

Going All Out
Week 1: Are You Going All Out?

I. We're starting a new series of messages today, but it's really a Part II series of what we just finished up: Core: The Guiding Principles that Make Us Distinct. Pastor Clark Taylor, Elder Ed Haywood, and Pastor Mike Harris all did an outstanding job-sharing God's word and the biblical foundation for our Core Values. Can we give our preaching team another round of applause for the effort and prayer that went into each of those messages?

A. Whether you are checking out Tab or you've been here for decades, I can't stress enough how important it is to consider these Core Values. They're all aspirational and progress will only be made through prayer and humility. But without clearly defining our values we will be a chaotic mass of "me's" rather than a unified force of we! Too many churches die a slow death because they placate to the "me" rather than uniting around a powerful force of we!

1. Last week, Bethany and I took the kids to Washington D.C., and I was inspired in so many ways. Our country is blessed and great and we enjoy the blessings we do because of the struggles of the past. There will never be a perfect nation as long as people hold power, but difficult, sacrificial decisions have been made that have made this country great. I was mulling on this concept as I walked through Washington, and I came across a quote that summed it all up for me in the Smithsonian Institute:

[Slide]: "It's not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are." -Roy Disney

2. What a powerful quote that is from the lesser-known brother of Walt Disney. The elder team over the past year has done the difficult work of clarifying our Vision, Mission, and Core Values so that we have a framework for making decisions that will prayerfully get us to the place of seeing the 1.7 million people in Hampton Roads discover their story in the context of God's global purpose! This is an audacious, outward focused, global sized vision that will only be achieved through the power of the Holy Spirit and a lot of hard choices.

3. Over the past several weeks we've looked at more than a collection of cute phrases. These are the values by which we will make decisions, so again no matter how long you've been at Tab, it would behoove us to consider these values to know where we're headed.

Our team

created handy cards that have our Vision, Mission, and Core Values laid out:

[Slide]: Vision, Mission, Core Value Graphic

On our website you can find all that information as well under the "about" section and it would be great to take the time to pray through those.

II. Today, we're starting a series called:

[Slide]: Going All Out! (Colossians 3:23)

You may have noticed on the other side of the Vision, Mission, and Core Value card, you see the series title with arrows pointing to 4 categories. Going All Out is one of our Core Value statements and it helps us move from the abstract to the concrete. Vision and Mission are great but if they stay so abstract, it's difficult to know how I join with the we in order to accomplish this global sized vision.

A. Here's the summary of our Core Value: Going All Out!

[Slide]: We believe God calls us to strive for excellence. We seek to honor God in response to grace not to earn it. Individually and corporately, God has given us abilities to influence the world for Christ and we seek to give him our very best. We grow in gratitude as God multiplies our efforts through the empowerment of his Spirit.

B. Here's the verse that corresponds to this Core Value:

Colossians 3:23 (CSB) [Slide]: 23 Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people,

These are words from the Apostle Paul, and they describe the way he lived out his life! This is the man who challenged the church of Rome to offer their bodies as a living sacrifice holy and pleasing to God for this is your true act of worship (Romans 12:1-2). Paul was a person who everyday Went All Out! He wasn't a perfect person and that's not the bar God has set. God set and met that bar in the person of Jesus Christ. We make it our aim to respond to God's grace by living a life of worship, gratitude, community (fellowship), and serving others. And it's about direction not perfection.

C. So, what does Going All Out in the Christian life look like? And perhaps the greater question, why does it even matter?

1. Let's start with the why. One of the greatest books of philosophy ever written was Ecclesiastes in which the wisest person who ever lived wrestled with the deep questions of life and summoned up all his discoveries in this statement:

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (CSB) [Slide]: 13 When all has been heard, the conclusion of the matter is this: fear God and keep his commands, because this is for all humanity. 14 For God will bring every act to judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil.

- a. Whoa!! That is an intense verse! As we consider this verse through the lens of what God has done in Christ, we should see this as a positive call to action that we can now fully live into by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit made possible through our relationship with Jesus Christ! We honor and glorify God through our obedience not to earn God's favor but because he lavished his favor upon us even though we were wholly unworthy! We experience the abundant life when we surrender our worldly desires at the foot of the cross. This goes against the torrential cultural current of our day!

- (1) The cultural climate we find ourselves in today has been a culmination, centuries in the making. Not to bore us but Enlightenment Philosophy developed by the likes of Jean Rousseau and Immanuel Kant planted the seed that for humanity to truly experience freedom and self-expression, one must not look outside oneself but look inwardly. Natural desires and inclinations are within us to lead us on a journey of self-discovery that would ultimately lead us to "living our best life." Our aim in life then becomes to live an "authentic" life which is synonymous with living out our natural inclinations.
- (2) Then, less than a century later, comes along a man by the name Friedrich Nietzsche. He takes these ideas to their logical end and says that looking outside of oneself for meaning and purpose is just a powerplay and god isn't real. Oh, and by the way, I hate him because god stands in opposition to the natural desires I want to act upon. I hope we can see the fallacy in these opposing ideas Nietzsche is trying to mold together. Nietzsche ended up dying a mad-man and depressed.
- (3) I say all of this to give a perspective on the cultural currents that are coming against us. I say this also to show that people have been turning within themselves to find answers now for centuries and it's a path that might feel good (that's the nature of sin!!) but in the end leads to spiritual and physical death.

- b. Why do We Go All Out? Because we were created to glorify and honor God and we discover our story not by giving into our natural desires, but by discovering our story in God's story! We don't look in; we look out! We bend our lives to the book!!

