

# LIFE on the RUN

Say YES to  
LESS

## DAY 1

**READ** Psalm 46:10. *“These are words to take with us in our busy lives. We may think about stillness in contrast to our noisy world. But perhaps we can go further and keep an inner stillness even while we carry on business, teach, work in construction, make music, or organize meetings. It is important to keep a still place in the “marketplace.” This still place is where God can dwell and speak to us. It also is the place from where we can speak in a healing way to all the people we meet in our busy days. Without that still space we start spinning. We become driven people, running all over the place without much direction. But with that stillness God can be our gentle guide in everything we think, say, or do.”*

Henri Nouwen

Finding the kind of stillness Nouwen describes sounds wonderful. But it's only possible when it begins with still times apart from the chaos of life. *What would it take to make a daily commitment to still time?* From this day forward... make the right commitments. Make value-based commitments. There are plenty of good things for us to do. Choosing to distinguish between those good things and the best things is a learning process. Think about your highest values and purpose statement as the trunk of a tree. Everything you do should branch from that trunk and be the fruit consistent with the trunk. Those things which we commit to should be consistent with our highest values. As we've seen over the past couple weeks, if we're not careful, these values can be derailed. One sure way to derail our *spoken* values is by allowing *unspoken* lesser or false values to drive our commitments and behaviors. *How do we know what to say yes to and what to decline?* Putting our choices through a sort of filter system may be the best place to begin. *Do they line up with my values and who I want to become?* This type of living requires us to take a breath. To actually consider the choices before us and recognizing the impact our choices will have on our lives and the lives of those around us.

## DAY 2

**READ** Jeremiah 29:11. In [The Bottom Line on Happiness](#) from the Harvard Business Review, Clayton M. Christensen writes, *“I graduated Harvard Business School in 1979 and over the years, I've seen more and more of my classmates come to reunions unhappy, divorced, and alienated from their children. I can guarantee you that not a single one of them graduated with that deliberate strategy... yet a shocking number unwittingly implemented that strategy. The reason? They didn't keep the purpose of their lives front and center.”* Christensen goes on to say that having a clear purpose is essential, *“you've got to define for yourself what you stand for and draw the line in a safe place.”* What Christensen is talking about is much like what we've been doing the last couple weeks - identifying what we say we value and seeing if our behaviors and commitments reflect those values.

**LOOK** back at your personal or family purpose statement and **CONSIDER** the following questions: *Are your spoken values reflected in it? Would a person living out that purpose statement be a person living above contempt? Would he/she be pure? Would he/*

*she be a faithful husband/wife/friend? Would holding to your purpose statement produce a perfect person (one whose inner and outer lives are in harmony with each other and with God)? Does your current schedule reflect these values?*

## Day 3

**READ** Mark 1:35-39. We've thought about our calendars and imagined a life which chooses those things we value most *first* as we become people that are less hypocritical. Let's look at the reality of where we are today. This is where “the rubber hits the road.” *What can and will we do about our commitments and our schedules?* **PRAY** about your day. *What are you scheduled to do? What have you committed to which doesn't line up with what you value most?* From today's scripture, *how did Jesus discern the good from the best?* **PRAY** about your week. *What does it look like? What commitments to lesser values have you already made? What are you involved in or have agreed to that is/are more in line with unspoken values or unrighteous things?* **CONSIDER** what you will physically and mentally be involved with this week. *What will you spend your time thinking about?* Refer to My **Change List** from the weekend outline. *Is there something you need to continue to do, but differently? Something you need to stop doing? Something you need to begin doing?* **CONFESS** to God where you are. **SHARE** it with someone, a spouse, parent, close friend, or your small group. **BEGIN** today.

## Day 4

**READ** 2 Timothy 2:15 and Philippians 1:10. Oswald Chambers writes that the biggest enemy to our faith is not necessarily sin but rather, good things. Good is always the enemy of the best. Notice both passages of scripture call us to do that which is best. There are commitments we've made to good things that we need to eliminate from our lives in order to commit to the best things. *Is there something you need to remove from your schedule this week? Is this something you need to begin taking steps away from?* It may be that you're not able to resign from this commitment immediately. *If so, what's the process for you to do so? What's the first step in that process? Can you take that step this week?* An initial step for all of us could be to share what we are planning to do. To speak the process and steps needed to bring it to reality will not only give power to it but will also give opportunity for accountability. If we're serious about making changes, we're more likely to maintain them with someone encouraging and reminding us to keep at it when it gets tough. *“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor; if either of them falls down, one can help the other up.”* Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

*Do you find it difficult to say no?* **CONSIDER** reading [Boundaries](#) (available at the JW bookstore). **READ** Matthew 5:33-37. Are you saying yes to the best and no to anything less?

## Day 5

**READ** Deuteronomy 6:4-7. In Andy Stanley's book [Choosing to Cheat](#), when work and family (those closest to us) collide, family will normally lose. When family and anything collide, the most common loser will be those closest to us. We rationalize that they will understand and forgive us. It's easier to say no to the people we're closest to.

**TAKE** time within the next few days to sit down with the people who mean the most to you. **CONFESS** the disconnect between the values and commitments you've discovered in the past few weeks. **SHARE** the steps you're taking to bring your values and schedule in line. **SHARE** any commitments in which you're taking steps to remove from your schedule in order to bring things in line with your value of them personally. **LOOK** at the change list again. Are there things you need to continue to do but do so differently? Things you will no longer do? Things you will begin to do? **SHARE** these with each other. **PRAY** for one another and for the steps you're taking.

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