

November 4, 2012 AM
#1472

Overhaulin' Life

What's life all about? Are we really here just to live a few years, accumulate some stuff, and then die and be forgotten within a generation or two? Those are questions that have confronted mankind since the beginning of time.

The reason we're plagued with those challenges is because we're not just chance products of a mechanical, sterile, universe. There is a personal God who loves us and has made us in His image.

Underneath, inside, we can sense it. We tend to shoot for way less than God's intention. The truth is, we are made for so much more.

How do we get from where we are to where God wants us to be? How do we go from ordinary to extraordinary?

Think about this... How boring would the circus be if no one took a risk? What if the lion tamer never got in the cage? What if he cracked his whip through the bars but never stood eyeball to eyeball with the lion?

What if the human cannonball just kind of eased off the end of the cannon instead of being shot out? How extraordinary would that be?

What if the trapeze artists just hung there but never let go? They could go back and forth but they'd never move forward. They have to let go of what and they're holding onto and trust the next person enough to believe they'd catch them.

It is the same way with us, if we don't let go of what ever we are holding on to and trust God to catch us we will never get anywhere. But it's so tempting to live a safe life. An ordinary life.

If we're going to move from ordinary to extraordinary, our life needs to be radically and completely overhauled.

I don't know if you've ever seen the series on Velocity TV called *Overhaulin'* but I've kind of got hooked on it.

What they do is get a car that someone owns but doesn't have the money to fix up and the bring in a team to completely remake the car. Some of these cars get many thousands of dollars worth of work.

I happen to have an affinity for old VWs. This is my 63 that I don't get to drive as much as I'd like, but they did a guy's VW on Overhaulin'.

This young man has Cystic Fibrosis and is on a lung transplant list. Here's clip of what they did. (2:30 min)

They took something ordinary and turned it into something amazingly extraordinary. And that's exactly what God wants to do with our lives. But if that's true, how's that going to happen? What are the steps?

I. The First Step To Overhaulin' Is To Let Go And Give Up Control

Turn to Romans 11 page 1114

In Romans 11 the Bible is explaining how God's people, the Jews, reject God and that leads to the cross and opens the door for the non-Jews to hear about salvation. The message of God then goes out to the non-Jewish world and they believe.

But in the future, during the tribulation, the non-Jews rejection of God opens the door, through the tribulation and the return of Christ, for the Jewish people to hear the gospel and believe.

Read verse 32

Verse 32 is like a culmination of all the things that have been taught in the first 11 chapters of Romans. Romans teaches that all people are sinners before God, our sins have separated us from a holy God, and that God would have been completely just in allowing us spend an eternity in hell.

God's found of us all disobedient, it doesn't matter what religious background you are, so He can show mercy to us all.

We know mercy comes through the Savior, Jesus Christ. He died as our sin-bearer. He rose again victorious over sin and the grave.

Read verses 33 & 36

It's all about God. He's the Savior. We're not little saviors. We can only receive God's mercy and God even uses our rebellion as part of His plan to get the message out to others.

Therefore... **Read 12:1-2**

Because God is rich in mercy. Because we can't earn our own forgiveness. Because God alone can give the gift of eternal life, there's a call on our lives.

Salvation is free. *It's not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.* (Titus 3:5&6)

But our response in discipleship is costly. We're to give our bodies to God as a living sacrifice. That's only reasonable in light of God's mercy.

But now notice the wording of verse 1. It doesn't say, "I command you." It doesn't say, "I order you." It doesn't say, "I demand of you." It says, "I beg you. I plead with you. I beseech you."

Discipleship is the only reasonable response to God's mercy but it's still voluntary. We are the ones that have to make the commitment.

This is not something that every Christian automatically does. If it was, we wouldn't need these verses. Discipleship isn't self-activating. It takes a radical commitment on our part.

And too many times we're like the trapeze artist who's afraid to let go of the bar. She's thinking, "What if I'm flying through the air and I let go and He doesn't catch me?"

God wants to take our ordinary lives and use us to do extraordinary things but step one is, we have to give up control.

Normally on Overhualin' a friend or family member arranges to get the car secretly to the team that does the work. But in the case of Blake, he showed up while they were putting his car up on rollback. He's really upset. He doesn't know if these people are stealing his car or what.

So the people from the show come out and say this is who we are and we want to fix up your VW.

Blake's like, "Wait a minute. Do I want to give these people my car?" He hesitates but in the end he hands over the keys. He gives them full authority. He trusts them with that which is so very valuable to him.

God wants to overhaul our life. He wants to make something exceptional, phenomenal, extraordinary, out of our ordinary lives. But it can't happen, it won't happen, until we are willing to trust God.

That can be a scary process. We start thinking, "What if He asks me to totally break out of my comfort zone? What if He wants me to actually talk to my neighbor about the Gospel? What if He wants me to sacrificially give to the poor and needy? What if it's a call to serve in missions? What if He wants me to break up that person I'm dating who's no good for me but I just love her so much?"

"What if He asks me to let go of the trapeze while I'm swinging through the air? What if it's to give up the keys of my life and to let Him have complete control?"

I. The First Step To Overhauling Is To Let Go And Give Up Control

II. The Next Step To Overhauling Is To Hold Nothing Back

When the Overhauling team tackles a project they strip the car completely down. They don't just do the cosmetics. The VW was a frame off restoration. And it was good it was because when they stripped it down they found rust and structural damage that could have been deadly if not taken care of.

Years ago I bought an 80's Honda Accord. It had new paint. It was all cleaned up. It was a good-looking car. The guy I bought it from even gave me an inspection certificate.

One day I was getting the oil changed and the mechanic said, "Come in here. You need to see this."

I was thinking, "Oh, he just wants to sell me some kind of service." Really what he wanted to do was show me how the car was rusted out underneath.

He said, "I wouldn't drive around the block in this vehicle it's so rusted. You're taking your life in your hands every time you drive down to the 7-11 on the corner."

Taking care of the outside fooled me into buying the car.

Well, it works that way with our outside too. We can have a Bible on our desk at work. We can have a fish sticker on the bumper of our car. We can have a dresser full of all the latest Christian T shirts and still be ungodly on the inside.

Turn to I Samuel 16 page 280

I Samuel takes place around 1000 BC. By this time Israel is well established as a nation.

It was election time in Israel but there weren't any political ads, special interest groups, multi-million dollar campaigns, or ostentatious conventions. God picked the king.

So in I Samuel 16 God sends His prophet Samuel to anoint the next ruler in Israel. He sends Samuel to the house of a man named Jesse who happens to have 8 sons.

Now, when the prophet of God shows up that's a big deal. So Jesse brings his sons before Samuel starting with the oldest. The oldest son in the ancient Jewish families always had the position of honor.

Read verse 5-10

Seven times God says, "No."

Then finally (**verse 11**) *And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?"*

The prophet says, "Wait a minute. Something's wrong here. God sends me to this address, I go through your sons one by one, and God says 'Not him,' each time. Are you sure you don't have any more sons?"

Read rest of verse 11 *Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep."*

"The kid's out back but you're not interested in him." Dad's a real encouragement here, isn't he? Jesse didn't even consider David significant enough to bring him in. In fact he doesn't even use his name. He's just "the kid, the youngest."

"He's out back watching the sheep. Are you sure you want him in here? He won't smell very good. He'll probably have sheep poop on his sandals."

You can probably guess what happens next. God had chosen David all along. Why? God said, *I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.* (Acts 13:22)

God passed up Jesse's sons who were attractive, tall, strong, and well positioned to choose the runt of the litter because David's heart was right. He was committed to do God's will.

Have you let God expose the reality of what's inside your life? Blake's VW had to be able to handle a 200 horsepower turbo charged engine. If the pans were rusted underneath or if the front suspension was shot the car would have come apart.

Well, God's calling us to demonstrate His perfect will. We're to be a living sacrifice empowered by the Holy Spirit.

An apostle named Paul prayed this for a first century congregation: *That you may know what ... is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.* (Ephesians 1:19-20)

God is empowering us with the same power with which He raised Christ from the dead! That's power.

That's why we want to be completely open before Him with whom we have to do.

I. The First Step To Overhaulin' Is To Let Go And Give Up Control

II. The Next Step To Overhaulin' Is To Hold Nothing Back

III. The Final Step To Overhaulin' Is To Maintain A Faithful Walk

The TV show definitely put some money into Blake's car. I don't know how much because most of the parts and labor are donated but I was talking to a guy from Western Maryland that has \$70,000 in his 62 VW!

Now just suppose the show does all this work and uses top quality materials and Blake just drives the car and never does another thing to it. What if he never changes the oil and filter? What if he never lubes the chassis? What if he never adjusts the valves or checks the tires?

What was truly extraordinary will eventually revert back to ordinary. It may take a while and the process might not be that noticeable at first but ultimately that's where things will head.

The Bible uses imagery like birth, life, and growth to describe what's supposed to be happening to us. God's a living God. Life needs to be maintained. Nourishment and exercise are essential for maintaining physical life, but we need them for our spiritual life too.

Turn to Ephesians chapter 3 Page 1147

We pointed to Ephesians 1 a minute ago and said it's a recorded prayer of an Apostle for a church which he actually started.

