

The Other Side



WEEK 1

The Other Side

We've all heard it before. You have to commit to the work to see the growth. It takes more than a week (or even a month) at the gym to see change. It takes more than one practice to master the game. But what we rarely talk about is what happens before the work: the stretching. To go farther, longer, and faster, you do the opposite. You sit. No one is handing out awards to the best stretcher. In the gym they put the stretching mat in the corner. It is more ritual than performance. But that's because it's necessary for growth.

In this collection, we're talking about growing through hardship. And for that to be true in our lives, we have to start somewhere as unconventional as stretching. We have to learn to let go. That may be the one thing you need to do in this season that you haven't tried yet. 2020 has felt like a year where lofty resolutions were quickly traded in for a "I just have to hold on" mentality. The idea of growing in this time seems so foreign. We're just trying to make it, we'll worry about "growth" later.

But here's the secret. The seasons, or years, of our life that seem like they're the most out of control is when God proves that He is in control. What's too big for you, isn't too big for God. And in seasons of uncertainty, doubt, and seeming setbacks, God is still there, just hoping you let go.

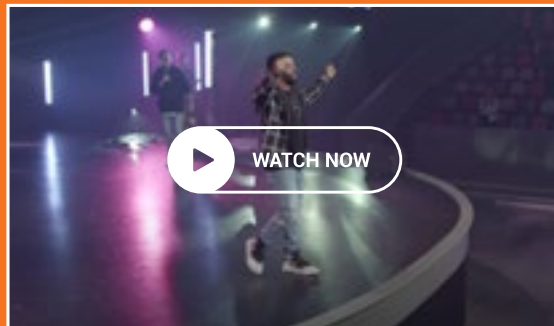
I know in a collection about growth through trial it seems like we should talk about grit and perseverance. All that is great. But the foundation isn't grit, it's worship. It's sitting in His presence. It's stretching your sight to see His power. His only requirement of you is to sit and see. There's strength in the stretch.

Too often we want to show our faith, through acting like nothing's wrong. That we're good and have everything under control. What if we could learn to exercise our faith by recognizing that while our circumstances may not seem conducive to growth, that has never stopped our Savior.

He has a knack for making a way out of no way. The level to which you will come out of this year better than you went in, is directly correlated to the level that you let go of trying to control the narrative of your life, and lean towards the One who's actually in control anyway. Your trust in God should be one of the main things that's fortified on the other side of hardship. What you believe may be a little questionable at the moment, but whom you believe doesn't have to be.

What do you have to lose? You've tried holding it all together. You've tried using will power to get through life. You've tried suppressing your fears. Why not try letting go, and stretching. Stretching your faith, to strive for nothing else then drawing near to the Father. Faith isn't evidenced by your preparation. Faith is realized when instead of looking around at your life defeated based on what you see, you choose to look up and worship, based on WHO you see.

Try it. Let go. You're gonna make it through to the other side and you're gonna make it there stronger than how you entered. Not because of you holding on, but because God is holding on to you.



Water Walking 101

Steven Furtick

Truth for Dark Days – Alistair Begg >

1. What were your goals at the beginning of the year and how have they shifted?
2. Mark 4:25-41 – Jesus tells them where they're going but circumstances cause the disciples to focus on the here & now, and to question Jesus' care for them. What can we learn from this story.
3. When God has called you to something, it's on Him to get you there. How does that truth, effect your faith?
4. What are some comfort zones you're being pushed out of in this season?
5. In a culture that values striving, how can you practically live out faith?

WEEK 2

Storm Chasers

What sucks about hard seasons is it's hard to see the point. Most of us can push through something painful if we at least know the purpose. I can work out, if I know it's going to make me stronger. I can study, if I know I'm getting a degree. I can practice, if I know a championship is on the line. I can work overtime, if I know I'm in line for a promotion.

But often in life we're hit with something that seems random. We're hit with a storm that seems as steady as the wind. A global pandemic upends our way of life. The economy crashes right when we're looking for a job. The relationship fails again. Your friend cuts you off out of nowhere. You're discriminated against simply because of who you are. That's the stuff that's hard to look past. And if you're not careful, you can become bitter, not just at your circumstance or even at a person, but with God Himself.

This is why theology is important. Because if you read scripture and see a God who is as out of control as you are and simply tries His best to bless those who He loves, your faith will falter. But if you read scripture and conclude that God is writing all of history, it implies that everything has a purpose. Including the situation that you'd rather not be in right now.

Whether that's encouraging or not is really up to you. We can sulk at His sovereignty, and think "if I was God, I would do it differently" or we can surrender to His sovereignty, and say "His ways are higher than my own."

I'm not asking you to have blind faith, I'm asking you to consider the blind men who had faith and allowed Jesus to wipe mud and spit on their eyes. That may not have been comfortable, but I'm sure their sight was worth it.

