

FOREWORD BY GARY CHAPMAN,
#1 *New York Times* bestselling author

JIM BURNS



Have
Serious
Fun

AND **12** OTHER PRINCIPLES
TO MAKE EACH DAY COUNT

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

ZONDERVAN BOOKS

Have Serious Fun

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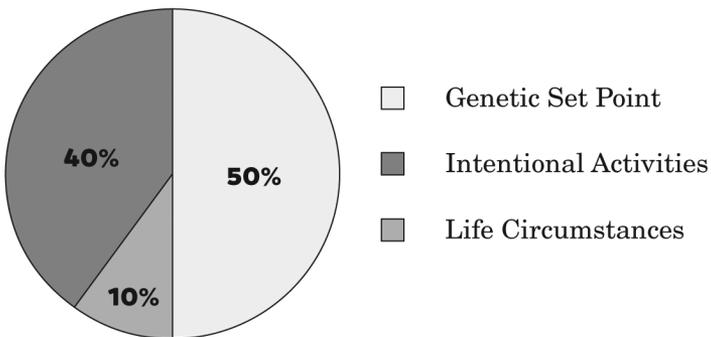
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Lesson 2

ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING

Pie Chart of Happiness

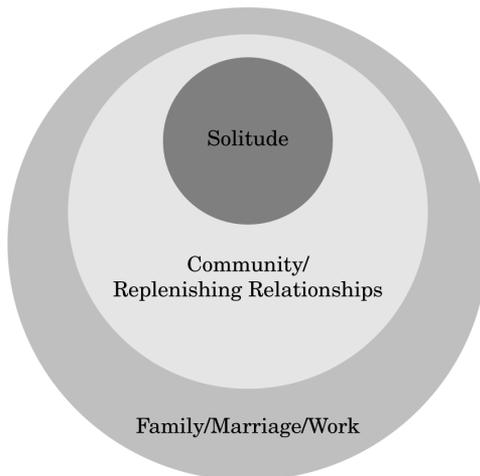
What Determines Happiness?



