

## Leveling Off or Adding On (2/3/19)

### Video Clip: Napolean Dynamite and Uncle Rico

- that man Leveled Off in High School
- He reached a peak and never Added anything else Onto his life
  - its pathetic to watch him try to draw pleasure from his past at the expense of his future

- The good news is that we are probably much better off than Uncle Rico.
- The bad new is that even still We have a Tendency to Level off in life.
  - to grow to a certain point and then “let off the throttle”

*-Many of us level off in our Style of Clothing or our Music right:*

- i heard the story recently of a middle aged man **PROUDLY ROCKING JYNCO JEANS**
- or for some us we are HOLDING ON to those CARPENTER JEANS,,, or BOOTCUT
- that is why you have **radio stations** that play from certain eras

-There is no harm in any of that.

- in fact sometimes people who refuse to dress like their generation look like they are trying to hard....

**-But what about Spiritually, Emotionally, Mentally; is there a negative impact when we Level Off in those areas? What its to be gained by Adding ON?**

*-Continue with Peter's Story.*

- Peter was one of Jesus' 12 disciples
- All things considered Peter was a Great Dude
  - a natural born leader.      - courageous.      -he was “action oriented”
  - some people talk a good game, but little else,,, Peter was a doer!*
- Peter was a man's man.....

-But for all of Peter's strengths there were still shortcomings

**-But through his following of Jesus, Peter was growing.**

-Peter slowly morphed from a Load Mouth, Opinionated, Self Centered person into something much more beautiful and effective.

-Last week we talked about Peter's greatest Regret: **disowning Jesus right before the crucifixion.**

**-In an act of Great Mercy Jesus welcomed Peter back and Peter Grew as a result of this event.**

-after Jesus restored Peter he goes right back to Leading among the early Jesus followers

-You can see the Growth and development when 40 Days after the Resurrection Jesus had ascended into Heaven and there was a Crowd of THOUSANDS in Jerusalem.

-this crowd begins to mock the disciples!!!

**-rather than being afraid of the mocking crowd**

**-Peter stood before this multitude and Preached about Jesus**

-Instead of running and hiding, when opposition came

-instead of chopping off ears

-instead of hiding by a fire and watching it all play out

**-Peter actually said “this Jesus whom you killed is God and king”**

**-His resurrection Proved that you were WRONG**

-Then Peter Publicly called on people to surrender their lives to Jesus.

-That sounds like Growth and Progress form a month before.....

*-the growth that was displayed in Peter that day ended with 3000 men coming to faith in Jesus!*

**-But God was not finished with Peter’s growth yet:**

-the church was expanding rapidly now in Jerusalem

-Jews from all walks of life were joining the Jesus movement

**-but there was a problem,,,,, Jesus told Peter “you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, all Judea, Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth”**

-God intended the church to reach all People groups and all nations, but Peter was uncomfortable with that,,,,, because honestly he was RACIST.

**-God appeared to Peter in a weird dream to give him specific instructions about Going to a foreigners house and preach the gospel**

-Peter argued with God that he had never defiled himself by being in a non jewish home (he tried to dress his prejudice up in spiritual clothes)

-God kept pushing and eventually Peter went to the house and told them about Jesus, everyone there accepted Jesus, and God worked in their lives powerfully.

**-that was progress, but Peter still had issues**

*-This a Breakthrough, Non Jewish people could be saved through Jesus.*

-but even though he accepted the Idea of it, Peter still had a lot of baggage to overcome

-Eventually the Apostle Paul became a key leader in the Jesus Movement and he went all around Asia Minor starting churches filled with Non Jewish people.

**-Peter himself visited these churches and saw all that God was doing**

-God was working on his heart about how he instinctively disliked or Mistrusted people who looked different than him.

-he was growing..

-Peter was now at the point where he **ate meals together with Gentile Christians**  
**-this was a big deal for Peter**

-But on one occasion Peter is with a bunch of the gentiles and Some of the Jewish BIG WIGS from the Jerusalem Church showed up.

**-Peter was now to uncomfortable to eat with his Gentile friends,,,,, he was afraid of how his Jewish Jerusalem Church Friends would react.**

*-He was like a Popular kid who was friends with an unpopular kid until his popular friends showed up, and then he shunned his once friend.*

-Paul “confronted Peter to his face” about this hypocrisy.