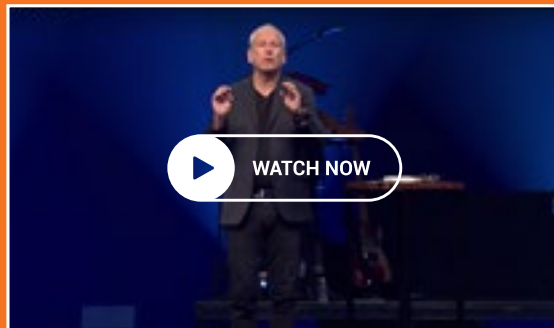
I'm asking you to consider Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who told the king their God would deliver them from the fiery furnace, but even if He didn't they still wouldn't bow. As it turns out, God doesn't prevent them from getting thrown in the fire. Instead, He jumps in with them, and they come out unharmed with their king worshipping the King.

I'm asking you to consider Jesus, who asked God the Father if there was any way He could get out of going to the cross, but concluded not my will but your will be done. That will that Jesus surrendered to, was His resurrection, glory, and our salvation.

I'm asking you to consider that God always wants to do more in & through us than we even know to ask. I'm not asking you to not be honest, I'm just asking you to have an honest perspective. Has He ever left you? Has He ever forsaken you? Why would He start now?

You can walk through the fire in confidence when you know who is walking with you. You are never alone. There's another in the fire. And the promise of the Father is not just that He'll see you on the other side, but that He carries you through to the other side.

I don't know what you're going through right now, but I know there's a purpose to it. And if you choose to surrender, He just may let you see it.



Sunrise in Dothan

Louie Giglio

Goliath Must Fall – Louie Giglio >

1. What's something you've been through that at the time looked pointless, but turned out to be purposed?
2. How do you mature to the point that you can join Paul in rejoicing always?
3. Are there areas of your life that if you're being honest don't seem redeemable?
4. Romans 8:18–30 – what stood out to you from this text?
5. Why is it reassuring that God is sovereign and close in the middle of your trials?

WEEK 3

It's Personal

Have you ever wondered why YOU are going through what you're going through? Not wondered why hardship is happening, but why is it happening to YOU specifically?

In seasons of turmoil it's important that you not only get a heavenly perspective on your circumstance, but that you also get a heavenly perspective on you. It's unlikely that God randomly selected you to go through what you're going through. The hardship, setback, or uncertainty that you may find yourself in, is there – at least in part – to give, develop, or show you something, not just about God, but about you.

Some trials are there for God to give you something. David faces Goliath in part, to set the stage for David to become King. God put him through it to give him a platform. If you're in a tough season, look for what it is that God is trying to give you in the midst of it.

For all of us, if we'll be wise enough to discipline ourselves in the midst of our hardship, that dark season can actually be a development season. The fruits of the Spirit are not revealed in times of bliss, but rather blossom in times of toil. You want patience? God may keep you in a situation longer than you'd like to be. You want joy? Paul testifies about LEARNING how to be joyful through trials from a jail cell. You want peace? The disciples realized that peace is found in the person of Jesus, in the middle of a storm! Be careful what you wish (pray) for.

Or maybe for you, this season is designed for you to realize your calling. God calls Moses, who is a stutterer, to speak. God calls Joseph, the youngest brother, to lead the family. God calls Esther, an orphan and ethnic outcast, to save a nation and serve as queen. Perhaps this season isn't designed to kill you, but to reveal you.

I've learned there's no need in others knowing who you are, if you don't know who you are. Not for your fame or notoriety or even self-esteem, but so that you would stand firm, uncompromising in your pursuit of the renown of the glory of God. People who don't know who they are are subject to not knowing what they should do or how they should live. But people who have come to realize that they truly are more than conquerors, are not easily swayed.

Don't just come out of this pandemic with a clearer understanding of who God is or the purpose of the pain, come out with a stronger sense of who God has uniquely made you to be.

(You can learn to love the process.)



The Role of Revival

Dr. Dharius Daniels

Overcomer: Finding Strength in Hard Times – Youversion >

1. What's something about you you want to look different on the other side of this pandemic?
2. Has your aim in the past been to grow during hard seasons, or just survive hard seasons?
3. In Judges 6:11-18 – God calls a guy named Gideon a mighty warrior, but Gideon doesn't see himself that way. So God sends him into a battle with the odds against him, but God with him and he is victorious. What stood out to you from God's initial talk with Gideon in that passage?
4. What's a harder battle for you, pride or confidence, and how do you let scripture instruct you in that battle?
5. What's something you've seen someone else in your family group grow in in this season, that you could encourage them in?

YOUNG ADULTS

Bonuses

SERMONS



Let it Happen

Steven Furtick



What Now?

Louie Giglio

BOOKS

A Long Obedience in the Same Direction >

Eugene Peterson

Through the Eyes of a Lion >

Levi Lusko

When Life Gives You Lemons >

Gerald Fadayomi

PODCAST

Doubt and Future - Proof Faith >

Joseph Solomon & John Onwuchekwa

PLAYLIST

Quarantine Worship III >