2. How do We Go All Out? Consider these words from the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (CSB) [Slide]: 24 Don't you know that the runners in a stadium all race, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way to win the prize. 25 Now everyone who competes exercises self-control in everything. They do it to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable crown. 26 So I do not run like one who runs aimlessly or box like one beating the air. 27 Instead, I discipline my body and bring it under strict control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

- a. Paul would say there're two realities that come together in Going All Out in the Christian life.

Let's sum it up like this:

[Slide]: Our position in Christ enables our participation with Christ in a God honoring life.

- (1) We can't manufacture growth in the Christian life. At the same time, we're called as Christ-followers to be like a branch that's connected to the vine. That isn't a passive act! Growth will always be produced from God's Spirit, but we opt into participation by being intentional or disciplined in the Christian life.

- (2) In Going All Out at Tab we've distilled down 4 disciplines that we believe will provide structure for growth in the Christian life. Over the next several weeks we want to talk about these 4 aspects or disciplines of Going All Out. We will experience God through our participation in these 4 disciplines of discipleship and discipleship should always lead us back out into mission! As we grow in Christ and experience transformation, it leads us out into the world to share God's story with others!

- b. So here are the 4 disciplines we'll be looking at over the next several weeks and although we could find these scattered out all across Scripture, we can expand the context of Colossians 3:23 in which our Core Value is rooted and see these disciplines represented.

But first, here are the 4: [Slide]:

- (1) Serving
- (2) Generosity
- (3) Worship
- (4) Community

- D. We'll be diving deep into each of these over the weeks ahead and looking at different passages related to each, but let's start the discussion by looking at Colossians 3 again:

Colossians 3:16-17 (CSB) [Slide]: 16 Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

This passage is one of the few windows we get into first century church life and the 4 disciplines of Going All Out are evident in the text. It's also interesting to see how the disciplines fluidly flow amongst one another. Worship leads to generosity and community leads to service. The same could be true for any combination.

Let's take it in order of the text:

1. [Slide]: Worship

- a. Worship is a lifestyle not an event. Worship is literally the transfer of worth or value from one thing to another. So, worship both in our private life and corporate life is aimed at taking worth or value that we've misplaced on worldly things and redirecting that worth back to its proper place toward God. And beyond an abstract worship of God, the central focus of our worship is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! When Paul says to let the "word of Christ dwell richly among you" he is referring to the gospel. God has done for us what we could never do on our own! He's saved us through the sacrifice of his Son Jesus Christ giving us eternal life when we trust him by faith! The gospel should permeate our worship in order that we might be reminded of this precious gift of grace we have.

- b. Corporately our singing together isn't some random practice that got infused into our worship gatherings, it is a command of Scripture. Song styles and how music is played isn't outlined for us in Scripture but what is clear is the importance of theology and doctrine in what we sing and our attitude while singing it. Music has a way of lingering in our heart and it's a vital part of a worshipful lifestyle.

2. [Slide]: Community

- a. Paul reminds us in the text that the Christian life is a team sport. If the word of Christ is going to dwell richly among us and we're going to teach and admonish one another that's going to be predicated on an ongoing relationship we call participation in community or fellowship or the Body of Christ. Paul just before this verse calls us to be a unified body defined by the love and peace of Christ.
- b. Community is a discipline particularly in the nonstop world we live in. The discipline of worship is vital and so is the discipline of community. There's some fluidity here, but community is heavily related here at Tab to Tab:Groups, particularly LifeGroups. A LifeGroup is 8-16 people that gather regularly to encourage, challenge, support, and pray for one another. God works powerfully in bringing about growth when we get in a circle of people and mutually share our lives together! We don't find time for this; we make time for this! It's a discipline and vital part of Going All Out.

3. [Slide]: Generosity

- a. Paul reminds us twice in the text how vital it is that we have an attitude of gratitude. How do we turn gratitude into a discipline? Our generosity is a tangible expression of our gratitude or thanksgiving. No matter what, I hope all of us will be generous particularly with our finances to something we believe in. Generosity is good for our soul! It's something God wants for us not from us.
- b. If you're participating and being impacted by a local church, i.e. Tab, there's biblical precedent for contributing financially to the general operating budget of the church. We're fueled by faith, but finances aren't far down the list. We'll take a week later in the series to talk through some of the biblical instructions on being generous.

4. [Slide]: Serving

- a. All 4 of these disciplines should be marks of our lifestyle not something we occasionally do, but again we want to be a people who Go All Out and having pathways or structure for these disciplines to form is a huge part of the mission. Paul says that whether in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus! Our aim is to live a life that reflects our Savior and if anything marks the life of our Savior it was service to others.
 - b. At Tab, we have Tab:Teams that provide a pathway for us to serve others and discover our gifts and talents. The focus of Tab:Teams isn't to fill in a bunch of needs or holes to make the church function. If it gets to that point, we'll just shut stuff down, because the heart of service is for people to experience how God uses them to make a difference in the lives of others. Serving is good for your soul! There are internal Tab:Teams such as TabKids, TabYouth, Greeters, Ushers, Tech Team, a Kitchen Team, you name it! But, we also have external teams that engage with local school partnerships and serving the homeless population of Norfolk. The point is to serve somewhere and work toward incorporating service into all aspects of your life. We have people who are passionate about their workplace or their neighborhood and have intentional ways of serving in those areas. Tab is here to resource and empower you to make a difference in the lives of others not to suck more life out of you.
- E. Today was a bit more of an overview and set up of the series, but again, with us talking about key elements of our Vision, Mission, and Core Values as we wind down the summer, I wanted to make sure we take the time to get aligned as a church.
- F. If we're going to help the 1.7 million in Hampton Roads discover their story in the context of God's global purpose by pushing through boundaries to share God's story from Norfolk to the nations, it's going to take all of us Going All Out! A people committed to worship, generosity, community, and service. God can change the world through us and I'm believing he will!