

Grace's Q Series

#3: Relationships

1 Timothy 4:6-10

Dr. Matt Cassidy --- November 24, 2019

Turn in your Bibles to 1 Timothy chapter 4 if you brought one of those. And here's the question: Why do we even show up? Why do we exist? Why is there a Grace Covenant Church? Let's read it out loud together. Here it is on the screens: Glorify God by guiding people to become like Christ in all of life. Why is that? I mean, why would we do that? I'll tell you. Three reasons. This is the direction we have gone in and will go in. It doesn't matter what cultural wind direction is blowing, it doesn't matter what the cool kid church down the street is doing. This is it --- three reasons I can think of offhand why this is important, why it's a priority, it's a value.

The first is that we glorify God just in the choices that we make. Our freedom is twofold. Our freedom is to vote and our freedom is to use to display or to impress upon. Freedom is used to vote --- who is our king? And when we make choices, it is choosing that Jesus Christ is our king. He is our sovereign. He rules over us. And then in our freedom we get to impress to the spiritual world, frankly, to angels and demons, what we have chosen to do with the one life that we have. It's an offering. It's an act of worship, what we choose to do with our lives.

Also, the reason we like becoming like Christ in all of life, being a disciple, is because it's the most loving ambition that God could have for us, to become like Christ. What attribute did Jesus have --- when you read the gospels, what attribute does He have that you don't envy? I think a hard-boiled atheist, honestly, could read through the four biographies of Jesus Christ and at the end say, "Could I be like him? I would love to be like that man Jesus."

So, when we want to become like Christ in all of life and that's God's design for us, that is the greatest loving ambition that God could have for us.

And then, finally, I gave it away already, and that's what we were designed to be like --- to be like Christ in all of life. That's how God made us. Jesus is the second Adam and is the true perfect man. And when we are like Christ, it is as though "What would Jesus be like if He were us?" And so, it is our ambition, everyone in the building and that we touch, that we would love to help guide you to become like Christ in all of life. We personally want to become like Christ in

all of life. And we want to touch the whole world if we possibly could, so that people would become like Christ in all of life, that they would be disciples. There.

Now how do we do that? How do we make that process happen? First thing that we looked at a couple of weeks ago is that **we're committed to biblical truth**. And the reason we do that is because the Bible is the primary means that the Father has chosen for the Spirit to use to make us like His Son Jesus Christ. And so, the Bible is going to be taught here because that's one of the critical aspects and ingredients in our equation.

Now listen, this is kind of fun --- I'm kind of excited about this --- next year, 2020, is going to be the year of the Bible at Grace Covenant Church. And we're going to start off --- save the date, January 12 --- a walk through the Bible. A walk through the Bible --- we invented Walk Thru the Bible here at Grace fifty years ago and it became a national ministry. And so, we're going to have one day on January 12 that you want to bring as many friends as possible. It doesn't matter where they go to church. It's just this one day. The sermon will start and that will start the seminar, and then we'll have lunch and then we'll finish it around 3:00. Everyone from six to one hundred and six can apply for this. It will be a blast. So many people want to know the big picture story of the Old Testament. That's what we'll do on January 12. And then we'll survey our way through the Bible throughout that year. It's going to be a great year. We thought, *You know what? Let's start over --- fifty years. Let's do it right. Let's start with the Bible.* And we're doing that. So, save the date, January 12. You'll hear a lot more about it later on.

But here's the thing. It's not just the Bible. Knowing the Bible isn't enough. This is the important thing here today. What the Bible requires of us, we cannot do. As a matter of fact, the more Bible you know, the more defeated you'll become. Because what it's requiring is impossible.

So, today we're going to add to the formula of biblical teaching, the next necessary ingredient to becoming like Christ in all of life. We're going to look at this passage in 1 Timothy chapter 4 and I'm just going to tell you where it's going so we'll know what we're looking at. Paul --- he's the writer of this --- he's going to be using a metaphor throughout the entire section that's athletic. He's going to be using all physical fitness as a metaphor for spiritual fitness. And so, he's basically going to be saying throughout the whole thing in all the vocabularies that he's using, "Get in shape." And so, Paul is coaching --- there's an athletic term --- Timothy, who he's writing --- he's a pastor. Paul is coaching Timothy to train his parishioners on how to get in

shape. And so, since Paul is going to do that back and forth, I want you to be looking at that. I'm just going to hang this whistle here so you can constantly be thinking, *Okay, wait. What I know to be true physically is probably true spiritually, but so much more.* That's what he's going to do.

