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2024

ENLARGE

STRETCH

LENGTHEN

STRENGTHEN

ISAIAH 54:2

Enlarge the Place of Your Tent

Read Isaiah 54

Listen to the Message 'Enlarge the Place of Your Tent' (7th January 2024) at www.elim.family/media

In this message Pastor Jim focused on the theme "Enlarge, Stretch, Lengthen, and Strengthen," derived from Isaiah 54:2. Pastor Jim urges us not to become complacent but to strive for continuous spiritual growth individually and as a church. The biblical context highlighted the challenge faced by the Jews returning from captivity who had to enlarge their thinking and strengthen their foundations for the promised growth.

He encourages us to avoid spiritual "takeaways" and invest in the commitment and discipline required for substantial, long-lasting growth. Pastor Jim cited Philippians 3:12-14, emphasizing the need to press on toward spiritual goals and forget past shortcomings.

Three key points for spiritual growth were outlined:

- **Do it with others:** *Stressing the importance of discipleship in community, this sermon encouraged believers to surround themselves with wise mentors and, in turn, disciple others.*
- **Small Gains:** *Likening spiritual growth to small, consistent efforts, Pastor Jim advocated making sustainable lifestyle changes in faith practices, such as attending church more frequently, gradually increasing Bible reading, and enhancing prayer life. Consistent efforts leading to significant progress over time.*
- **Continuous Striving:** *Ps. Jim emphasizes the danger of stagnation and urged believers not to stop striving in their faith.*

The sermon concluded with a call to radical commitment, quoting Christine Caine:

'We ought to be radical revolutionaries taking great risks to advance the cause of Christ. The purpose of life is not to arrive at death safely... God is looking for a generation that would dare to trust him to do incredible things in and through their lives.'

The overarching message is to embrace the theme of Enlarge, Stretch, Lengthen, and Strengthen in our individual lives and as a church community.

Questions for reflection:

1. **Personal Commitment:** How have you personally experienced intentional growth and discipline in your spiritual journey, similar to Pastor Jim's commitment to achieving pull-ups?
2. **Church Theme Application:** In what specific ways can you envision applying the theme "Enlarge, Stretch, Lengthen, and Strengthen" in your personal life and within the church community this year?

3. **Complacency Check:** Reflect on a time in your life when you may have become complacent or settled in a comfortable place spiritually. What steps can you take to avoid complacency in the future?
4. **Spiritual Takeaways vs. Homecooked Meals:** How do you distinguish between spiritual "takeaways" and the commitment of a "homecooked meal" in your faith practices? What changes can you make to prioritize deeper, more sustainable spiritual practices?
5. **Community Discipleship:** Share about your experiences with discipleship in community. How has being part of a group or having a mentor contributed to your spiritual growth?
6. **Small Marginal Gains:** Reflect on a small, consistent spiritual practice that has led to significant growth over time. How can you encourage others to adopt similar practices?
7. **Striving in Faith:** Discuss the concept of never stopping striving in your faith journey. In what areas do you feel the need to continue growing, and what steps can you take to press on toward those goals?
8. **Personal and Church Vision:** How can you personally contribute to the vision of enlarging, stretching, lengthening, and strengthening the church? What specific actions or changes can you suggest?
9. **Avoiding Cruise Mode:** Share about a time when you noticed complacency or cruise mode setting in, either in your personal life or within the church. How can the group collectively guard against this tendency?
10. **Risk-taking for Christ:** Christine Caine mentioned being "radical revolutionaries taking great risks to advance the cause of Christ." In what areas of your life and within the church can you envision taking greater risks for the advancement of God's purposes?

If you have never accepted Jesus as your personal saviour and you would like to move from the margins to having a relationship with Him. Please speak to one of the pastors or leadership team, we would love to pray with you. Alternatively, go to www.elim.family/ihavedecided to find out more about giving your life to Jesus.