

The “Best-Me” Emerging

You must face the reality of your life, no matter how good and pleasant it may be, or how bad and horrible it may be. You must take responsibility for you own life (Gal. 6:5), and decide if you will grow or allow myself to deteriorate as a human being. Without dealing with the reality of your life, there will be no growth, for you cannot change what you do not identify.¹ There is no question that if you are a disciple of Jesus, the mandate *is* to grow (Mt. 5:48; 2 Cor. 3:18; 13:11; Eph. 4:14-15; Heb. 6:1, 3; 1 Pet. 2:2; 3:18), have impact upon others (Mt. 5:13-16), and bring glory to God through your life (Eph. 1:12). This growth is an indication that you are in fact a Christian.² As someone amply put it, “God’s gift to you is your life; what you do with your life is your gift to Him.”

An Approach for Your Growth

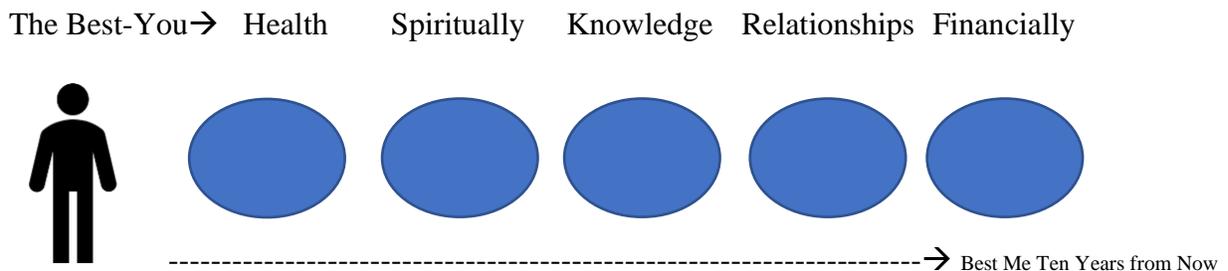
I would like for you to consider a practical and challenging approach with respect to your growth as a disciple of the greatest life ever lived in human history—Jesus. In following Him, you must emulate Him in every respect and grow to become like Him (Rom. 8:29; 1 Jn. 2:6; 4:17). The Holy Spirit is influencing you in this direction (2 Cor. 3:16-18; Gal. 5:22-23).

Here is the approach I want to challenge you with. First, consider what the *best-you* would look like ten years from now; and then consider what the *worst-you* would look like ten years from now. Put them in juxtaposition. The quality of your life will certainly be evident ten

¹ Viktor E. Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006); Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled: A New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values and Spiritual Growth* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978); Richard Rohr, *Breathing Under Water: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Franciscan Media, 2011); William Glasser, *Reality Therapy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965); John W. Drakeford, *Integrity Therapy* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1967); Brene Brown, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent and Lead* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2012); Brene Brown, *Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Heart.* (New York: Random House, 2018).

² For a thorough treatment on this reality of the Christian life see Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 896-912.

years from now, but will you be a *better-you*, and at that point, the *best-you*; or will you be a *lesser-you* or the *worst-you*. In considering this approach, you must not traffic in vague generalities—you must be specific with the details of every aspect of your life. Here are a few categories for you to specify in detail: health, spirituality, knowledge/education, relationships (family, marriage, friends), finances, achievement, character. List these categories on the following diagram/spectrum, and then get very specific with what would contribute to the *best-you* emerging in each category:



Then, in the next diagram, list in each category what you would have to do to contribute to the *worse-you* emerging in that particular category over time. With those items in mind, you must renounce/reject, with a solemn commitment, those specific items in each category that would lead to the worst-you. After all, you don't want to be a lesser or worse person as time continues? Certainly not, if you are an authentic disciple of Jesus. Frankl, suggests a kind of renunciation of any behavior that would contribute to a life *not* well lived in the present, through projecting what that behavior would mean for your future—the worst-you emerging.³

³ Frankl, 109.

The Worst-You → Health Spiritually Knowledge Relationships Financially



-----→ Worst Me 10 Years from Now

Examples

Here are a few categories with specifics for you to consider in this realization of the best you emerging over time:

- *Health* Pro-actives: eating healthy (a protein drink every morning instead of McDonalds), intermittent fasts, drinking a glass of water every morning and every evening; Renunciations/Prohibitions: eating French Fries, soda and all sugar drinks, drinking alcohol (frankly, a poison for your body⁴).
- *Spirituality* Pro-actives: listening to biblical message every morning while getting ready for your day; involvement with a small group in a faith community; memorizing or meditating on a verse of Scripture each day; Renunciations/Prohibitions: friendship with a toxic person who is bringing you down spiritually or contributing little to your growth, unspiritual music that is polluting your mind.
- *Knowledge (an information base that will benefit you for your future)* Pro-actives: read a book each week or once a month; taking a course online; pursue a degree; Renunciations/Prohibitions: binging on Net Flics; consuming time with social media

⁴ Annie Grace, *This Naked Mind: Control Alcohol, Find Freedom, Discover Happiness & Change Your Life* (New York: Avery, 2018), 68. Alcohol contains at least 15 known carcinogens including arsenic, formaldehyde, lead, and in the liver produces acetaldehyde which destroys your cells and renders them unable to repair.

Principles

Here are few principles for you to realize with this approach for your growth:

- You must get specific with what you *will do* and what you *will not do*. It is imperative to realize that *to the degree you are willing to get specific* with your life will be *to the degree of your growth*. There will be little to no growth unless you get very specific with your moves on the “court” of life, for no ball player’s game will ever get better unless he identifies his “bad moves” and commits himself to “new moves.”
- You must feel the joy of functioning in the discipline of each category, because you are becoming more effective, more efficient, and the *better-you* is emerging for God’s glory.
- Without the renunciation of specific sinful or “weighty behavior” (Heb. 12:1), you will not be able to focus on the items for the *best-you* to emerge. The specifics of the best-you must trump the specifics of the worst you. Also, you will not learn self-denial in an age of self-indulgence. This vow of renunciation of a particular item will give you the boundary line to not cross for the good of your future.

Conclusion

It will be your joy to develop into the best-you over time as the years unfold, which will result in you having great impact with your life, being a maximized person (vs. a minimized person), having a wonderful legacy, and above all things hearing the words of the very one you followed during the entire journey of life: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:21, King James Version, 1611, 1873).

Resources

Brown, Brene. *Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Heart.* New York: Random House, 2018.

_____. *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent and Lead.* New York: Penguin Random House, 2012.

Drakeford, John W. *Integrity Therapy.* Nashville: Broadman Press, 1967.

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Rohr, Richard. *Breathing Under Water: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps.* Cincinnati, Ohio: Franciscan Media, 2011.