1 Timothy 4:6-10

If you put these instructions before the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound teaching that you have followed. ⁷ ... train yourself in godliness, ⁸ for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. ⁹ The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. ¹⁰ For to this end we toil and struggle, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

Here we go. Here's the passage, 1 Timothy chapter 4. He said, "If you put these instructions before the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound teachings that you have followed. Train yourself in godliness, for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present time and the for the time to come. Now that's a saying that is sure and worthy of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and struggle, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe."

Did you see it? Paul just said, *Get in shape*. How do you get in shape? Paul says it's diet and exercise. He says, *Diet --- it's what you think. Exercise --- it's what you do.* He's saying, *Get in shape*. Becoming like Christ in all of life is this: getting in spiritual shape. He literally says "diet" in the first part --- "diet, nourish, these instructions" --- "nourish on the words of the faith and of the sound teaching that you have followed." Hey, that's us. That's us being committed to biblical truth.

So, diet, and then that's not enough --- there's exercise, too. In the second section of getting shape spiritually is training yourself. He says, "Train yourself in godliness, for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way." Train in godliness. Train in righteousness. And the words here --- interesting, you probably know Greek --- you didn't

know that when you came in, but the word “train” here in Greek is this word – *gymnasia*. Anyone? Gymnasium. And the word that’s used for physical training is where we get our word “gymnastics.” He’s using all these physical getting-in-shape metaphors. He’s saying, “Look, this is what it takes to get in physical shape --- diet and exercise. And it’s good for you.” So much more. And so much truer is your soul and spirit.

So, now I want to help you apply this section of getting in shape. Last time we talked about nurturing our mind, and today we talk about training in righteousness. Let me tell you a trick. This is it. If you want to get serious about physical training, this is an irreducible minimum. You need a training partner. You have to have someone that can hold you accountable. You have to have somebody who can give you direction. This is the secret that is not a secret to people that are in shape. This is the secret: you have to have a workout partner, someone that knows you and pushes you and encourages you and takes you to that next place.

Look at it this way. Have you ever done this? Oh, so many times for me. I buy the equipment, the outfit, I sign up for the gym. I get the cookbook and the diet. I watch videos online. Oh, I could probably do that. But I don’t. Oh, how many times I’ve bought running shoes. You know, they don’t run by themselves. What’s the problem? Why is nothing happening? Here’s why --- no workout buddy. There’s not partner in this. You have to have somebody else kind of make you do what you don’t want to do.

There’s a saying in the business of getting in shape. It goes like this. The worst workout with a partner is better than your best workout alone. Why? Because they’ll push you. They’ll take you to places that you can’t go otherwise. Without a partner, here’s what happens --- you plateau. You stall. Often, you just quit, because there’s no one talking to the voice inside of your head. The voice inside of your head is saying, *Stay in, lay down, tomorrow --- we’re going to do this tomorrow*. No, there’s none of that.

Melinda and I, we had this experience. Again, when you’re younger, you can sometimes work out alone and that was our experience and we got married and ten years in, three children, she did her thing working out and I did my thing. But after that third child, we kind of both were in really bad shape. And we were showing all the signs of being in bad shape. And even during that period, our lives were so separate when it came to exercising that she would never tell me how much she weighed. Not in ten years. “How much do you weigh?” “Not going to tell you.”

Then one day I broke into her wallet and on her driver's license it had her weight and I said, "I know how much you weigh."

Now if you look on your driver's license right now, they don't have a weight. And do you know why? Because they used to put it on there and it got really ugly out there. Can you imagine a policeman? Picture yourself being a police officer.

"Excuse me, ma'am, you were going seventy-five in a school zone. Can I see your driver's license? Okay, it says here that you weigh 102. And if you weigh 102, I'm a rooster."

And then he looks at her and says, *I just said that out loud*, and she looks at him. And then he says, "Cock-a-doodle-doo. And I'm really sorry ... slow down ... I'm going to let you go." And that's why they took the weights off your driver's license --- for the safety of our policeman.

