



Writing Life Faith



The Staff Handbook: Going Above and Beyond

"Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the LORD rather than for people." (Colossians 3:23)

Life at Camp, Part 8.

Quote of the Week

"It has very little to do with how much you've been given, but how you use what you've received."

One of my favourite games at camp is *"How many chores can I check off the whiteboard before breakfast ends?"* (I think four is the record.) While I have grown in balancing chores, delegation, and building friendships, the heart of my "game" is straightforward: *How can I do more than is asked of me?*

I could get away with doing one extra chore per day, no problem. Unfortunately, I have a strong aversion to doing the bare minimum. The most invaluable people at camp do their jobs (and a few extra tasks) without needing to be told.

Today I'll share some of my thoughts on doing our best, being a diligent employee, and not suffering from burnout. Let's examine...

Going Above and Beyond

At camp, everyone has responsibilities. We need to lead our cabin groups, lead our skill, do chores, serve on the worship team, etc. If our hearts are in the right place, it should show in the ways we act. When I say "go above and beyond", I mean put in 100% of your effort, look for ways to make things better, and do more than is required of you. Go the extra mile.

Going Above and Beyond in the Bible.

"I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me." (Philippians 3:12)

In Matthew 5, as part of His *Sermon on the Mount*, Jesus approaches things from an alternate angle. He says that when we face tribulation, we should respond with servant hearts and joyful spirits. Verse 41 says, *"If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles."* Christians should be known by their actions. Joy in the midst of tribulation goes against everything the devil's kingdom stands upon. It sets us apart.

Jesus wants us to do our best *in all circumstances*. **It's easy for me to do my best when I love the job; not as much when it's hard or monotonous.** When I'm writing, helping with chapel production, or tackling a fun chore, I put in loads of extra effort. But when it comes to a hard job or a boring task...? Jesus tells me to apply the same energy and joy. I hope people see this in my work ethic at camp. And you know what? The more joy I bring into the menial jobs, the less dull they become.

Jesus modelled joyfulness in suffering when He went to the cross. That wasn't easy or fun. Part of Him probably wished He was doing more miracles or teaching a crowd. Yet for the *joy* set before Him (Hebrews 12:2), Jesus sacrificed His life. **Therefore, whatever tasks, challenges, jobs, or chores we face, we ought to bring joy into them.** It's a secret weapon: motivating us, energizing us, reminding us why we're working.

Going Above and Beyond at Camp.

"Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works."
(Hebrews 10:24)

At camp, I want to leave a legacy of exceeding expectations. My aspiration is for others to see what I'm doing and be inspired to do likewise. Two weeks ago, I talked about the heart behind my mindset. The devil wants to trick me into making work something that brings me glory. His objective is to divert my vision from my true Master and make me think I'm working for my boss's satisfaction, people's praise, or my ego. These are empty lies.

It's time to explore six components I employ daily as I seek to go above and beyond.

1. The Heart Check.

Our first step is asking, "Why do I want to go the extra mile?" If you're looking to impress your peers or boss, they will see through you. If your reason is rooted in pride, self-worth, or distracting yourself from other things, you will fall flat. **The only worthwhile motive for exceeding expectations is a genuine desire to glorify God.** He wants our entire lives.

2. Praying for the Holy Spirit.

After verifying your heart status, you need the Holy Spirit. I would die of burnout if I didn't pray throughout my day, asking the Spirit for strength, endurance, and wisdom as I work. We can't do it by our strength; we need Him.

3. Finding a Team.

On that note, we need other people too. Sure, I can do some jobs by myself. But my efficiency-oriented brain knows that the more people I have, the faster we work. I could spend twenty minutes flipping benches in the dining hall, or I could recruit five people to do it in four minutes. **Working with other people is smarter than working harder by yourself.** We've all heard that, so let's put it into practice.

4. Maximizing Efficiency.

Now we enter *Efficiency Mode*. Second to the devil, time is my greatest enemy at camp. I need to make the most of what little time is available. The Clean Team head will regularly tell us, "Even if you have 10 minutes, make them count."

Most people find it frightfully easy to waste an evening on social media or mindless entertainment. More startling are the small chunks of time we waste throughout the day. Make every moment count.

At camp, our to-do list is a whiteboard with chores and tasks. I love daisy-chaining assignments. If I notice that two jobs are geographically close to each other (i.e. in the basement), I do both. If I realize I need the same cleaning supplies for two tasks, I'll do both. Simple things like these save lots of time. Also, play to your strengths. Be efficient. Get familiar with the tasks and equipment. Keep coming back until everything is done.

5. Spurring Others On.

Scripture tells us to spur one another on to good works. I wanna build a habit of thanking others for their work, big or small. I also love encouraging people to join me. If they're sitting in the office, I'll ask for their help. Again, leading by example is the key. Don't ask people to do work you're not willing to do yourself.

6. Anti-Burnout Framework.

I hope all of this makes sense, except for the complication brought on by our neighbour...burnout. Many people lose enthusiasm, energy, and joy after a time. We call this "burnout", aka lack of motivation. Thankfully, God gave me a framework for suppressing burnout. (Believe me, there's no way we can do this on our own.)

Part 1: Ask God for endurance and strength. Too often I catch myself working by my power. This is stupid. I have God's Spirit, ready and willing to help me and grant me joy. I'm not suggesting we turn the Holy Spirit into a back pocket energy drink for getting work done; I'm advocating that we release our pride and self-interest so God can work through us. Human pride is incompatible with the Spirit's presence. Once we work pride out, God's Spirit can do what He's meant to do: equip believers for the good work (even cleaning or tasks at our skill areas).

Part 2: Choose joy over motivation. Honestly, I rarely feel like doing chores. I don't wake up in the morning overjoyed to scrub toilets for the twentieth time. Yet I do it anyway because it's part of my job and it's on the chores list. Likewise, rarely am I enthusiastic about cleaning weeds out of the water at swim. But I do it; otherwise somebody else has to. Motivation is a limited resource. We can't do life by willpower alone. We need to bypass motivation entirely and tap into a Higher Power: God's joy. His joy is with me 24 hours a day, even if motivation jumped ship at 4pm.

Practical Application.

I want us to take a few minutes to reflect on the six areas we covered today. I've listed them below, with a short reflection question for each. Please don't feel pressured to answer them all.

1. The Heart Check.

Wherever you're serving God right now, what is your reason for doing what you're doing?

2. Praying for the Holy Spirit.

Are you asking God for strength and guidance, or leaving a section of your life empty of the Spirit's power?

3. Finding a Team.

Do you have people around you who share your vision, and how can you help one another do better?

4. Maximizing Efficiency.

Is something in your life (a distraction, sin issue, lack of motivation, uncertainty, etc.) holding you back from God's full potential for you?

5. Spurring Others On.

How can you set a good example and encourage others to join you in the LORD's work?

6. The Anti-Burnout Framework.

Are you relying on your feelings and human motivation to carry you through the day, or God's eternal Spirit?

Next week is the end of August, the end of camp, and the end of this series. Until then, please leave a comment if you have any thoughts or insights from this post. God bless!

I'll finish with Galatians 6:9, which reads... *"So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up."*



Written by Samuel James

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