What's going to keep them headed in the right direction? What's the required routine maintenance?

Read verses 14 & 15

This is so important it drives an apostle to his knees. You might be thinking, "Yea, OK. I get on my knees once in a while. Is that so out of the ordinary?"

Remember, Jewish men normally stood up to pray.

If you've ever seen pictures of the wailing wall in Jerusalem you've seen crowds of men standing at the wall, swaying and rocking on their feet while they read their prayers. No one kneels.

That's how this man, Paul, a first century Jew, would have traditionally prayed. But for some reason he changed his posture. There are a few occasions where the Bible records people kneeling to pray and each one is a very deeply moving incident.

When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane Luke 22:41 he knelt down and prayed.

I think that it's safe to conclude that this man was very deeply moved at this point. This was something Paul saw as extra important for the church.

It's so easy for any of us to get sidetracked.

So what does Paul pray for? There's 3 main requests:

First: Read verse 16

Now these requests are going to be unique, they are going to come across a bit lofty, they're going to sound just a little bit abstract.

Because of that, there's a temptation to just pass over these verses as if they couldn't possibly be true for us. We think maybe for Paul, the super Christian. Maybe for Jesus, the Son of God. But for just plain old me, they're just not possible.

And yet, as we read through here I want you to remember that Paul is making this request for the average guys in the church at Ephesus.

He's not even saying, "I pray this for the pastors, or elders, or leadership team."

This is for all of us. And notice he asks according to the riches of God's glory.

Why do we need to be strengthened by God's Spirit? Because inevitably life brings us challenges. Life brings us challenges and some of them are really, really hard to get through.

What does it mean to have the Holy Spirit strengthen the inner person? It means that our spiritual faculties are controlled by God, and that we're exercising them and growing in the Word.

It's only when we yield to the Holy Spirit and let him control the inner man that we succeed in living to the glory of God.

This means feeding the inner man the truths of the Bible, praying, worshiping, practicing loving obedience.

This is the only thing that's going to get you through the problems of life with God's viewpoint. If you go day after day without standing on His truth, sooner or later you are going to run into something that's more than you can handle and you're going to collapse. How vital this is to be strengthened in the inner man.

Request number 2: **Read verse 17 (through "faith")**

That's a strange request. Doesn't Jesus Christ already live in us? He does but He doesn't always dwell there.

Well the real key is found in the word "dwell." It's the translation of a Greek compound word *katoikeo*. The verb *oikeo* means "to live as in a house." This is *oikeo* with the preposition *kata* which means "down."

The word actually means "to settle down, to be at home." Not just live, but dwell.

The prayer is that there'd be a natural, intimate relationship between Jesus Christ and His children.

Jesus Christ is the sovereign Lord and the only way He can ever be settled down in your life is if you're yielded to his Lordship.

So by faith we are to appropriate what Christ has provided for us. We rely on him to live his life in and through us.

Request number 3: **Read 17b-19**

There's a big difference between appreciating something and comprehending it.

When we go to the fireworks on the fourth of July and go "Ooo" and "Aha" we might be really impressed for a moment but it's not going to change our lives.

We can come here and talk about the love of God, the grace of God, the strength of God and we can agree and say "Amen" (or what ever) and still not have those things strengthen us.

Again, there's going to be plenty of times in life that we're going to say, "I can't do _____."

But if we look to God for spiritual strength, and spiritual depth, we'll be able to get our hands on all the resources of God's love and grace. No wonder the Bible says, *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.* (Philippians 4:13)

Remember again, Paul is praying this for a group of average Christians living in 1st century Asia, who had a lot less chance for biblical input than you and I do.

They didn't have Bibles in book form. They didn't have most of the New Testament because it wasn't complete.

This is all about routine maintenance. This is for us. This is what our extraordinary God wants so that His extraordinary work in our lives will live on.

Do you feel ordinary this morning instead of extraordinary? That's because without God you are ordinary. So am I. That's because God doesn't want you to ever think, "I've got all this figured out."

God doesn't ever want you to ever think, "I don't need an overhaul."

Remember on the video clip when they showed Blake his VW and he was speechless? Remember when his mom and girlfriend and other friends saw his reaction? They were excited. They rejoiced.

That's what happens when our ordinary lives are transformed by God into extraordinary lives. Others rejoice.

Read verse 21

This is what it's all about. Ultimately God gets the glory, for ever and ever through his church.

Are you joining in this great doxology? Have you looked at the possibilities that are open for you in Christ as this very moment?

Is God real to you? And is His glory your ultimate priority? Do the people in your life rejoice in the change they see in you? Are you ordinary or extraordinary?