Anyway, it was so bad --- we got in such bad shape --- that it got good. We realized, "You know what? We're going to share the rest of our lives with each other." And --- a kind of fun twist to things --- our regular lifestyle now, the first thing we do every day is have weigh-ins. I stand over the scale when she weighs in, she stands over the scale when I weigh in. That's how we start --- we get up together. That's it. Why? Because that's the only way it's going to work. That's part of our lives --- we're going to work out together. We bought some gym equipment, we do all kinds of stuff and that carried us a long way until I started doing grappling and stuff and she didn't want to do that. So now we're finding new workout partners. And if you want to know how much she weighs, I'll tell you --- but not in this lifetime. No. I'm liking it the way it is.

I might have distracted a little bit. Here's the lesson. You want to do something hard? Find someone to do it with that you really like. And then choose to make it a fun thing. Getting in shape is hard, so you've got to have a workout buddy. It's not going to happen without that. Find someone you'd like to do it with and then choose to make it fun. And what is true physically is so much more important for your soul, right? That's what he's saying. The passage says this: "What is certainly true in the physical and has some value," he says, "So much more for the spiritual world, for this training in godliness, for all sorts of things." Another translation says, "What's true physically, temporarily, so much more training in righteousness is for all times in eternity."

So, if you want to get in shape spiritually, you're going to need a workout buddy. You're going to need, in the practice of godliness --- here's how it works. Find someone you love to do it with and choose to make it fun. Again, it's so back and forth. Here's what happens so many times in our lives. We go to the seminars; we go to the Bible studies; we buy the equipment; we do everything we're supposed to do, but we're not in shape physically or spiritually. We're not getting any more like Christ in our life. And do you know why? We don't have a buddy. We don't have a spiritual workout buddy that's encouraging us, that knows us, that's making us do the things we don't want to do.

The things you don't want to do --- that's the whole point. The person in our lives that's actually arguing with the voice inside of our head saying, "No, I'm probably right again, because I'm always right." And the person outside of your head says, "Nah, you're wrong ... again. And you need to take responsibility for that."

1 Timothy 4:10

For training in godliness we toil and struggle, because we have our hope set on the living God ...

Why do we need a spiritual workout partner? Because getting in spiritual shape is hard work. Don't take my word for it. I'm just going to refer you to Coach Paul. Look what he says in verse 10: "For it's this training in godliness that we toil and we struggle, because we have our hope set on the living God," and it continues. But look at the verb he uses. Look how graphic and hard --- "toil" and "struggle." And actually, the Greek is even amplified. "Toil" means "labor and strife" and the idea here is that it's long term. It is not a sprint. It is hard for a long period or seasons of life.

And then the word "struggle" --- I think you know another Greek word without knowing it --- the word "struggle" in Greek is *agonia*. Anyone? Agony. So be in agony for a long time. Oh, well, you'd better have a workout partner.

It reminds me of a friend of mine who was in special forces. He said, "Yeah, I remember my first week in the Special Forces training when the drill instructor said, 'Run for your life, as fast as you can.'"

And he said, "Well, for how long?"

And the instructor said, “You just run. Run.”

Paul is saying, “Train. Train. Toil and struggle in your pursuit of godliness.”

And then we say, “Oh, yeah, for how long?”

And then Paul says, “Train your whole life.”

I mean, think about how much more difficult the training is in godliness. We need to be courageous now and continually. We need to be generous now and progressively. We need to be gentle now and until the end of our life. We need to forgive now and remember that we forgave. You can't do that alone. That's work. Training in godliness --- you have to have a partner. There are too many reasons to quit. There are too many voices to say, *Don't go any further*. You can't be left alone with something that is this difficult.

Video clip of two UCLA basketball players:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s75m-xfTxyA>

You guys might have seen this cute little video that came up just a couple of weeks ago. The center at UCLA, I think, he just threw the ball out of bounds and the point guard, the smallest guy on the court, is being the biggest man, because he's teaching him not about basketball --- he's teaching him about life. *That thing that you did where you threw the ball out of bounds? That was now two and a half seconds ago and that was in the past and we can't change that. In the future, put your head up. We've got a game to finish. We can change how this game ends if you don't dilly-dally in the past.*

That's coaching. That's a training partner. That's a guy that literally grabs someone's face and moves it for him. That's the kind of training partner that we need for our souls.