Lesson 6

**IT'S THE PAIN OF
DISCIPLINE OR THE
PAIN OF REGRET**

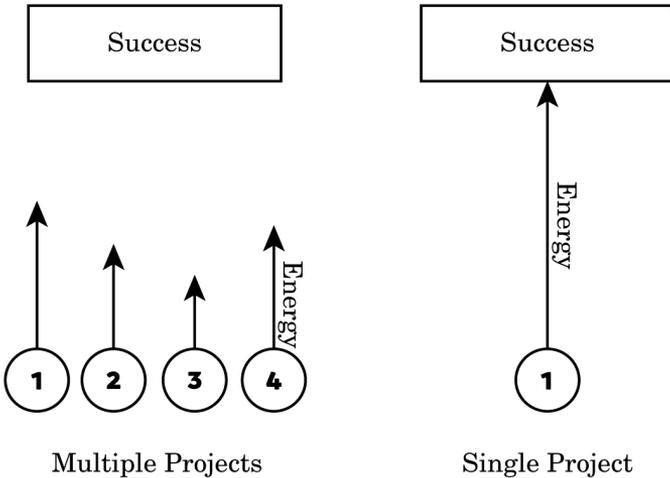
A Day in the Life of Jesus



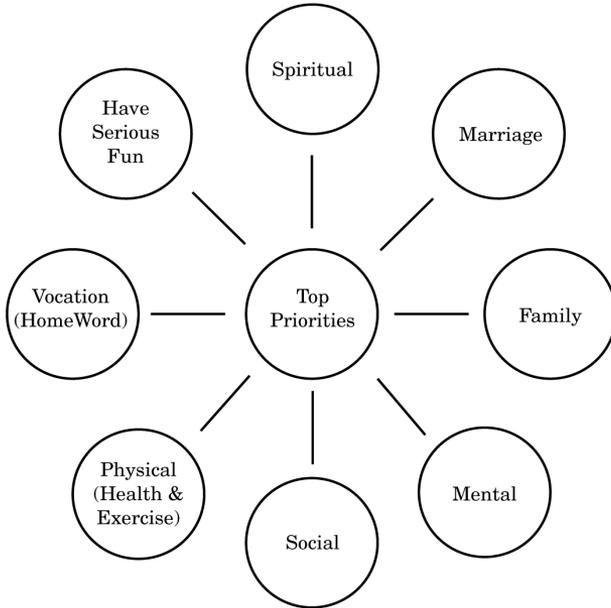
Lesson 12

**DELEGATE TO FOCUS ON
WHAT YOU DO WELL**

The Success Diagram



Core Eight Priorities



APPENDIX

It is often helpful to look at others' goals and workable habits. Here is a shortened version of my goals that I shared with my support group and my wife. I try to incorporate the SMART plan for goals as well as making sure the goals have a workable system that become habits. It's always a work in process!

2020 Goals (with systems where needed)

Personal, Marriage, and Family

1. Put time and energy into my relationship with Cathy
 - a. Weekly spiritual time
 - b. Prayer daily
 - c. Date weekly (add to the calendar)
 - d. Continued work on financial planning (financial plan done by June 30)

- e. Enjoy more time together away (create together and put on the calendar)
 - f. Extended times on the calendar. We do better away.
2. Work on my physical plan (personal training is the system)
- a. Goal: fifteen more pounds
 - b. 70,000 steps a week
 - c. Three times a week in the gym
 - d. Stretching most every day
 - e. Stay mainly off sugar, little “whites,” stricter on calories
 - f. Accountable on a monthly basis
3. Family
- a. Put energy and regular time into the lives of my sons-in-law
 - b. Annual family get-together in July
 - c. Be supportive, showing leadership, and speak into their lives when invited
 - d. Keep up our commitments with James and Charlotte

Spiritual Growth

1. Continue daily with the One Year Bible, *Jesus Calling*, and journal
2. Tuesday morning group
3. More extended time with God on a regular basis (put dates on calendar with the plan)

4. More rest and more margin (add to the calendar and have group hold accountable)
5. Take more days off (add to the calendar for the next six months)
6. Read six spiritual growth books this year (create the list of books to read and get started by January 1)
7. Listen to a weekly message podcast by the best of communicators (add to calendar and be held accountable)

HomeWord

1. Continue to create the “new and improved” HomeWord
 - a. Ministry model, finances, leadership
 - b. What do the next fifteen years look like? Partnerships, younger and fresh leadership
 - c. Meet with board chair monthly to review plan
2. Finish *Have Serious Fun* book by August 1. Film the course by September 15.
3. Develop *The Marriage Course* by end of year
4. Create HomeWord Digital. Add digital component to seminars and Trainer of Trainers by October 1.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION OR GROUP DISCUSSION

Preface

1. Sometimes significant experiences can wake us up or even force us into seasons of great change. For Jim, learning he had cancer was a catalyst. What experience or experiences have caused you to make a profound change in your life?
2. There are many great quotes in this book. Jim says that this one from C. S. Lewis summarizes his theme: “You can’t go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.” How does this quote apply to your life and thinking?

3. If you were making a list of key lessons or phrases that you have learned in your life, what would they be?
4. Have you taken the time to think about your legacy? What words describe how you want to be remembered?
5. What are some things you hope to take away from reading this book?

Lesson 1: Have Serious Fun

1. How is the fun factor in your life? On a scale of 1 to 10, how often do you feel the seriousness of life weighing you down?
2. Despite the serious and negative circumstances in your life, do you still make time to have fun? How so?
3. “A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person’s strength” (Prov. 17:22 NLT). How have you seen this proverb working in your life?
4. Play builds great memories. What memories do you have of fun that helped you connect with someone or improved your life?

5. Play reduces stress. Jim wrote five questions to know whether you are overstressed. How did you do with those questions? Are you overstressed?

