

# Tallgrass Strong

2019-08-25 by Ben Deaver at Tallgrass Church on 1 Timothy 4:7b-8

## Don't forget:

- Give away Jimmy John's free sandwiches.
- Give away *Crazy Busy*.
- Smile more! 😊
- Develop a burden
- Affection for these people! Gratitude—Paul's heart for people!

## Mingle Question: Why are you here?

### Why are you here?

- For Maris' birthday she looked at me and said, "For my birthday, I want you to go to **Konza Strength** for one month!"
- I stepped into Konza Strength for the first time on Friday, February 1, 2019. I was so insecure. But I had taken the initial step. Battled a shoulder injury but then since May I've been more consistent at the gym than I've been at just about anything in my life.
- Why is this working so well for me? What's resonating with me? Why can't I get this type of consistency in the spiritual disciplines I know are so good for me, even more valuable than physical training?

Why am I getting physically stronger? What's working? How is this accountability actually functioning in this area of my life? How can I apply what I'm learning about bodily training to train myself for godliness, or spiritual maturity? How can I glean from what's working with my bodily training and applying that to training for godliness?

As we head into the fall I want to tackle this question. How can we apply what's working with bodily training to training for godliness?

## Tallgrass Strong

**1 Timothy 4:7b-8** <sup>7b</sup> ...train yourself for godliness; <sup>8</sup> for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

## Pray!

- Train = Gymnazo
- Perhaps young Timothy was into bodily training.
- The ascetics were all about whipping the body into shape.
- Physical training does have value. But, inevitably, our bodies will fade away eventually. It's guaranteed that over time, I will look more and more like David Letterman, no matter how hard I try to fight it!
- But let's reflect together on what's been working for me these last four months at the gym.

## What's working?

- 1) Common Cause
- 2) Compelling Community
- 3) Consistent Coaching

### Common Cause

- We're all there for a shared reason, physical health. There may be variations on the goals each person has and the unique training plan to get closer to those goals, but we all share a commitment to physical health (and many to mental and emotional health too).
- The common cause eventually becomes a conviction.
- We're so committed to this common cause that each of us are financially invested. If I'm paying for it, then I'm taking it more seriously than if not.
- Let's start with what our common cause is not—GUILT! Guilt is what has driven so much religious activity over years and throughout cultures in human history. We DO NOT have guilt as a motivator. Or I should say we shouldn't have guilt as a motivator.

What's our common cause here at Tallgrass Church?

- **Mission Statement:** Because God first loved us, we exist to love God and love our neighbors.
  - The Gospel—God first loved us!
- **Jesus' Mission Statement:** Make disciples of all nations—**Matthew 28:18-20** <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of *all* nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
- **Paul's Mission Statement:** Spiritual maturity of all—**Colossians 1:28-29** <sup>28</sup> Him we proclaim, warning *everyone* and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present *everyone* mature in Christ. <sup>29</sup> For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.
- Jesus is the common cause! We want to help one another in our relationship with Jesus and help others to come into relationship with Jesus.
- Baptism Celebration!

### Compelling Community

- The community support is compelling. We show up TOGETHER. We stretch and warm-up TOGETHER. We do the workout TOGETHER. We celebrate TOGETHER. Sometimes we even whine a little...TOGETHER. We encourage others to jump in from wherever they're starting at TOGETHER.
- Diverse community—Way more diverse than I anticipated when I first stepped into the gym.
- Thursday's question, "Why are you here?" This was the whiteboard from last Thursday's workout. Guess why most people in my class said they were there. Physical fitness, mental health, yes, but the number one reason was COMMUNITY!!!
- Mingling after Saturday's workout—I was the first to leave. Everyone was sitting around talking. Guess what they were talking about, the common cause, physical fitness.
- Good use of technology—Facebook Group; Facebook and Instagram Posts; Beyond the Whiteboard
  - This helps keep us connected...even when we're not physically present together at the gym.
- There's a specificity to the community that is helpful. There are classes offered throughout the day.

### What does community look like at Tallgrass Church?

- **STORY:** Matthew and Mike—Different backgrounds but rallied around the cause of Christ in their lives individually and the life of our church family!
- CG, LIFE Group, study with 3-5 guys/gals, be discipled, disciple someone, spiritual friendships, prayer gatherings (because why not?) (15 hours total).
  - Remember, average TV consumption in the U.S. per person is almost 28 hours weekly.
  - Steal some time from something weird you do that you need to scale back on.
- Ideal Week Calendar—Adjustments are made along the way both individually and as a whole church community.
- Individualized plan in the context of building a stronger community, a stronger Tallgrass family (or herd as we're called at Konza Strength).

### Consistent Coaching

- Both coaches track with how my body is doing EVERY DAY! That's crazy consistent...and so helpful.
  - Pushed to my boiling point, but not my breaking point (usually)
  - "Your strength, your stability"
  - Modifications every step of the way
    - Handstand push-ups—Knocking them out, deficit portion only, seated dumbbell shoulder press
    - Pull-ups
  - Sometimes I pick the load, sometimes it's assigned for me.
  - Up to me how hard I push myself ultimately.
- The coaches are in it with us! Traditional vs. Organic Paradigm
- Weaknesses are exposed and must be strengthened.
  - **Example:** Hurt my knee. It was a reality. I had to adjust. Now it's strong again.
- Quick feedback, both negative and positive...with an emphasis on positive!
- Set the Stage for Success—I know exactly what tomorrow's workout will be. The workout is posted every night for the next day. I know where my water bottle and shoes are and which class I'm going to go to. I plan ahead so that I will follow through with my good intentions to get physically fit.
  - When will you meet with God in His Word? Where will you read the Scriptures? What's your Bible reading plan? When? Where? What?

### What does coaching at Tallgrass Church look like?

- CG, LIFE Group, study with 3-5 guys/gals, be discipled, disciple someone, spiritual friendships, prayer gatherings (because why not?) (15 hours total).
- Ideal Week Calendar—Adjustments are made along the way both individually and as a whole church community.
  - **Example:** Struggling to get involved in everything. Just choose something. Take the next right step. Build up to more engagement.
  - **Example:** Friend who struggles to read. Get the audio Bible. Read with a friend or spouse. Take the next right step. Find your boiling point, but not your breaking point. This same friend who struggles to read has no problem praying in a group and in fact will initiate group prayer.
  - We're all at different places with training for godliness. That's ok.

- Clear, compelling picture of the future.
  - Spiritual maturity of all
    - TawG
  - Gracious generosity! How will we get there? By lessening our anxiety about money and stuff. How will we get there? By cultivating gratitude. This is a multiple step plan toward gracious generosity.
  - Thriving LIFE Groups
  - Engaging Central Gathering
  - Robust equipping
  - Discipleship

## What's working?

1. Common Cause
2. Compelling Community
3. Consistent Coaching

- Sheer willpower won't work. Neither will passivity.
- There are so many ways you could train for godliness. Perhaps you should lean into just ONE right now.

## Gather around the white board

- Application—Then go do the workout!

## Keystone Habit

*Crazy Busy: A (Mercifully) Short Book About A (Really) Big Problem* by Kevin DeYoung

- “In his book *The Power of Habit*, Charles Duhigg argues that people usually change bad habits most effectively by focusing on only one pattern, or what Duhigg calls a ‘keystone habit’... If we concentrate on one specific habit, instead of the thousand areas that make up our busy lives, we are more likely to be successful, not just in that one area but in many others.” –p. 115
- Extended example on page 115—“For example, think of what could happen if you made it your one firm, resolute goal to spend time every day in the Word of God and prayer. You’d probably decide you need to get to bed earlier so you have time in the morning to read and pray (or so that you don’t fall asleep later in the day). And because...”
- How has consistency at the gym been a keystone habit for me? If I got to the gym then I need to eat better and sleep better. I have overall more energy to connect relationally and think more clearly. The break in my day has been good. I have more discipline in general.
- What might be a good keystone habit for you today?
  - Bible reading—Checkout the YouVersion Bible app. Friend me. We’ll read a plan...together. I just started a new plan with my sister...and I’m behind already...but she’s probably gonna check in with me soon. That’s good accountability.
  - Prayer
  - Bedtime
  - Scripture memory
  - Discipleship
  - Other?
- Take some time to ask God what Keystone Habit He’d like you to focus on. And then a couple people will have a chance to share.

**1 Timothy 4:15** Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.

- You may feel like you have so far to go. Great! Then people will really be able to see your progress.

