

THE BIG IDEA: We'll be reliable with whatever we think is valuable.

The Take-Off

I'll never forget the first car that Wendy and I bought together. We were your typical young and "all we need is love because that's all we can afford" couple, and we went in knowing we couldn't afford more than a \$100/month payment.

I remember two things about that day. One, we walked out with a white Chevy Corsica for \$97/month, and two, I saw white cars everywhere for the next few months!

That's kind of what's happening for a lot of us right now.

After just one week of focus, we're seeing disciple making everywhere!

Last week we talked about how focus can give us resolve, how when we settle the matter of Jesus being our Lord, it steels our soul and allows us to burn the ships because we go all in with him!

Then, everything we read, every conversation we have feels like a repeat of previous conversations because they all point back to our mission to make disciples.

The more white cars Wendy and I saw, the more confident we were that we'd bought the right car.

Resolve is a wonderful thing, and it gives us the cement to deal with something else that comes from focus.

Not only does focus give us resolve, but focus makes us reliable.

If you've ever thrown a ball to someone and then noticed after you released it that they weren't paying attention, then you've lived the truth of that statement!

We'll never be reliable to catch something if we aren't expecting to receive it.

1. We've got to be reliable

- a. I really need you to get this, right? We aren't reliable when we're distracted and scattered.
- b. Check out this short clip for the proof of that [Pam Oliver getting hit with a football]
- c. Here's a backup QB who can't be relied on to throw an accurate pass that can't be caught which ends up hitting an unsuspecting person.
- d. This is how we've treated the call to make disciples, isn't it?
- e. We're not intentional. We're just slinging the ball around and hoping something sticks, right?
- f. If that's the case, we'll never be the people that God needs for this call.
- g. The ball he's throwing us is too important for us to be distracted. If we aren't reliable, we'll never get off the bench, right?
- h. Look at 2 Timothy 2:2 - take this ball and give it to another who can give it to another - it's being a discipler!
- i. I mean, this backup QB is always going to be a backup QB if he isn't a more reliable passer!
- j. So Paul - in his last letter - grabs a young Timothy by the shoulder and says, "Listen. The things that I've trusted you with, you need to trust others with, but only others who can then trust others with them, too."
- k. In other words, Paul looked at Timothy and said, "Don't drop the ball!!"

2. What makes us reliable

- a. So here's the deal: we know we need to be reliable, and yet most of us find ourselves dropping the ball all the time! Seems we drop more than we catch, and so we find ourselves on the bench, don't we?
- b. The reason is surprisingly simple, but overlooked: we've made reliability the goal.
- c. We're focused on doing reliable things for God instead of first being reliable to God.
- d. When doing reliable is more important than being reliable, the pressure is too much.
- e. Always, always, always, the key is to be focused on Jesus - following him and being his disciple.
- f. That's what Paul tells Timothy here.
- g. I need you to be reliable, and to do that I need you to do 3 things.
- h. In keeping with our little football theme here, think in terms of a football player who doesn't want to fumble
- i. Any coach worth his salt will tell the player to establish a minimum of 3 points of contact: palm over the tip, side against the forearm, and other side against the rib cage.
- j. When a player values the ball, he'll make sure these are covered. If he values looking awesome more than the ball or the mission of the team, he'll hold it crazy so he feels more "free."
- k. So, if we want to be reliable, we've got three points of contact as well, and they're right here in the passage where Paul is instructing Timothy.

- l. We've got to make sure we do these 3 things well:
 - a. Fan the flame (1:6)
 - i. fire is the picture of the Holy Spirit
 - ii. Paul's telling Timothy to tend the fire, don't let it go out
 - iii. Forget what's all around you, forget other people's fires, and blow your own fire up!
 - iv. How do you do that? Personal time with him!
 - v. For our purposes today, I'm saying that worship is what we do to fan the flame.
 - vi. Not just singing, but recognizing that God is worthy
 - b. Value the gospel (1:14)
 - i. what was the good deposit?
 - ii. the things that Paul entrusted to Timothy
 - iii. commentators will say the deposit was the fundamental doctrines of the faith
 - iv. don't think of the gospel as what we share when we tell others about Jesus, but rather what we know to be true about Jesus
 - v. this thing is valuable, and the truth is that we'll be reliable with whatever we think is valuable
 - vi. so valuing the gospel is the same as valuing the Word
 - c. Grow in grace (2:1)
 - i. grace is given to us by Jesus and grown in us by community, because that's where we tend to need it over and over again
 - ii. you're not going to grow in grace without being in love with Jesus and in relationship with his bride
 - iii. you're not going to grow in grace without being in community for the long haul
 - iv. think about it, we don't even know what grace is until we need it and then last long enough to give it back, right?
 - v. so growing in grace means living in community
- m. So, if we're going to be reliable, we need these 3 in our lives: worship, the word, and community
- n. And it's not enough to only have those on Sundays, right? Because there are 6 other days when the enemy is pounding on you, trying to get that ball out of your hands.

The Landing

While we're wrapping this morning up, let me just state the obvious: this stuff takes time, and even though we want it another (faster) way, we all know it only works over time.

The day is going to come when some dude is going to want to date Sydney, and how many of you dads know that it'll take some time before I let that happen, or even if I let it happen at all.

Why is that? Because I have to make sure he's reliable, a man of character, and you can try to impress me at one meal, but give me enough meals with him and I'll see what he's really like.

Because I value my daughter, I'll not just be handing her off to any old yahoo at the altar.

How much more valuable is this mission of taking the gospel to the world and making disciples?

It took Jesus 3 years with 12 men before he dropped back to pass the ball to them, and by then there were only 11.

Anybody can do something reliable once, but only a person of reliable character - someone secure in worship, the Word, community - can consistently do reliable things over the long haul.

And what I love about God is that he looks at those of us in Christ and says, "That's in you! Fan it into flame, value my word, grow in grace with others and you'll find yourself more and more reliable with this mission I've called you to."

And then, reliability won't have to be grafted into us, because it will have been built into us.

Value this mission of making disciples - this one thing we've been asked to do - and nothing will strip it from you.

You'll be reliable with the mission because, to you, the mission will be valuable.

And we'll be reliable with whatever we think is valuable.