Here's a great quote that I stumbled upon. “In the New Testament, friendships of accountability, mutual encouragement, confession, admonition, and joyful challenge are an indispensable vehicle for what Paul calls *training in godliness*. It is amazing in its power.”

Do you know why? Because in the areas of our life that we need it the most, we're most often putting it somewhere else. Again, let's go back to leg day. No one likes leg day. Everybody hates leg day. Do you know when you need a personal helper, when you need a workout buddy the most? Leg day. Yeah. Because it's the part we don't like. It's the part we resent. And you know what? If you have a partner who helps with leg day, that's the area of your life where

you're going to think, *Man, I'm so glad I had a partner so that I didn't give up on leg day.* How much more for your soul?

The very things that you do not want to talk about because you're either embarrassed or it's painful or lack of courage --- whatever it might be --- that is the area where you need a workout buddy for your soul, to confront and to encourage and to make you do that particular workout. Because then, where you need it the most, you'll look back on that time and you'll say, *I grew out of that weakness in my soul. I have been able to become like Christ in that part of my life because I couldn't do it without a workout partner.*

Training in godliness is toilsome. That's what Paul says. You're going to need a workout buddy. Becoming like Christ in all of life --- it's a struggle. That's what Paul said. So, you're going to need a friend of virtue --- that's what Aristotle called it. You cannot get to where God is going to take you by yourself. You cannot get to where God wants to bring you without a purposeful accountability relationship that's friendly.



Look, we know this historically. This is historic, right? Look at this history --- Rocky III. You guys know that story, right? That's a true story. Rocky couldn't beat --- what's his name? -- - Mr. T. As a matter of fact, Mr. T knocked him out in the second round and all was lost. The

whole series is ruined --- it's over --- it's gone. And then comes Apollo Creed, his workout buddy. And Apollo Creed teaches Rocky how to find --- anyone? --- the eye of the tiger. Thank you, I cannot get that song out of my head either. So, he gets him to get the eye of the tiger by running him on the beach and working the heavy weights, talking to him and grabbing his face and making him see it right. Do you know why there's a Rocky IV, V, and those other three that followed? This guy, right here – Apollo Creed. Yep. Couldn't have done it without a workout buddy. It's silly, but that's the point, right?

How much more in the training of godliness, how much more important in our eternal state? But how much harder is spiritual development than physical? Right? I mean, personally, if I had to choose between giving up, this coming week, giving up pecan pie and run a mile, or confess my sins, I'm going with the physical, because it's so much easier. The soul things, the things that change our lives --- those are the things that count forever, but they're also the hardest. So much more do you need a real friend that will stand up to the voice inside your head that keeps saying, I'm always right.

I have a great story about this kind of relationship here at Grace. We were celebrating our fiftieth anniversary for two weeks. Literally, circumstantially, providentially, while we were doing those two weeks of celebrating this church being here for fifty years, our church was literally on trial. There was a gal that used to attend here – her name is Kathy Martin. And she attended Grace for thirty-eight years. Of those thirty-eight years, thirty years she served in our recording ministry. And in that ministry is where she found Helen, her workout buddy. And listen, it wasn't just a friend of convenience or of hobbies. They were friends in Christ. They were friends in purpose. They both wanted to become more like Christ in all of their lives. They wanted to be purposeful. And so, they set out to that and they involved themselves in the women's ministry, they went to various Bible studies together. They wanted to know and be known. They wanted to love and be loved. And so, they did.

And when Kathy was having a difficult time with her finances, making ends meet --- she was on a meager income --- she came to our stewardship ministry and they taught her how to balance the books. And then when she had some other areas of care she was needing help with we kind of routed her over to our care ministry, and our care ministry cared for her. It was just a great thing that was going on in Kathy's life.

In January 2017, after a year of fighting cancer, Kathy Martin died. Kathy Martin left all of her possessions to Helen and Grace Covenant Church. We thought, *Okay, so ...* Turns out she was worth about 2.5 --- 2.2 million dollars --- with land and assets --- 2.2 million dollars.

