

How deep is your rut?

Intro: Someone once said, choose your rut well because you will spend a lot of time there during your life. That is so true, many people find their lives simply one big rut but they stay there because it is safer and takes less energy than trying something new. Yet I often wonder just how happy a person really is in the rut they have chosen or if deep inside they say I would like to try something different?

The reality is that successful people, or people who stay out of the rut are people of action. They know how to get things done. Dreams and goals must be put into action if they're ever going to be reached. Will Rogers once said, "Even if you're on the right track, you're going to get run over if you just sit still."

It's very important that we learn to become self starters, or people of action if we are going to stay out of, or climb out of the ruts in life. In James 2:17 it says "Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." Part of life means not just believing but also doing.

I read one time that if more husbands were self starters fewer wives would be cranks. There was once a cartoon of a guy with a beer belly sitting with a can of beer, watching television. It said, "Most of us live our lives the way we watch television, the program isn't that hot but we're too lazy to change channels."

So just how does a person get out of the ruts they find themselves in? Lets think about it for a while today. First lets think about

I. WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE TO GET MOVING?

How does a person get started on the road to success because life really begins when we get moving. What gets you up and going to do something about your life, something that will help you out of your rut?

There are many different things that motivate us but there are three very common ones:

1. Pain

It's been said, It's not when we see the light but it's when we feel the heat that we get moving. In other words it's when we get desperate.

In the story of the prodigal son it says "he came to himself". We rarely change until we get desperate.

The pain may be physical or it may be emotional before we do something about it. Prov. 20:30 (Good News) "Sometimes it takes a painful experience to make us change our ways." Pain motivates people toward change.

2. Pressure

Pressure motivates us to get out of a rut. Your boss says, "Improve your performance or you're fired!" Teacher says, "Get an A on this test or you fail the class!" That's pressure.

Pain and pressure are tremendous motivators, while they last. But the problem is, once the pain and pressure subside, we go back to our normal ways.

Sometimes pressure comes from circumstances. I Kings 17:1-8 "God said to Elijah, 'The brook will supply you with water to drink' so Elijah went and stayed by Cherith Brook. After a while the brook dried up then the Lord said to Elijah, 'Now get up and go.'"

Everything was going great, Elijah was satisfied and successful, happy and comfortable. Then it said, "The brook dried up."

Has it happened in your life where circumstances change? You know, God promises to take care of our lives yet the bills are piling up and the brook's dried up with that lay off slip on Fri. night as you leave work!

The fact is God often uses finances to push us in a new direction or more accurately, to help us out of our rut.

3. Perspective

It is a flash of insight, an inspiration, a new vision. Acts 9:3-6, "*Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice 'Who are you Lord?' Paul asked. 'I am Jesus now get up and go into the city and you'll be told what you must do.'*"

In a flash Paul was out of the rut of persecuting believers into the newness of being a believer and servant himself That may not be dramatic for you, but most of us change when we get an "Ah-ha!" moment! "That's it! That's my problem! Now what do I do?"

Lets look at six steps to get us moving as we think about

II. HOW TO CLIMB OUT OF A RUT first I must

A. Assume responsibility for my own life.

There are three kinds of people in life. There are accusers, excusers, and finally choosers.

Accusers blame everybody else. Their favorite phrase is, "It's all your fault!" They love to pass the buck. Accusers are people who want to blame everybody else for their failure. Adam took it like a man; he blamed his wife.

Then there are excusers. They have an excuse for everything - They rationalize "The reason I'm not making it is because...when I was a little kid my mom couldn't buy me name brand sneakers and I couldn't be popular in school, therefore I'm a failure at life."

George Washington Carver said "Ninety nine percent of all failures come from people who developed a habit of making excuses." The fact is: Accusers and excusers are really just losers.

Then there's the choosers. They accept responsibility for their own happiness and when they make a mistake they admit it. Proverbs 28:13 *"A man who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful, but if he confesses and forsakes them he gets another chance."*

Stop blaming others, stop making excuses, when you have had a mistake in your life - when you've been in a rut -- admit it. The first step in breaking out of a rut is to assume responsibility for my own life. Don't blame someone else.

Who are we blaming for our unhappiness? A husband, a wife... a boss... a parent... If we want to break out of a rut, we need to assume responsibility for our own life and choose to be happy.

The second step in climbing out of my rut is to

B. Believe I can change

Stop saying "I can't" and start saying "I can". Of the person who says "I can't" and the person who says, "I can", who's right? The fact is, they both are because attitude determines ability.

If your attitude is one that says you can't then you won't be able to, but to change that way of thinking takes a reprogramming of our mind. Romans 12:2 "Let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of mind."

Success starts in our mind, by how we see ourselves. Thought: We are only responsible to try—not to succeed Mark 9:23 "Everything is possible to him who believes."