Lesson 2: Attitude Is Everything

1. Henry Cloud told Jim that you can't just choose joy but rather you need to "choose the practices and activities that enrich your life with joy." How have you seen that work in your life? And are there new practices or activities you might incorporate to enrich your life with joy?
2. According to the Pie Chart of Happiness, only 10 percent of our joy comes from circumstances. Does this finding surprise you? Are you leaning in to enough healthy activities to help bring you more happiness?
3. How do prayer and spiritual practices help with your happiness mindset?
4. Your circumstance may never change, but your attitude can change, and that makes all the difference in the world. Think of a time when that principle has worked in your life.
5. Joni Eareckson Tada told Jim that giving thanks in all circumstances had become her "reflex reaction." How does this principle help your attitude?

Lesson 3: Practice Thank Therapy

1. Thank therapy is a process of daily acknowledging God's gift of life and naming reasons to be thankful. Name five reasons why you are thankful.
2. Think of a tough situation in your life right now. What are a few reasons to be thankful even in this tough situation?
3. Science reveals that thankfulness can unshackle us from toxic emotions and even have lasting positive effects on our brains. Think of a time when you experienced something like this.
4. John Ortberg says that a mindset of gratitude "liberates us from the prison of self-preoccupation." Think of the most fulfilled person you know. Do they have a mindset of thankfulness? What might you do to be more like this person?
5. God tends to do his greatest work through people who have grateful, trusting hearts. Thankfulness opens the door to God's presence. When have you deeply felt God's presence? Was thankfulness a factor in that experience?

Lesson 4: If the Devil Can't Make You Bad, He'll Make You Busy

1. "Perhaps one of the greatest problems in this world is the breathless pace at which we live our lives." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
2. Busyness and hurry are a "form of violence on the soul." How do you see this principle playing out in your life and the lives of those around you?
3. Constant busyness and fatigue cause health and relationship problems. What have you done in your life to cure the hurry sickness syndrome?
4. Are you overloaded? How did you do with the ten questions Jim asked about the overload syndrome? What one or two decisions could you make to improve?
5. Which of these sabbath prescriptions do you most want to work on: rest, refresh, restore, or recreate? Does anything come to mind that you can do this week to make a small but important change?

Lesson 5: Practice Positive Adaptability

1. Would you say that you are an adaptable person, or is adaptability an area that needs improvement?
2. Asking “does it really matter?” is a principle that Jim says provides great benefits to any relationship. What do you think makes this principle important? What makes it difficult to accomplish?
3. Jim says, “Positivity is the twin of adaptability.” How might these characteristics be related? Do you practice “learned optimism”?
4. Negativity can devour happiness in a relationship. Where do you see negativity hurting a relationship in your life?
5. What advice would you give to an “awfulizer”—someone who always imagines the worst?

Lesson 6: It's the Pain of Discipline or the Pain of Regret

1. How have you recently experienced the pain of regret encouraging you to accept the pain of discipline?
2. How often do busyness and a hurried pace in your life cause this principle to fail?
3. Jim writes about “a day in the life of Jesus,” which he began with solitude, then moved to community with his replenishing relationships, and then to his work. How does this structure compare with your typical day? What’s different?
4. Grit is a great word when it comes to discipline. In what areas of your life could you use a large dose of grit to get things under control or moving forward?
5. To persevere in life, you need grit and discipline. Can you think of someone you know who applied perseverance and it paid off? How did they do it?

Lesson 7: Family Matters More Than Work

1. Why do you think a lot of people struggle with prioritizing their work ahead of their families?
2. Have you experienced what Jim calls “confused priorities”? What were they for you?
3. Many people deal with overcoming negative family patterns. Are there issues from your family’s past that still cause you strain? If you have some negative family patterns, what key ones need work?
4. In her research on dying, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross found that people have two dominant desires at the end of their lives: a right relationship with God and a right relationship with their loved ones. How does that understanding help you think about your priorities?
5. Between a person’s birth and launching into adulthood there are only 936 weeks. What’s one way you might make the most of your family time this week?

