

Series: *Growthology—Breaking Through Patterns of Predictability in Your Life*

Message Title: Today Matters

Date: Thursday, March 9, 2017

Event: Men's Forum

Scripture: Various Scripture Passages

Speaker: David H. McKinley

Location: Warren Baptist Church, Augusta, GA

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## Introduction

This morning, we come to the final topic in the series, *Growthology: Breaking Through Patterns [Habits] of Predictability in Your Life*—a study in personal growth toward maturity for men. *Growthology*—if you make up your own words, you get to write your own dictionary!

### ***In review...***

**Week 1:** “Why You Can’t Fake It Till You Make It”—know yourself to grow yourself.

“You can’t make progress anywhere if you are unwilling to face the place where you are today.”

Six Critical Questions for Personal Growth:

1. What obstacles are you facing?
2. What opportunities are you missing?
3. What excuses are you using?

4. What resources are you neglecting?
5. What disciplines are you lacking?
6. What lies are you believing?

## **Week 2: "Happiness is a Choice"**

"Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be." —Abraham Lincoln

"While the pursuit of happiness is universal, the choice to be happy is personal."

So many refuse growth because they are in a rut of unhappiness.

## **Week 3: "One is the Loneliest Number"**

Friendship is a make or break point for growth in your life and mine.

The presence or absence of friendship is a leading growth indicator in your life and mine.

***And today, our last topic in this series is...***

## **Week 4: "Today Matters"**

For all the future projections of growth, goals and dreams, the truth is that growth is not

somewhere out there. To take a play out of Guy Fieri: "That's all right here, right now!"

The greatest challenge in growth is starting. But growth can start today. We simply have to learn and embrace the power of process.

Begin today!

"This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24).

This is the day! Say it again and again and again!

"We waste so many todays, banking on our tomorrows."

### *Today Matters*

"This is the day"—that's honesty.

"Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring" (Proverbs 27:1 ESV).

"Rejoice and be glad"—happiness is the choice of the day!

“Let us”—who? It is more than one, and all involved understand the need to rejoice together!

This day—it matters. “Everyday does. Someday never does.”

There is a concept called, *The Rule of Five*. I have read and heard this rule applied from a variety of sources. It goes something like this: “If I take an axe, go out to a tree and chop it five times a day, everyday, what is going to eventually happen to that tree?” The only variable is how big the tree is! Is there any question as to whether it will fall? No. It’s just how long will it take for it to fall?

I could go out and try to chop down a big tree in one day, but I’m likely to get really tired, sore and frustrated. In time, I could come back to the tree, see the scars affixed to my mutilated tree, and say, “I tried to chop it down once.”

But in truth, if you use the axe five times a day—just five (no more, no less)—there will come a day when the tree will fall. That is *The Rule of Five*.

“One’s philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes. In the long run, we shape our lives and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices are ultimately our own responsibility.”

—Eleanor Roosevelt

What I am trying to say to you through the words of the Psalmist (“This is the day”) and the practice of *The Rule of Five* (“Chop five times”) is that you can start planting seeds today for phenomenal growth tomorrow. But you have to start!

The question today is this: What are you going to do starting today? “Your daily agenda is the key to your future achievements.”

I believe we all need to get the axe and go to work. So I am going to suggest five “hacks” to help you grow.



# 1. Make Time to Seek God Daily

Everyday is a gift from God. Give some time back to Him.

Westminster Shorter Catechism—Q&A to teach basic truth or doctrine (1646)

Q. What is the chief purpose for which man is made?

A. The chief purpose for which man is made is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever. (Revelation 4:11)

“The opening question brings us at once to the subject of true religion—what it requires and what it gives. God has made us for a purpose just as everything made by man is made for a purpose. Only as we fulfill the purpose for which God made us can we be happy. Now God made us to glorify Him. Of course we cannot add to God’s glory because He is entirely perfect, but we can show His glory by doing everything in life as service to Him. This means that God must be first in our lives; only as we know and love Him can we truly please him. That is why, since sin entered the human race, we can only be

brought back into God's family through Jesus Christ. Then we can have real joy in our lives, and look forward to knowing joy that never ends after this life. Looking for happiness apart from your Maker—'doing your own thing'—is a dead end."

To neglect your Creator is to limit your capacity to live life to the fullest. Talk about stunted growth—arrested development—what we are without God.

You were made for God, to know God, and to live for the glory of God. Do you want to grow? Spend time with God daily.

## **2. Learn Something New Everyday**

There are many ways to learn. I like "Word of the Day." I think the best is simply to read. I read everyday!

Reading allows us to grow our thought-life. Too many get in "mental ruts".

"Five years from now you will be pretty much the same as you are today except for two things: the books you read and the people close to you." —Charles Jones

Growth requires resource, and reading is a resource that will fuel your life.

“No fuel, no journey. No resource, no growth.”

### **3. Today, I have to Trade a Present Indulgence For a Future Investment**

There is nothing harder than saying *no* to something so easy and near today.

My greatest obstacle to growth is *present*—David vs. Future David. Present David is always right here and ready for the moment, but Future David is out there too!

“To abstain from the enjoyment that is in our power or to seek distant rather than immediate results, are among the most painful exertions of the human will.”

—N.W. Senior (1836)

I want what I want, and I want it *now*!

“People are anxious to improve their circumstances, but are not eager to change themselves.” —James Allen

However, what you want now may keep you from ever having what you want to be or hope to have in life.

#### **4. Practice the “Golden Rule” Everyday**

What is it?—seeing life not just through my eyes, but also through the lives of others.

“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7:12).

Why “golden rule”? Because it is a different standard of measure. It is based on positive initiative, not responsive relationship.

Do! This practice is positive and active. “Do to others as they do to you” is a *street law* in life.

“If you scratch my back, I’ll scratch your back.” —Elvis

The practice of the golden rule is not conditional, but intentional—“as you would have them treat you” based upon the behaviors of others. Our response is not

based on how we expect others to treat us or how we think others should treat us or even how we have been treated. It is based on how we would want to be treated and responding in that way.

This is a revolutionary concept. It can and will change all of your relationships from casual acquaintances (restaurant, service, etc.) to your relationship with your wife, kids, work associates, etc.

Our greatest problem and one of the primary growth-inhibitors is preoccupation with *self*.

Narcissus, a character in Greek mythology, spent his life admiring himself in a reflection pool and fell in love with himself.

In the end, every sin in life is rooted in a preoccupation and exaltation of self.

Self-focus is pride and pride brings conflict. Selfless focus is humility and humility brings honor and peace.

“If you treat your wife like a thoroughbred, you’ll never end up with a nag.” —Zig Ziglar

How do you want people to treat you? Then start “treating”.

## **5. Find a Reason to be Grateful Today!**

“Rejoice and be glad in it.”

If you hope to find a happier tomorrow, it will never come. Find it today and all your tomorrows will be bright.

“Gratitude is the healthiest of all human emotions. The more you express gratitude for what you have, the more likely you will have even more to express gratitude for.”

—Zig Ziglar

Gratitude helps us keep life in perspective and dismiss the pursuit of emptiness.

“One today is worth two tomorrows; what I am to be, I am now becoming.”

—Benjamin Franklin

I hope you will continue to learn and practice the core subject matter of *Growthology*!