

*Tuesday, April 25, 2017*

## **Taking It to Another Level**

### **Matthew 5**

**Definition:** Taking it to another level means to further improve or develop something that is already successful.

#### **Segment Questions:**

- We talked about Christ coming and setting other standards. How do you love your enemy, turn the other cheek, go the extra mile at work, in your family, or in your daily living?
- Should we ever be satisfied with the level of our relationship with God? Why or Why not?
- Is it easier to take your job/career to the next level than taking your relationship with the Lord to the next level? Which one are you more concerned about?
- Who do you let decide what level you are at in your relationship with God? Are there parameters in the Bible?
- The Bible gives us guidelines for being an elder and deacon. Is this an example of taking it to the next level? Isn't this something we should all strive for? (*Not necessarily saying we should all want the office, but what about the qualities of those seeking the office – are they worth striving for*) | Timothy 3: 1-10

#### **Action Questions:**

- How can you stay consistent in your progress to other levels? How do we keep from slipping back?
- Do you know anyone who has totally lost their relationship with God? They are at level zero? How can we help them? Have you ever been there?

## Taking It to Another Level

**TAKING IT TO ANOTHER LEVEL MEANS TO FURTHER IMPROVE OR DEVELOP SOMETHING THAT IS ALREADY SUCCESSFUL.** How would “taking it to another level” look for your spiritual life or in our relationship with the Lord? Notice the definition says it is improving on something that is “already successful.” Would you consider your relationship with God and spiritual journey a success today?

When Christ came to earth, he set the tone of taking it to another level. For example, when he said he came not to abolish the law, but to fulfill the law. The law said don't commit adultery, but Christ said if you look at a woman with lust you have committed adultery in your heart. Or what about if you are slapped on the face, shirt taken from you in court, or a soldier orders you to carry his gear a mile.....what does Jesus say we are to do? Turn the other cheek, give them your coat, and carry the gear two miles. Love those that hate you. Easy to do today? Christ wants us at another level!

Adultery-Matt 5:27; Slapped-Matt 5:39; Shirt-Matt 5:40; Gear-Matt 5:41

We read about many individuals in the Bible that struggled in taking it to another level. Or we read of some that did, but then dropped back to their previous level, or maybe even further south. Think of Moses...escapes death at birth; lives in royalty; kills a man; tends sheep; leads a nation out of bondage; disobeys God; doesn't reach the promised land. Can we relate? Adam, Job, Abraham, David, all could be examples. In my opinion...again my opinion, Joseph seemed to me to be a man who never seemed to falter. Sure, he had setbacks, but his relationship and trust in God was always strong.

So can we experience circumstances in our lives that look like failures and setbacks, but still be taking our relationship with God to the next level? What would that look like? First, only God knows a man's heart. We must be careful when we try and evaluate a man's relationship with God or if he is going forward or back. Looking at Peter might give us some insight.

Peter. What a study. Confesses Christ is the Son of God. Walks out on the water. Takes his focus off Christ. Wants to sit next to Christ in heaven. Is called Satan by Jesus (get behind me Satan). Denies Christ three times.... how many times was he taking it to the next level, then seeming to go down two or three levels in the blink of any eye! I think many of us can relate to Peter. We make progress in our relationship with the Lord, but then let something/someone get us off track.

I believe (again my opinion) that when we are taking our relationship/service/worship to the Lord to the next level, from an already good level, our relationships with others will be enriched in many areas. And I believe the opposite is true.... decreasing relationship with God, decreasing relationship with others.

We have talked about taking it to the next level, but how do we do it? Let's see how the group answers that question?

### **Matthew 5:27, 39-40**

<sup>27</sup> “You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’

<sup>39</sup> But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also. <sup>40</sup> If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. <sup>41</sup> If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles.