

Strong Start 4 – Winning in 2025

PASS OUT CARDS AND PENS

Welcome

Day 47

How is your year going?

Are you accomplishing...?

Let me share something personal.

Many Resolutions... Many failures

Health vs Donut Shop/Fast Food

Read books vs Youtube

Spiritual growth vs full schedule

I made the goal... but I fell short on the follow through.

I had the belief, but lacked the behavior.

Can we relate?

Do you have a current goal that you falling short of completing?

I'm going to save money, but Amazon...

...Quality time with family, but your phone...

...Generous, but when the opportunity comes, your behavior hesitates.

Nearly 80% of New Year's resolutions fail by February.

We are going to talk about why... and find an answer so we can win this year.

Test Time

#1 How important is the Bible in the life of a Christian? Scale of 1 to 10

#2 How important is prayer and relationship with God in the life of a Christian? Scale of 1 to 10

#3 How important is it for the Church to serve others? Scale of 1 to 10

Score? Hopefully close to 30.

Turn the card over...

#1 Did you read your Bible last year? Yes or No

#2 Did you make prayer a priority last year? Yes or No

#3 Did you serve once a month at your Church last year? Yes or No

Beliefs & Behaviors

How did you do on the test?

Not here to beat you up.

If your beliefs did not measure up to your behaviors, you are not alone

Study – The majority of Americans believe honesty is a core value... but the majority of us admit to lying regularly.

The majority of us value forgiveness as a virtue... but the majority of us admit to holding grudges.

67% of Americans say they value mental health, yet only 25% seek help when struggling.

There is a disconnect between our beliefs and our behaviors.

Science calls this **COGNITIVE DISSONANCE**

This disconnect affects everything...

- Relationships
- