

1: PERFORMANCE CHRISTIANITY IS REAL

By John
In Discipline, Faith, Pressure

5 Min Read



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Mask of Success Series: When Winning Isn't Enough

OPENING THOUGHT

If that headline hurts—it's doing its job. In this devotional, we're shifting our focus on men's performance from the fitness centers, board rooms, and golf courses to our churches. Men attend weekend services, lead Bible studies, and faithfully serve where needed. Is their performance motivated by love, or wanting to be seen as "good men of God?" No one talks about how performance pressure is corrupting our spiritual lives.

Many good men are burning out in silence. They're told, resting is a sign of laziness. Being vulnerable is a weakness. Men are taught to hide their feelings—and man up. Because, according to Barna research, only 18% of men volunteer at church during a typical week, the burnout problem among men is amplified. No one is saying out loud what is so obvious; that you can love God and still be exhausted.

Success is a poor substitute for identity. This world has convinced too many men to trade their identify in Christ for performance. Success in this world is not a podium finish but a treadmill, achievements can be lost, careers can end, and circumstances will change. Only God is unchanging and everlasting.

Busyness doesn't equal obedience. A packed schedule doesn't always point to spiritual growth. I've spent years doing work for God without always making space for Him to work in me. As a textbook Type A personality—capital "A"—I tend to stay busy. But I've learned that activity isn't the same as intimacy. I don't just write these devotionals to stay on schedule; I ask God to speak to me first, to shape the message in me before it's written down.

The world measures status—God measures character.

We act like everything depends on us. But it doesn't.

SCRIPTURE

"Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain."

—Psalm 127:1 (ESV)

This is a familiar verse to us all; most can probably quote or paraphrase it from memory. When I started my first company, I typed this verse on a borrowed Smith-Corona portable typewriter and taped it, in plain view, over the desk in my home office. What, no computer at home? Guess, I'm showing my age. Computers had not hit the scene. The quote in 1977, "There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home," by Ken Olsen, the president and founder of Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC), didn't help either.

I put that verse in view because I wanted to constantly remember that it was God who had given me this opportunity, and to Him would go the glory and honor.

Men are hard-working, industrious, and tenacious. We see businesses seemingly created out of nothing. But if the foundations are not built on what God has for us in life, will they last? Will they honor Him? Will they accomplish His purpose for our lives? Matthew 7:24:27 cautions us about building our foundations on sand.

Performance isn't the enemy—our motivation is.

Pressure becomes toxic when it replaces trust. If your entire life is built on your ability to produce, then what happens when you fail? What happens when the market dries up, the ingenious idea flops, or the approval stops?

If you find yourself praying like you're depending on God, but living like it all depends on you—it's time to check your intentions.

Jesus never rushed. He moved at the Father's pace. He came to earth to accomplish what God had set in motion from the beginning of time. He didn't run on adrenaline. He moved at the pace of grace.

TODAY'S CHALLENGE:

Take 10 minutes today—just you and God. No distractions. No agenda. Just honesty.

Ask Him:

- Am I striving to prove something You've already settled?
- Where have I let performance replace obedience?
- What pressure am I carrying that You never placed on me?

Then pray:

"God, I've been retaking control. Forgive me. Help me resist the notion that I have all the answers. Let Your Spirit lead me—not me will but Yours be done."

You may need to say "no" to something good to say "yes" to God's best. Maybe that looks like declining the next big thing. Perhaps it's stopping work at a set time and being fully present at home. Maybe it's a scheduling margin. Whatever it is—obedience will always lead to peace.

FINAL THOUGHT

You don't have to live for the next win. You don't have to prove your worth with every result.

Your Father isn't impressed by your résumé—He's moved by your heart. You're not valuable because of what you do. You're valuable because of *whose* you are.

Stop building for approval. Start building with God.

This week's step: Identify one area of your life where performance has taken over peace. Lay it down. Let God build what's meant to last.

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