Enter the estranged brother. She had a brother? She never talked about her brother. Well, I'm being very kind by just saying the word "estranged." He never initiated contact with her for forty years. But now that she's dead and there was money to be had, here he comes.

And so, he sues the church for whether or not Kathy Martin was intellectually able and capable of making a will and whether we used undue influence to cause her to want to give her resources to us.

Now the church was thinking, from our point of view, we didn't even know she had money. From his point of view, why would anyone be so nice and so kind for so long if it wasn't for financial gain. So, we were literally put on trial.

Now this doesn't happen at our church much. What I mean to say is, a lot of our ministries don't know how we're overlapping --- how much we're caring for each other independent of each other. And the court case required us to find out everything we'd ever done for Kathy in some kind of loving context. And under oath --- line 'em up --- and that's what happened. Under oath people testified. And in the recording ministry where she was highly involved, Tommy Hurst and Dottie McClain talked about their love for her. Helen spent almost an entire day testifying about her love and concern for Kathy. The leadership of our church --- Steve Hake, Robin Wieber, Bill and Shelley Schreyer, Ray Anderson --- all told the various ways that we cared for her and how she got connected and how she became like Christ in as many ways as she could in her life. People from our church who were watching the trial literally wept with pride for the care and concern that we had for the widow. We didn't even know. People in leadership didn't even know how much we had helped her.

And her friend Helen wasn't mincing around. She confronted Kathy a couple of times on forgiving her brother and they went back and forth on some things and had some hard words on that, because she was a good coach. She was a good workout partner.

The only relative in Kathy's life that concerned himself with her and loved her was her cousin. And her cousin said this under oath. He said, "I can't imagine Kathy Martin giving her estate to anyone except Helen and Grace Covenant Church. She loved them and they loved her."

The recording ministry back there? You walk by there and say hi. That's a church. That recording ministry is a church and the pastors are Tommy Hurst and Dottie McClain.

That's why we do --- I tell you that story, because that's why we do what we do here. And that's how we do what we do here. We want people to be well-nourished with Bible teaching and we want people to get in shape with great relationships. Life, training in godliness, the hope of enjoying righteousness --- that's pushing a boulder up a mountain your whole life. And then you meet Jesus face to face.

So, in our application time let me ask you --- what kind of shape are you in? I mean, your soul --- the things that matters most, the thing that matters for eternity. What's your diet like? Maybe we'll use our communion time to express that. What's your diet like? Remember what Paul said? --- nourishing your mind on the words that are true, the doctrines that have been set forth that Paul had sent out. What's your diet like?

And maybe in our time together when we take communion --- you guys can go ahead and start handing that out --- maybe challenge yourself before you take communion --- what do you do next? For some of you that are relatively new to church, maybe next is *I'm going to start coming to church each week. I'm going to start making this a priority. I'm going to work my life around that.*

Some of you might be thinking, *My mind is out of shape. I work out once a week, you know, and that's not enough.* Daily Bible reading and maybe the challenge would be for you to join a Bible study the first of the year when they get started up again.

Okay. What kind of shape is your soul in? Nourish and exercise. In your pursuit of godliness, in your training towards righteousness, do you have a partner? The best prayer I ever prayed --- I prayed it several times --- but I remember it in my twenties --- it was desperate. I said, "I knew this to be true and dear God, I cannot go any farther without a friend --- I mean a good friend. I want to be a Jonathan to some David. I can't --- I'm so lonely and confused and I want to quit all the time. Give me a friend." God wants to answer that prayer in your life. It took me eight or ten months to find that friend. Pray that prayer. Some of you need that kind of partner.

Some of you --- this is a challenge for some of you --- you have that partner and you need to quit kidding around. You need to go to the partner and say this: "Look, we're workout partners, but we've got to step it up a notch. We're running out of time. I'll be seeing Jesus soon.

And I want to be in the best soul shape that I could ever be. And what do you say --- you and me --- we start having more confrontational conversations and get this right?"