-Peter has grown a lot and has changed A LOT over these last few years, but will he Level OFF here, or will he Keep ADDING ON.

*-pause here and pick this up later*

*-Years after this event Peter wrote a letter and had it circulated through all the known churches.*

*-it was RECOGNIZED by Early Church fathers to be more than just Peter talking, God was Speaking through Peter*

*-so it is now officially part of the Christian Scriptures.*

-2 Peter 1:3-8 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

5 For this very reason, **make every effort to add to** your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in **increasing measure**, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**The Finished Work of Jesus is the Standard Issue Tool Chest given to Every Christian.**

-I love how it says it: “everything needed for a Godly Life has been given to us through our knowledge of Jesus”.

*-Illustration: Luke scored his first goal in B-ball*

-I am so proud of him,,, he had never played before this year

-he has really thrown himself into it,, and practiced,, he is getting pretty good

**-There is a kid on his team who is so much better than most of the others**

-calls plays.                    -plays tough defense                    -he can handle the ball

-and if he gets an open shot,,,, he is probably going to make it

-All of those kids are playing every game with THE SAME BALL.

-they shoot on the same hoop.

*-Everything given to one was given to the others, why is this one kid SO GOOD?*

**-every morning without fail he wakes up an Hour Earlier than anyone else in his house and goes outside and practices for 1 hour**

-then he comes in and joins the rest of his family in getting ready for the day

-A basketball is Standard Issue, but what is done with it decides so much.

**-What Jesus contributes to Your Spirituality has been Universally Given.**

-we simply need to avail ourselves to it.

**-This is such good news for Jesus followers:**

-there are no 1%'rs who are capable of a spirituality that the rest of us are not

-there are none who simply don't have the Means for a Godly Life

-the difference is whether we develop what he has given

**The Jesus Life is, by nature, a Life of Adding To.**

**-This Jesus life is NOT A ONE AND DONE type thing.**

-a drivers license is an example of “One and Done”

-you learn and do it once and that is it,,,, you can forget everything you learned and did

-how many still know which direction to turn wheels when parallel parked.... Who still knows how many years you lose license for 3rd Dwi,,,,, who can still flawlessly parallel park.....

-you still need to retain the BASIC ABILITY to operate a car, but the specifics don't matter as much anymore,,, **you achieved the license once for all**

**-Life in Jesus was designed to be a Journey not an Accomplishment that gets checked off a list.**

-Peter actually thought that continued growth was SO IMPORTANT that he said in his letter “**make every effort to Add To Your Faith**”

*-another translation says it like this “bend all your energy to the task of equipping your faith with: Knowledge, self control, perseverance, Godliness, mutual affection, love*

-So “bend all your energy to adding those things to your life.

-Here is what that means:

-faith in Jesus is the starting point

*-many stop there, seeing it as a finish line, but it is more like HAVING A CUSTOM HOUSE BUILT*

-There is the basic house, but from there there are many options and extras

-you need windows,, and good windows,,,, you need to pick and pay for your floor choice

-you need to decide how heavily to invest in your kitchen and bath

-will your basement be finished or unfinished,,,, will there be door from your kitchen that goes out to NOTHING or will there be a DECK

-You get what we are saying, two houses can be built with a really similar basic design but what really makes that house into YOUR HOME are those additions.

**-the big difference is that in houses every step costs you more,,,,, in Christ it has all already been paid for we simply need to Install it.**

-Faith in Jesus is the basic house and from there we add on Knowledge of Ourselves and Of Jesus

-as you learn to know Jesus and really know yourself you will see places that don't match

-Self control is how you make them match

-self control is easy for a time, but eventually **you get tired of the change, or it begins to cost something**

-that is where Perseverance comes in.

-as you push through the hard part of our Sinful Flesh Pushing back against the change, eventually it just becomes part of who you are.

**-This process over time results in You looking and Being more like God. (Godliness)**

-you are not “trying to be good” you are living out Godliness that has been established within you

-While this is happening in you, you will notice what others are not doing and all the things wrong with them.

-Affection toward your fellow man and woman is not a FEELING IT IS A CHOICE and a DISCIPLINE

— **we must bend our energy toward mutual affection**

-People are DUMB and they are hard to Love. That is why it has been Commanded to Us.

