



SPECIAL SERMON
"The Weight of Ministry"
Sermon Small Group Questions
Speaker: Pastor Joseph Zwanziger

USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

- This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session together. After considering the needs of your group, you may choose one of the following options:
 1. one section of questions
 2. one or two questions from each section
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, add Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- Personal application is key to everyone's growth and should be included in every discussion. When asked how he or she intends to apply a certain principle a group member may say, "I need to spend more time in the Bible and in prayer." It is important for you to help group members make applications that are more specific and commit to a specific plan of action by asking, for example, "How are you going to begin?" An example is to get up 30 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- As the leader your goal is to help bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their need for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.

INTRODUCTION

In spite of the pain of training, the results are worth it. In fact, we would never grow up and *grow into* our full potential and maturity unless we lifted the weight of ministry. Even more so, when we join up with folks with the same priorities and submit ourselves to one another, we make progress through simultaneous support and challenge.

The true context for ministry goes beyond just gifted, licensed, and ordained "ministers." From one standpoint, there are those gifted and called to the fivefold ministry: teaching, evangelism, apostleship, prophecy, and pastoring. Their biblical job description is to "equip the saints for the work of the ministry." At the same time, those that have accepted salvation in Jesus Christ, immediately are called into ministry to share the gospel with those far from God.

MESSAGE

[Ephesians 4.11-12] *KEY TEXT*

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Key Thought #1: *Without using weights, our muscles would never be built up, grown, and come to maturity.*

[1 Corinthians 3.1-3]

Dear brothers and sisters, when I was with you I couldn't talk to you as I would to spiritual people. I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in the Christian life. ² I had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren't ready for anything stronger. And you still aren't ready, ³ for you are still controlled by your sinful nature.

What would our families look like if our children never grew up? What would our church look like if our people never matured? Would we ever reach the full potential of what God wants for us and for His Kingdom?

[Psalm 92.12-14]

*The righteous shall **flourish** like a palm tree, He shall **grow** like a cedar in Lebanon. ¹³ Those who are planted in the house of the LORD Shall **flourish** in the courts of our God. ¹⁴ They shall still **bear fruit** in old age; They shall be **fresh** and **flourishing***

Key Thought #2: *God's plan for us is that we would GROW UP in Him!*

Key Thought #3: *One of the primary ways that we grow, is by "lifting" the "weight of ministry."*

Some are called to fivefold ministry, but not all!

No fivefold ministry = No ministers = No strengthening of the Church.

Likewise:

Fivefold ministry expected to do all ministry = No ministers being equipped = No strengthening of the Church

The Church is strengthened when each part does its work!

Each role is vital. We are all ministers!

Physical and Spiritual "Weight-Training" Principles:

1. The Principle of Use and Disuse.

- ***Use it or lose it.***
- ***Muscles grow with use and atrophy (lose muscle) with disuse.***
- ***We decondition or lose fitness when we stop exercise.***

[1 Peter 4.10]

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

You can grow in knowledge, but never grow up.

When you start lifting the "weight of ministry," you'll find a new growth process start to happen--you get stronger in the things of God, you experience His favor and blessing in a new way, and you step into a new realm of fulfillment in God.

2. The principle of lifestyle.

- ***Workouts are most effective when paired with a nutrition plan and positive lifestyle choices.***
- ***To see the results, you have to change some things.***

[1 Corinthians 13.11]

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

CONCLUSION

Some of you are being asked by leaders to carry more weight--this is an invitation from God. You might feel incapable, or at a breaking point. Scientifically, the most growth in your muscles happens when you add more weight and you take yourself to the brink of "failure." Unless you add that extra weight, however, you would never get to where you need to be. What looks like a "burden" is really what is going to produce the most significant, immediate growth in your life!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. How are you carrying the weight of the ministry, in order to grow personally? What would happen if the pastors, and five-fold ministers, *only* did the work of the ministry?**
- 2. Based on the *Principle of Use and Disuse*, if we don't use our gifts and callings, we can end up losing it. What gifting do you have that you need practice using?**
- 3. What habits in your life need to change in order to see the growth in yourself spiritually?**
- 4. Who are the "spotters" in your life that can help push you spiritually toward maturity?**