*Loving God's Way: A Fresh Look at the One Another Passages* by Gary DeLashmutt

### **Pray for LIFE Group leaders!**

- Pray for our top coaches here at Tallgrass Church, our LIFE Group leaders!
- Gather around these LIFE Group leaders.
  - Pray for the LIFE Group leaders and their families.
  - Pray for your LIFE Group.
  - Pray for your own engagement.

**Have Dave close us in PRAYER!**

## The Chopping Block:

C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*—"We shall often find ourselves in danger of deteriorating our zeal by the cold Christian people with whom we come in contact. What terrible wet blankets some (Christians) are! ... If these frost-bitten men should happen to be the officers of the church, from whom you naturally expect the warmest sympathy, the result is chilling to the last degree, and all the more if you are young and inexperienced..."

### ***CrossFit as Church? Examining How We Gather*** (Harvard Divinity School; November 4, 2015)

- <https://hds.harvard.edu/news/2015/11/04/crossfit-church-examining-how-we-gather#>
- "We are offering a challenge, and this is more of a challenge to the world of religion, that if you think religion is dying, we are saying religion is changing," said Casper ter Kuile, co-author of the study.
- What they found were many common threads and themes when speaking to leaders of these organizations. At CrossFit—a worldwide workout phenomenon with 4 million users—the members exhibit a close-knit community of people trying to better themselves and those around them through physical fitness. Members have organized fundraisers and other drives to aid friends and other CrossFitters who are going through sickness and other extraordinary circumstances.
- Thurston and ter Kuile selected 10 organizations to study more closely using six different themes: community, personal transformation, social transformation, purpose finding, creativity, and accountability.
- "What you will see among young people is that they are indeed participating in communities and they are in communities that are some ways mirroring the function that religious communities have served," Thurston said. "These are communities that are helping people aspire toward goals, transform themselves, and work toward change while holding each other accountable to make things better. They are inspiring creativity and inspiring people to find their purpose and mission in life. All these kinds of key functions that a community can serve."
- "These things are actually religious. You should treat these institutions as religious options that people find," said ter Kuile. "That's a difficult thing to hear if you are a church or for other denominations. At the same time, it's exciting."
- *How We Gather – A New Report On Non-Religious Community* (April 18, 2015 study by Casper Ter Kuile and Angie Thurston from Harvard Divinity School)—<https://caspertk.wordpress.com/2015/04/18/how-we-gather-a-new-report-on-non-religious-community/>

**1 Timothy 4:7-8** <sup>7</sup> Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; <sup>8</sup> for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

**1 Timothy 4:11-16** <sup>11</sup> Command and teach these things. <sup>12</sup> Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. <sup>13</sup> Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. <sup>14</sup> Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. <sup>15</sup> Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. <sup>16</sup> Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

**Isaiah 61:3b** ...that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.

- This is all about Jesus' ministry. We are a ministry of Jesus, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.
- Ideas:
  - Hear my heart
  - Unchurched and dechurched
  - Relational, every member a minister

## Glorify the LORD by sharing stories from the ministry of His Son, Jesus:

- Remember when stories...
- LIFE Group
  - Peter and Emily had their LIFE Group kids over so the parents could go out.
- Discipleship
  - LIFE Group and disciplemaking
  - My struggle and resistance over the last several years
- Tallgrass Prayer
- Central Gathering
  - Terrance walked in and shared his heart.
  - Mike and Matthew interacting.
- Neighboring
  - The language of neighboring has caught on.
  - Neighboring Fund
    - HVAC system
    - Alex's father
    - Paxton's neighbor
    - Amber helping someone struggling
    - Helping with cars

## How has vision changed as we've gotten going? We've had to adjust!

- We thought we'd be larger numerically at this point.
- There were some individuals and families we thought would be with us that aren't.
- We anticipated we'd be further along with our desire for a culture of equipping and learning.
  - XSI
  - GLS
  - KLC
- We've learned that we need to adjust our preaching. Both Dave and I love content but need to learn to share stories more. "Let me tell you a story..."
- Meeting in a traditional church building has been both positive and also potentially negative.
  - Great space for kids and office.
  - But is it off-putting to those we want to reach?
- We thought we'd have more LIFE Groups at this point. But the LIFE Groups we have are awesome! And we're planting a new one in a couple weeks!
- Staffing—Didn't anticipate already having Sprouts Coordinator and TGY Pastor on staff!

I want to switch gears now and speak to each one of us about how we can individually and together make Tallgrass strong! I'm snagging a mixed metaphor to capture both the concept of organic growth and strength training.