

Use It Or Lose It (Louisiana Men's Conference)

- American Fitness (Sept/Oct 1997) magazine reports the following quite drastic effects of AGING on the male body:
 - Aerobic capacity decreases 10% per decade, pulmonary function decreases, and maximal cardiac output decreases.
 - Muscular strength is reduced, there is substantial loss of muscle mass, and the number of muscle fibers decrease 10% per decade.
 - Movement time and reaction time decrease, bone mass decreases, and body fat increases.
- One man said, "Over the last ten years, my supervisor retrained me, my office relocated me, my company downsized me, and finally my boss fired me. But that's okay, because during the same decade my body moved me into MIDDLE MANAGEMENT."
- Another man said, "I've sure gotten old. I've had two by-pass surgeries, a hip replacement, and new knees. I've fought prostate cancer and diabetes. I'm half blind, can't hear anything quieter than a jet engine, and take forty different medications that make me dizzy, winded, and subject to blackouts. I have bouts with dementia, and such poor circulation that I can hardly feel my hands and feet anymore. I never can remember if I'm 85 or 92. But thank goodness, I still have my Louisiana driver's license!"
- Our personal aging process changes us; however, we need to remember that the body of Christ is not a human body. It remains unchanged by human condition; only our perception of it changes!
 - Human senses and strength fade with increasing age.
 - Age brings an increased likelihood of chronic diseases.
 - The human body eventually loses ability to beget children.
 - The aging human body suffers a marked decrease in flexibility.
 - The human body grows weaker and adapts to its limitations.But these symptoms should not occur among the members of the body of Christ, because His body is forever young!
- Just as studies across the board show that PHYSICALLY ACTIVE people are able to reduce the physiological effects of aging, experience shows that SPIRITUALLY ACTIVE people remain vibrant and healthy. So, go ahead and clap your hands, shout unto God, run the aisles, dance before the Lord, and leap for joy! It's good for you!
- You've heard it from your teacher, your trainer, your doctor, your mother and your wife: Don't be a couch potato – get some exercise! The word for this conference is: Don't be a pew potato – get some spiritual exercise!
- The slogan is true, and it is my subject today: USE IT OR LOSE IT!

1 John 1:5 *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

- Light is absolutely pure, impossible to defile.
- God does not just HAVE light, He IS light!

1 Timothy 6:15-16 ¹⁵*Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; ¹⁶Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.*

- Do you see the problem? No man can approach unto Him! But here is the wonderful solution: God allows us, born in sin's darkness, to be BORN AGAIN into His marvelous light!

Colossians 1:12-13 ¹²*Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: ¹³Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:*

- I may look like the same "book" with just a new "cover" but I'm not! I'm an entirely new "translation" – God has written His law on the fleshly tables of my heart! God's light shines in me!

John 1:1-4 ¹*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²The same was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life; and the life was the light of men.*

- Stephen Hawking: "The universe just IS."
- Albert Einstein: "Time is an illusion."
- RELATIVITY: Time ceases to pass at the speed of light.
- Albert Einstein: "The relativistic analogy can be carried to its logical end. Since time begins to slow down with higher speeds, it can be shown that at the speed of light it stops totally and beyond that begins to run backwards!"

1 Timothy 1:17 *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Psalms 90:2 *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*

Isaiah 57:15 *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

Isaiah 43:10 *Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.*

Isaiah 44:6 *Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.*

John 8:58 *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*

Revelation 1:8 *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

Revelation 4:8 *And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

- Samuel A. Cox: "Einstein's universe is like an eternal book with pages ... It is finished before it begins ..."

Deuteronomy 33:27 *The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.*

- **GOD'S TWO WORDS FOR TIME:**
 - **CHRONOS – Time governed by the clock**
 - **KAIROS – Time measured by special moments**

Luke 19:44 *And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the **TIME** of thy visitation.*

Acts 24:25 *And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient **SEASON**, I will call for thee.*

Galatians 6:9 *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due **SEASON** we shall reap, if we faint not.*

Ephesians 5:16 *Redeeming the **TIME**, because the days are evil.*

- We can trade the commodity of time for eternity by what we do in prayer! One moment in God's presence during a service can reap ETERNAL rewards. It's just a CHRONOS moment in your schedule, but it can be a KAIROS moment in your heart!
- **One of the greatest enemies of men is chronos time – not just because of what it does to our bodies, but because of what it does to our spirits. You see, EVERY MAN HAS A PAST!**

- Many men's books are now calling it "THE WOUND," "WOUNDED SPIRITS," or similar terms. Men are hurting, but it's not the male way to talk about it, so they suffer in silence and isolation!
- Patrick Arnold: "To be a man is to bear wounds and wear scars."
- Sam Keen: "Men are violent because of the systematic violence done to their bodies and spirits."
- In "Bringing Up Boys," Dr. James Dobson describes the damage statistically: "Boys, when compared to girls, are six times more likely to have learning disabilities, three times more likely to be registered drug addicts, and four times more likely to be diagnosed as emotionally disturbed. They are at great risk for schizophrenia, autism, sexual addiction, alcoholism, bed wetting, and all forms of antisocial and criminal behavior. They are twelve times more likely to murder someone, and their rate of death in car accidents is greater by 50 percent. Seventy-one percent of delinquency-related court cases involve males ... Boys younger than fifteen years of age are twice as likely to be admitted to psychiatric hospitals and five times more likely than girls to kill themselves. Fully 80 percent of suicides involve males under twenty-five years of age. Suicide among black adolescent boys has increased 165 percent just in the past twelve years. Boys comprise 90 percent of those in drug treatment programs and 95 percent of kids involved in juvenile court."
- Robin Karr-Morse, coauthor of "Ghosts in the Nursery: Tracing the Roots of Violence," said a nation of ignored and emotionally neglected children 'has created an assembly line [of youth] leading straight to our jails.'"
- If that were not bad enough, the abuse many men suffer as they grow up is minimal compared to the abuse they INFLICT ON THEMSELVES through their own behaviors and addictions! And then because of embarrassment and shame, they lock the pain deep inside and tell everyone else that they are okay.
- Robert Fisher, in his humorous but convicting satire, "The Knight in Rusty Armor," writes of a knight who "had lived in his armor for so long he had forgotten how everything felt without it ... and since he had difficulty feeling his own pain, the pain of others went unnoticed as well."
- Many men sit in church week after week, totally convinced by the devil that they are somehow "second class citizens" BECAUSE OF THEIR PAST. Whether their personal history involves abuse, addiction, scandalous sin, moral failure, or just long lethargic periods of lukewarmness, EVERY MAN HAS A PAST he would sooner forget. **Past failure is the #1 limiting factor in Christian men!**

- BUT THAT'S WHERE THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL COMES IN!

Romans 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

- THE GOSPEL IS GOOD NEWS, NOT JUST GOOD ADVICE! Good advice is what a banker gives when providing the address of the Salvation Army to someone he has just foreclosed on. Good news is when he tells the person that an unnamed benefactor has just paid the overdue mortgage in full and has also left an extra million dollars!
- Many people are tired of listening to good advice all the time. They have exhausted their ability to HOPE while trying to COPE with problems that just grow worse day by day. What they want is not good advice, they want good news!
- The Bible does not use the verb “to cope.” Its biblical equivalent would be the verb “to overcome.” The world teaches us how to cope with the wrong in our lives, but God does not want us just to COPE with our sin and our problems; He wants us to OVERCOME them!
 - **Romans 12:21** *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*
 - **1 John 5:4** *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*
 - **1 John 4:4** *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

- At what point in your life did the “new things” of God begin to take hold? Many people would say “at the moment of my conversion” but that is not a complete answer! The people who believe that live many times under the shadow of their history, in bondage to their past.
- THAT IS NOT GOOD NEWS! In fact, having a pre-conversion life that influences you post-conversion is like spiritual schizophrenia!
- When the Bible says “all things are become new,” what part of our life history is it talking about? The answer: **ALL MEANS ALL!**
 - **John 1:3** *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*
 - **Romans 3:23** *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

- **1 Corinthians 15:25** *For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.*
- **Colossians 1:17** *And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

- **Colossians 2:9** *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

- At the moment of conversion, the grace of God enters our life and goes all the way back to the moment of conception, TURNING EVERY OLD THING INTO A NEW ONE.
- He takes what the devil intended for evil and now uses even those situations to bring good in our lives!
 - **Romans 5:20b** *But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:*
 - **Isaiah 59:19b** *When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.*
 - **Romans 8:23** *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*
 - **Romans 8:35-39** ³⁵*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. ³⁷Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

- The landscape of our soul was scarred with all kinds of evil before we met Jesus. He does not just HIDE our old lives, He TRANSFORMS our old lives! **JOSEPH SAID IT BEST – “YOU MEANT IT FOR EVIL, BUT GOD MEANT IT FOR GOOD!”**
- Someone may be here in this service whose life is a result of an unwanted pregnancy, or whose upbringing included terrible abuse, and you may have (consciously or unconsciously) lived with rejection all of your life. But the gospel is good news! THE SAME GRACE THAT ERASES YOUR SIN WILL ALSO CANCEL OUT THE SINS OTHERS HAVE COMMITTED AGAINST YOU, TRANSFORMING THE EVIL INTO GOOD!

- Grace reverses the degradation caused by sin! Grace is not soft, it is tough! It gets out the stains that others leave behind! GRACE CHANGES THE WORST SIN INTO THE BEST TROPHY!

1 John 1:5-7 ⁵*This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

- **CLEANSETH:** God dwells in my past, present and future all at the same time, and when I repent God intersects chronos with kairos, time with eternity, and begins immediately to bring good out of the evil that has been part of my life!
- **THE DEVIL DOESN'T WANT YOU TO UNDERSTAND THIS!** You must “use” your past to make you better, stronger and more compassionate toward others, or you “lose” it altogether.
- **USE IT OR LOSE IT!**