If you have a partner that can't do that, find a partner that will. Because when I look around at a church like this, one of the things that grieves me is this: diet's great, but the exercise --- not so much. I see people that have been married for ten or fifteen or twenty years, but they haven't had a marriage in a year ... or five. And if you haven't had a marriage and you can count in decades, I bet it's not nutrition. I bet it's exercise. And I'll bet you don't have a workout partner --- not one that will stand up to you and the voice in your head that says you're right all the time. And so, the challenge here is, why wouldn't you? Maybe you've had workout partners in the past that did challenge you and you pushed them aside because they did. When we take communion, what do you say we get serious about this second part of the pursuit of godliness, this training in godliness that includes *agonia* --- agony over a long period of time. Because where God is taking us in His sovereignty --- He's working your life in His power and He's taking you to a place to be like Christ that you can't get all by yourself.

So, when we take this bread --- here's what we have here --- it's called an open communion --- if you love Jesus Christ because He first loved you --- if you trust that you have a right standing with God solely based on the work of Jesus Christ --- then you take communion with us. You're part of the family. We don't care about denominations and all that stuff. Take that. Hold this until we will do it together. But I want you to be thinking about this: your past. How did you get here, this far along, and in this condition? Is there something that you need to go to the Lord with and confess? Nutrition? Exercise? Bible study? Or accountability?

Let's bow our heads and think about that, okay?

[Music plays]

Would you pray with me?

Lord, I confess that there have been more than a few opportunities that I have wasted or even stiff-armed that I might be here now and in this spiritual condition. And I confess, Lord, that I want to take responsibility for my decisions. And I want to do what I have to do to make things right. And I leave that with You. And I'm thankful for the death and the resurrection of

Jesus Christ for the sole reason that I get to have this conversation in this context of living a flabby, selfish existence. So, I'm grateful for that, Lord Jesus. Amen.

On the night Jesus was betrayed, He took the bread, and it was a Passover meal. And He took the meaning of the bread, its sinlessness --- it was without yeast, without sin --- a metaphor --- and He said, "This is my body and it's going to be broken. I will do what you cannot do. My body will take on the cost of your sins. And so, now, when you take this bread, do this in remembrance of me and what I've done for you."

Let's take the bread together.

You guys can pass out the drink.

Enough about the past. Let's talk about the future. When we take the cup --- before we do, I want you to think about what God has in store for you. Because when you become like Christ in all of life, when you train towards righteousness and godliness, He has for you integrity and honesty and generosity and character and a life with no regrets. That's what He wants. And I want you to picture before we take the cup together -- go ahead and pass it out --- before we take it together I want you to picture that little basketball thing we saw, where someone coming up next to you and grabbing your face and making it right and thinking about the future, not the past. What has happened has happened. Let's talk about how this ends instead. I want you to meditate on what God has for you. I'll be back.

[Music plays.]

With your heads down I want to just tell you something. That your imagination of where God would love you to go, that His desire for you is to become fully what you were meant to be -- what you've imagined to be as a better family member or a finer employee, a fuller human experience, is shallow and petty for what God has in mind. Our dreams are so superficial. He is a great and loving God who reigns over all things and our hearts, if we allow it. And He will make you more than you could ever ask or imagine. He'll make you like Jesus.

The night He was betrayed, He also took the cup, and this was to represent the blood covenant. And He said, "This is the new covenant and this is my blood. Take this and drink." Let's drink.

This that we have together is called communion or the Lord's table. It is sometimes called an ordinance. In some churches it's called a sacrament. And the reason is because it's not just food and drink. There's something spiritually happening here that is touching our souls and spirit. And it is attached to this last evening Jesus had with His disciples. And here's what He said. He said, "Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, do this in remembrance of me until I come in glory." And the reason is because we will forget why we're struggling. We'll forget why we're in agony. We'll lose hope.

And Jesus says, "Yeah, yeah, yeah --- you just keep doing this. And while you're doing this, something's going to be happening inside of you. Can't explain it, but it will. Kind of a grace is bestowed on you in a new way. Do this in memory of me." Let's pray to that end.

Lord Jesus, we are so grateful that You wouldn't leave us alone just with the Bible. That's awesome, but then you give us these friendships, if we choose to embrace those. And then the power of this sacred thing that we do as a community so that our souls can remember. I ask, Lord, that it would have its work in us, that we would desire so much to be like we were meant to be, that we would choose to have a partner that would take us to places that we don't want to go, for Your glory, not for ours. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.