-Because we are, ourselves flawed individuals trying to love flawed individuals we are instructed to **start with mutual affection.**

-affectionate actions toward others can be given regardless of feeling

-Love grows in well watered soil.

-as you invest deliberate affection for people, God does a work in our hearts and love grows for those you have invested affection with.

**-According to Peter, all of those things together equals Spiritual Growth. Adding To our Faith.**

**-But the continuation of this process is the most crucial part.**

-For an individual or a CHURCH there will never be some Final Key or Final Piece

**-This is a Journey where every continued step of Obedience is as powerful as the ones before it.**

*-Lets take a minute and review what Peter Said next: "if you possess these in increasing measure you will not be ineffective or unproductive in your knowledge of Jesus"*

**Reverse Engineering:** If we are not growing then our faith will not be producing what it was meant to produce!

-For us and the world around us.

**If we are Growing then our Faith will be Effective and Productive.**

-Jesus made this statement about the main purpose of his ministry: *"I came to seek and save the lost"*.

-Jesus also said that our enemy has come to Steal, Kill, and Destroy but Jesus came to give us Life and Life more Abundant.

-God's initiative through Jesus is all about bringing life to Lost people, and greater degrees of wholeness and blessing to those who are Found.

-that is why at GU our mission is: encountering Grace right where we are,,, and being moved by Grace toward all God has for us.

-If we are growing in our faith then we will get better at life; and we will be instrumental in others finding life in Jesus themselves.

-Those two effects of Spiritual Growth are inseparable: If we are growing in Jesus we will get better, and the Body of Christ will get bigger.

**-to focus on one without the other, is a distortion of the Jesus life.**

-God's plan is as much about you as it is about the world out there.  
And it is as much about the World out there as it is about You!

-Only our Commitment to continually **Add to** what God has already done in us will make Both of those things Reality.

### ***Back to Peter's Story:***

-Paul confronted Peter about his sin,, and just as he had done in past situations, Peter GREW FROM IT

-he added to his faith in Jesus knowledge of his sin and shortcoming

**-once he knew about it he could address it**

-he exercised self control and perseverance to live in Obedience to Jesus' way of LOVE,, **a love that was more powerful than his Ignorance.**

-As a result he became MORE GODLY,,,,, this prejudice was further worked out of his life

-He grew in his mutual affection and Love for Brothers and Sisters that he once Hated, then Shunned,,, Then accepted but hid the fact

**-now he is going to openly love and respect them as Jesus would**

-The next thing we see from this situation is in Acts 15 when the Jerusalem council is trying to decide how to handle the problem of Gentile Believers.

**-Peter stands in Defense of his Gentile Brothers and their proper place in the Church**

**-In doing that Peter helped finally settle the dispute in the church and OPEN THE DOOR WIDE for the Non Jewish world to come to Jesus.**

-Part of the reason that you and I are able to follow Jesus today is that Peter Added to his Faith. He grew,, And his growth helped enable the church to grow.

**-When we grow Better our lives get better and God's Kingdom Gets Bigger.**

## **Commitment forms:**

-We have witnessed that Happening in the last 2 years at GU.

-So many of you are Growing,,, You are adding to your faith...

-And as you have grown Deeper the church has grown wider

-As more and more of us commit to doing that and continuing that pattern then we will continue to see what God is doing Accelerate and Intensify.

-That is how it works,,, as we grow better, the church grows bigger because we are participating in what God is Doing in the world.

-he has come to seek and save the Lost and to Give us Abundant Life

-So we are starting a giving campaign. This campaign is about expanding our capacity to Keep up with What God is doing.

-the creation of a midsize meeting space and Office space will enable us to develop more leaders and future staff,,, and give work space to leaders we already have.

-So we are not asking people to Divert tithes we are already giving to the church to this project. We are asking you to pray and talk to your spouse and decide, *over the next few months what can we give to help accomplish this”*

-this would be an offering in addition to tithes you are already giving

-some of us may have some Moneys Saved, a resource God has blessed you with and you may want to make a significant Contribution,,, thank you we will need that

-i dont say this to brag but to show that I believe in this,,, Karen and I...

-others of us may not have significant money saved but you think that if you really commit yourself and sacrifice that over the next 3 months if God blesses you maybe you can make a Pledge ..... maybe God would direct you that way.

**-Then if you are able to arrive at your commitment today then please fold the card in half and drop it in the offering bags as you leave.**