

**“Back to the Basics Part II: Get in the Game;
“Training for the Distance”**

In part two of our sermon series, Back to the Basics, Get in the Game, is our stewardship emphasis for October. Stewardship is finding ways to live out our membership vows of “prayer, presence, gifts, service and witness.” During the next four weeks we will be invited to look at how we live out the life of faith and how we “train” to go deeper in our faith and practice our faith. In conjunction with the Wichita Prairie Fire Marathon, it seemed to make sense to begin our series “Training for the Distance.” Like any skill, faith needs a discipline to practice and to use in all of life. How do we practice prayer? How do we train for a life of “personal piety and social holiness” in the words of Wesley? How does our prayer life, our spirituality be made real in our actions and words? After the horrific massacre in Las Vegas, the continued recovery efforts in Texas, Louisiana, Florida and Puerto Rico, and endless acts of hatred, violence and war, the challenge of the faithful is not about words, but deeds, a faith in action. May this week invite each of us into a deeper love of God and of each other. Pastor Cindy

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: **“Training for the Distance”**

Prayer for the Week

Loving God, without you we are unable to choose wisely and live courageously. Speak to us this day, that your Word may open up new possibilities, and your Spirit enable us to both embrace the best options and fulfil the same. Through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen!

Study Guide

Monday, 10/09/17 1 Timothy 4: 7-10

This passage comes in the midst of the authors codes of behavior for people in one's household as well as the church. The first three chapters speak to law and grace and false teachers. The second chapter begins with prayers for the church and the government and starts what is often referred to as the "household codes" which speaks to the roles of men and women (which is where one of the prohibitions against women in leadership comes.) The third chapter speaks of supervisors and households and servants or slaves and their behavior. The fourth chapter speaks to the practice of faith which leads us to these three verses. Pay attention to the stories you are told, "train yourself for a holy life!" (CEB) All of the rules and regulations about behavior is but a foundation for paying attention to how a person is living out their faith. Like a race, or playing an instrument or learning a new skill, practice and training is what leads to becoming proficient and for lack of a better word successful. How do you train for your life of faith?

Tuesday, 10/10 /17 1 Timothy 4: 11-16

Here the author says pay attention to center disciplines of the faith: public reading of scripture, preaching, and teaching and don't let anyone look down on you because you are young (or young in the faith). Make sure your behavior is filled with love and faith through speech and action. This book is particularly focused on behavior. Maybe because it is our behavior, not our words that convince other people of our faith in Christ. The author ends the 4th chapter by saying "focus on working on your own development and on what you teach. If you do this, you will save yourself and those who hear you." (CEB) How you do focus on your own development in Christ Jesus? What tools do you use and how do you grow in your faith?

Wednesday, 10/11/17 Matthew 7: 24-27

This is the last story/parable example and is the last one in Jesus' sermon on the mount in Matthew, Chapters 5 through 7. There is so much to contemplate in Jesus' words and the challenge in how his followers are to live out their faith. He speaks of prayer, of private ways of participating in faith, of not judging and loving others and in this parable, of building one's house of faith on bedrock. Practicing the disciplines of faith is part of how our faith is built upon a rock, the rock of God's love and grace. This parable or teaching doesn't promise there will be no difficulties, only that our faith will remain steadfast in the midst of the storm. What do you understand to be the rock or the bedrock of your faith? How is your faith built upon it?

Thursday, 10/12/17 Philippians 3: 12-16

Paul and other New Testament writers use the image of races and prizes because in the Roman world, it was all about the "prize" about the laurel crown and the adulation of the crowds. The use of the image of the prize for Paul is about Christian perfection. Paul writes, "so that I may grab hold of it because Christ grabbed hold of me for just this purpose." For Paul, it isn't about being first, but about living his life constantly for Christ, and the "prize of God's upward call in Christ Jesus." Paul's challenge is to "live in a way that is consistent with whatever level we have reached." Are you reaching for the prize of God's call in Christ? How do you experience that call?

Friday, 10/13/17 1 Corinthians 9: 24-27

In his letter to the church at Corinth, Paul again uses this imagery of an athlete. He speaks of self-discipline and as someone clear about the results, "not like someone who is shadowboxing." Self-discipline whether in cooking, running, playing an instrument or any skill set, what it is required is to become adept at whatever it is one wants to learn. The Christian faith is no different, prayer, worship, scripture reading, acts of kindness are all part of what it takes to make our faith real in the whole of our lives. The United Methodist membership vows state we will support the church with our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service and our witness. How are you disciplining your life through your vows of faith?