the one who meditates day and night

He was righteous. And yet the fire of God's wrath came down on him on a cross.

Back to 3)

Step-
Serve!
Baptized!- Have you made a decision to give your life to Jesus?
Community Group
Conversation with a friend
Bible Reading- (read along with City)- pick one up
Prayer-

Jesus Prayer Starter

Lord Jesus Christ (breathe in)

Son of the Living God (breathe out)
Have mercy on me (breathe in)
A sinner (breathe out)

John the Baptist Prayer Starter

You must increase (breathe in)
I must decrease (breathe out)

Living Your Calling group-

every other Saturday morning beginning in March

Scripture and making disciples- How to BRING FORTH in others

G4