

THE WAY

- 1. The christian life is a life of celebration. How are you different today from a month ago? A year ago? A decade ago?**
- 2. How are you at seeking God's will for your life? Do you believe God is calling you to change and transform? How so?**
- 3. Recall an experience that have impacted you tremendously. How has this experience shaped you and what are lessons you may have learned from it?**
- 4. We are not designed to journey through life on our own. Who can you identify to help you stay on the way and why?**
- 5. There will be people that believe with you on your journey and those that do not. How can we have compassion on them, to not criticize them and to begin conversations with them?**

Aloha everyone and welcome to where being planted in the house of the Lord allows us to flourish in the courts of our God! I'm Pastor Glenn and thank you for joining us today. Last week, Pastor Mark taught us the significance of coming to grips with where we are, in order to determine where we are going. In other words, "What is the 'X' that marks the spot for you? The simple answer to that is, "into God's very best for our lives."

Now, in his second letter to the corinthian church, Paul writes that,

"... we all are progressively" (everybody say, "progressively).

That means moving forward by making changes, adjustments and course correcting along the way.

"So, we are progressively being transformed into His image (God's image) from [one degree of] glory to [even more] glory, which comes from the Lord, [who is] the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18 AMP).

So, by determining to follow Jesus, my transformation to become like Christ is my journey. He then becomes my guide on a journey to discover the life I'm destined to live, the love I am destined to receive AND TO SHARE and the person I am destined to become.

All of this determines, what we need in order to succeed on our journey. Everybody say, "What we need to succeed."

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Now, make no mistake. Everyone, and I mean EVERYONE, is on their own individual journey. So don't be comparing other peoples' highlight reels to your blooper reels instead, get real about where you've been, where you are now and where you are going. So turn to your neighbor, wag a finger at them and say, "get real with yourself." So let's focus on the adventure at hand. Now keep in mind, you are not on a journey to God, rather, you are on a journey with God. Proverbs encourages us to:

"Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the Lord and turn away from evil" (Proverbs 3:6-7 NLT).

Now, the truth is, we are where we are in life based on the decisions we've made up until now. Some of us like where we are and some of us don't. The bottom line is that we have the power to cut ourselves out of our own spiritual jungles. My encouragement is to pause, to point, pivot, then proceed to where God is prompting you. Because If you are not happy with where you are going, you're going to be miserable with where you end up. You gotta course correct by changing directions and God's Word becomes our spiritual compass. Now, we seek God's perspective and God shows us which path to take, SO THAT God can prepare you to see the wonderful mind blowing experiences he can't wait to show you. But, in order to get there we may have to trek across scorching desert, trudge through frigid sub zero temperatures or navigate dense jungle in order to get there. Remember, God knows the entire forest while we only see the trees. He has the best perspective, so think long term and enjoy the journey. You know why? Because Psalm 23:4 reminds us that:

"Even though I walk through the [sunless] valley of the shadow of death (or deep darkness), I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod [to protect] and Your staff [to guide], they comfort and console me" (AMP).

AMEN!!! Tell your neighbor, "You gotta walk through! Don't stay there!"

I tuck that scripture away in my heart, keeping it safe, so that I can take it out to encourage me whenever and wherever I go. So, as we "Gear Up," we need God's Word to succeed. Timothy writes that,

*"All Scripture (everybody say, "ALL, NOT SOME!") All scripture is [a]inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for [b]rebuke, for correction and for training in righteousness;
(2 Timothy 3:16 NASB).*

In other words, God's word breathes life to benefit you, to benefit me even though He has to scold us some times. Keep in mind Jesus says, *"I correct and discipline everyone I love"*
(Revelations 3:19 NLT).

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Hallelujah! You know how I know God loves me? Because He scolds me all the time! Strangely, God and Theresa share the same voice. So expect that God will correct you and God will discipline you and I! Welcome it! Embrace it! Tell your neighbor, wag a finger at them and say "God loves you, but I think he loves me more."

Most times, it doesn't feel good at all, but again, God knows the life He has for you. God knows the love He's giving you and God knows the best He's bringing out of you! And, if that means, you and I are living our lives way off course, Jesus WILL get our attention. God loves you and there's nothing you can do about it.

So turn to your neighbor, wag a finger at 'um and say, "no be hahd head!!!" Now translate for them and say, "It's very foolish to be stubborn!"

When I was 21, I was finishing my last year at university. I had no career established. I had no income, I had no direction in life. I didn't even know I was lost in my own spiritual jungle and my life felt as if it was cascading over jagged cliffs into a raging waterfall. So dramatic, I know. January of that year, my son was born. I was terrified, I was excited. I was tangled up in a mix of emotions and I was spiritually starving in my own desert valley. Now, in hindsight, I believe God used the birth of my son to knock sense into me and Mycah confidently lives his life knowing how true this is. God used that experience, to get my attention because I was a SAP. S-A-P, stubborn, arrogant and prideful.

I grew up with my catholic faith, which I appreciate because it helped to set a wonderful foundation. But God wanted me to level up from learning religion about Jesus to living relationally with Jesus. God wanted me to go to my next glory, God wanted to guide me toward my destiny. Paul writes in his letter to the church in Rome,

"And we know that for those who love God all things, (Say "all, not some!" Yes, that includes misdirections and decisions, both good and bad,) All these things, to work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose, (there it is brothers and sisters and that is the life that God wants to reveal to you and I, which is a life according to God's purpose.)"
(Romans 8:28 ESV).