What would you like to change about your life? First accept responsibility for it. Then, second, believe it can be changed.

The third step in climbing out of the rut is to

C. Clarify what I really want

In other words, write down specifically how and what you want to change. Clarify what you really want. James 1:8 *"A double minded man is unstable in all he does."*

He's saying that the problem is, a lot of people are in ruts because they can't make up their minds about what they want in life. If you really want to climb out of a rut, clarify what you really want in life and then commit yourself to it

Next,

D. Don't wait for ideal circumstances.

A lot of people living in their rut are saying, "I'm going to change but the time isn't right yet. I'm waiting for..." and they have their excuse. Life goes on! Whatever you're going to do, you've got to do it in less than perfect circumstances most of the time so don't spend your time waiting for perfect circumstances. They won't come.

Next we notice that to climb out of our rut we need to

E. Exercise our body.

1 Timothy 4:8 *"Physical exercise has some value"*. But the fact is that most people stay in their rut because they are simply too tired to change. It's not a matter of knowing what they ought to do, it's "I'm just too tired so I guess I'll just stay in my rut!"

Have you noticed when you go to a hospital now how quickly they get you up walking after surgery? Doctors have learned that inactivity kills. The quickest way to get healed is to get moving.

The parallel is: If you want to get out of the rut, the quickest way is to get your body moving. Something happening makes something happen.

Thought: Physical activity is necessary for climbing, as in climbing out of your rut

Finally, after I have

Assumed responsibility for my life as well as my rut
After I have believed I can change
After I have clarified what I really want
After I have decided not to wait for perfect circumstances
And after I have exercised my body in order to be able to climb out of my rut, then,
I need to

F. Fire away. In other words, I need to do it now!

Like the husband who said: "I'm aiming to change!" And the wife replied: "It's time to pull the trigger!" A lot of people are always aiming but they don't seem to ever get around to pulling the trigger!

Proverbs 27:1 (Good News) *"Never boast about tomorrow. You don't know what will happen between now and then."* We are not even guaranteed the next hour, much less the next 24 hours. So whatever we're going to do about getting out of our rut, we'd better do it now.

The story is told of James Aubrey wanted to be a writer. When he died he had this written on his tombstone, "He slept beneath the moon, he basked beneath the sun, he lived a life with 'going to do' and died with nothing done." How sad!

The greatest tragedy in life is to waste our life living in a rut when God wants us to really enjoy our trip through this world.

Dreamers are a dime a dozen. Always dreaming of getting their life out of the rut but it's the person of action who gets the new breathing room and the new view of the landscape. Faith without action is worthless.

Lets close with some questions for our self evaluation

Am I still trying to blame someone else for unhappiness or for my rut?

Have I learned to accept responsibility for myself and say, I'm going to make my life count by getting and keeping it out of the rut."

Have I finally believed I can change?

Have I clarified what I really want?

Have I gotten past waiting for perfect conditions to begin my climb out of my rut of despair or mediocrity?

Am I trying to take better care of my body so I will be able to climb out of my rut?

If I have done all of these things then I just need to pull the trigger and get started.

I have entitled this message, How deep is your rut and I must now say if you are here and you are a Christian the encouragement is that no matter how deep the ruts in your life they are never so deep that you can't get out of them if you if you really want to.

Young people the world tries to rush you into growing up too fast and they try to force you to choose a rut too soon.

Why not listen to the Lord, seek his will, take time to see his wonderful creation and enjoy and learn about life in Him for a while before you finally choose a way of life that, through an uninformed or unwise choice, can quickly turn into a rut for you.

If you are reading this and you have never met Christ in a personal way, your rut can quickly become your grave if you die without getting out of it.

II Corinthians 6:2 says *"Today is the day to be saved!" not tomorrow*. So will you climb out of the rut of a Christ less life and will you do it today while the conditions are right? To do that read just read the next few lines and follow through on what you read there. Your life will take on a new direction.

Realize you are a sinner Romans 3:23

Understand that the payday for sin is death or eternal conscious separation from God. Romans 6:23a

Know that there is a way of escape for you. Romans 6:23b and John 1:12

Desire to escape and pray this or a similar prayer.

"Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for my sins, and I confess them all to You [name them]. Lord Jesus, forgive all my sins and come into my heart as my Saviour and Lord. I receive You right now. Help me from this time forward to live for You. Thank You for hearing and answering my prayer. In Jesus' name. Amen."

On the _____ day of _____ I became a Christian by inviting Jesus Christ into my life to forgive my sin.

Signed: _____

If you have further questions or have chosen to do this, be sure to let us know so we can help you, pray for you and encourage you in your new life.

You can reach us at lapeerchurch@gmail.com Subject line: (Salvation)