Lesson 8: Find Replenishing Relationships

1. Many people report having acquaintances but no deep friendships. Have you ever had a deep friendship? What makes such a relationship so special?
2. Everyone has VDPs (very draining people) and VIPs (very important people) in their lives. Do you have good boundaries with your VDPs? Do you spend enough time with your VIPs—the people who replenish you?
3. Do you have mentors in your life? Who are the people you look to for guidance, coaching, wisdom, and wise counsel?
4. What is one thing of value you have learned from a mentor?
5. There is a proverb that says, “Iron sharpens iron” (Prov. 27:17). How does this proverb encourage you to find and nurture replenishing relationships?

Lesson 9: Seek Accountability for Effectiveness

1. Do you have a “safe place” to be totally honest with someone with whom you share your hurts, worries, pains, joys, hopes, and goals? If you do, you have made a really wise investment. If you don’t, what person or group could you build an accountability relationship with?
2. Accountability is security for your life. Jim told a story of a Christian leader who had a moral failure and later it was revealed that he’d had no accountability in his life and neither was he in touch with his “dark side.” Have you experienced the vital importance of accountability for keeping you focused on life’s top priorities?
3. The Bible says, “Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life” (Prov. 4:23 NLT). How do you guard your heart in your daily life?
4. There are many obstacles to guarding your heart. Jim mentioned several. Which are the most difficult for you? Are there others you would add?
5. Accountability breeds responsibility. Is there a safe friend you can be brutally honest with? How might you pursue closer accountability with them?

Lesson 10: Communicate with AWE

1. Good communication is a trait commonly found among successful CEOs, and poor communication is the number one reason marriages fail. Who are your models of good communication?
2. AWE is an excellent acronym for communicating with affection, warmth, and encouragement. Which of these is a strength for you? In which would you most like to improve?
3. Was there much affection in your childhood home? How has that influenced your feelings about affection? What would others say about you in the area of affection?
4. How much warmth do you feel in your home? In your workplace? What are you doing to help create an atmosphere of warmth?
5. Philosopher William James once said, “The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated.” Do the people in your primary relationships feel deeply appreciated by you? Do you feel appreciated by them?

Lesson 11: Set Excellent Goals and Create Workable Habits

1. Without goals, we can't make wise course corrections. How has setting goals worked for you? When has setting a goal not worked for you? Why do you think that happened?
2. When you set goals, do you consider the five attributes that make them SMART: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time bound? Write out one fresh goal that has all of these attributes.
3. While setting a goal gets us halfway there, we also need to create workable habits. Describe the habit you will need to reach the goal you thought of in question 2.
4. "Small changes produce amazing outcomes." If over the next year you could improve by 1 percent to make a major difference in your life, in what area would you improve? Why?
5. Why is living one day at a time so critical to reaching your life-changing goals?

Lesson 12: Delegate to Focus on What You Do Well

1. When Catherine of Siena said, “Do what you were created to be, and you will set the world on fire,” she assumed that meant focusing on what is most important and allowing some things to slide. What do you hope to focus on more in the next year? Is there anything you could let slide?
2. How might the “Four Phases of Ease” help in the process of delegating some of your responsibilities? What might you delegate and to whom?
3. Most people find it hard to say no to things that feel important. How could Jack Hayford’s advice to Jim about saying no to some great opportunities in order to say yes to the most important apply to you?
4. Multitasking is critical at times, but success comes from putting all of your energy into one project. How could you rearrange your workday or projects to be more singularly focused?
5. Jim listed his eight core priorities. What are your five to eight core priorities? Answer these two questions: Am I giving enough attention to the most important priorities in my life? What is the one thing that would benefit me most in each area?

Lesson 13: Glorify and Enjoy God While Serving Him Forever

1. What would it mean for you to live a life of reckless abandon for God?

2. John Ortberg's motto is "love God and do the right thing." Do you think living life through this grid could help you make better priorities?

3. Do you agree that it's critical to understand the concept of grace (unmerited favor) in order to glorify and enjoy God? Why or why not?

4. Do you think that if we truly lived what we believe—that life is eternal and life on earth is not—we would be better able to live each day to the fullest? If so, what do you think it would take to live from this perspective more consistently?

5. What does it mean to you to "invest" in the eternal? What one or two changes in your life may help you to live out that principle more effectively over the coming months? Describe what you hope will result from that investment.