So, as we "Gear Up," remember to take God's Word with you. Along the way you'll find that certain scripture inspire you immediately while others hold clues to apply in later understanding. The Word of God conceals these clues to later reveal these signs and wonders. Pay attention to signs along the way. In Joshua, chapter 4, the people of God did just that. They memorialized their adventures with stones. It says,

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"We will use these stones to build a memorial. (Everybody say, 'memorial') In the future your children will ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' 7 Then you can tell them, 'They remind us that the Jordan River stopped flowing when the Ark of the Lord's Covenant went across.' (The Ark is symbolic of God's presence), These stones will stand as a memorial among the people of Israel forever" (Joshua 6-7 NLT).

In other words, this passage reminds us to remember experiences that have shaped us into the people we are today. I'm not saying you have to go pile up some stones in your backyard, I am saying to appreciate small beginnings, so that we can truly celebrate where we've been in light of where we are in hopes of where we'll be. This in turn will serve as trail markers for our loved ones to follow.

Equally as important, is learning from the experience of others as well as our own. Everyone say "experiences." Remember, a wise person knows that there is something to be learned by everyone. Experience we learn from our personal past as well as experience from others is much needed in order to succeed. Ask yourself, "Who can I identify to help me learn? Who can identify to help encourage me? So don't be a SAP. Don't be stubborn, don't be arrogant and don't be prideful. We're designed to rely on one another. We all need fellowship on our travels and it's wise to have someone ahead in life that can serve to offer valuable perspective, someone to strengthen our hearts and someone to elevate our thinking. Keep in mind, Frodo had Gandalf even though Frodo had to walk every step of his journey toward his destiny.

So, we gear up with God's Word, we also gear up by a collection of past experience. Third, we gear up with "assistance."

From the new testament, Jesus Christ teaches us about the Holy Spirit. He told his students, *"But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send Him to you" (John 16:7 NLT).*

Now, the "Him" is the holy Spirit, call Him an extra sense, a feeling, a prompting a voice you may hear in your heart. The Greek word *paraklete* is the Holy Spirit, which means to come alongside, comforter, advocate, intercessor-counselor, strengthener and standby.

A few years ago when I was a military chaplain, we flew off island for field training. It was my first time at the location, but my assistant had been there several times before. He was experienced, so he was assigned as my guide. My assignment was to visit the different companies in our battalion to spiritually care for any of the soldiers, then to report back to the commander. My duty was simple and familiar, but the terrain was intimidating and unfamiliar. The landscape was desolate and dry, hot by day, freezing by night. I remember being so grateful for my assistant's help. He helped navigate and locate exactly where the companies were positioned. Moreover, I was never alone. Even though, I outranked him, I found encouragement from being with him as much as I believe he did from me because later, on His spiritual jour-

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ney, He asked me to be his best man as Pastor Theresa officiated his wedding. It was amazing to see how God orchestrated all that.

So we gear up with God's Word, we gear up with a collection of combined experience, we gear up with association to assist us on our journey and finally, we gear up with repellant.

Now we know, that we need physical protection from the elements, the sun, the wind and the rain. Not only do we need protection from the elements, we need protection from the irritants! Everybody say, "irritants!" So bring your repellant! Let me explain.

I grew up in the picturesque town of Wahiawa. Our back yard flowed the serene, tranquil waters of the mighty Wilson river. We spent countless days paddling up and down the river on makeshift canoes and swimming until our underwear were stained brown, from the muddy water. Every now and then you'll hear, "EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!" And you're like, aaaaaaah, mosquitos!

You know who these people are, I mean what these insects are. These people are the bloodsuckers in your life. Now I don't want to sound mean but you ever get around people and you can't wait to get away from them? Sometimes you feel like you want to swat them away. You don't exactly know why, then you realize the holy spirit is showing you these people are discouragers, not encouragers. These individuals speak doubt, while others speak belief. They're so negative that they contaminate the spiritual drinking waters with verbal leptospirosis. Guard against these people because if you listen to them you may never reach your destination and miss your your destiny entirely. Other times these irritants are deflators. You ever got around someone and all of a sudden you feel like your tires are flat and you can't get out of the mud? It's important to repel these irritants and attract those who want to travel in the same direction. What's worse is they try to dissuade you from making improvements because they themselves don't want to change.

Now Winnie the Pooh is a wonderful example of going on adventures in his 100 acre wood. So ask yourself, "Would you rather have Eeyore or Tigger as your companion? Would you rather have someone who drags his feet and sighs all the time or someone with a sparkle in his eye and a spring in his step. Now, If you don't know who they are, go google them later. We can learn a lot from them! Going on the greatest adventure of your life requires energy, spiritual stamina and enthusiasm. Make sure you surround yourself with the right people.

In conclusion, gear up with G - God's word, next gear up with a E - a collection of experiences, both personal and from others, next gear up with A - assistance and don't be a SAP and lastly, gear up with repellant against negative mindsets. Understand that others may try to discourage you from making unpopular decisions, like coming to church or following Christ and know that these may come from meaningful well wishers, but remember Jesus has the best perspective.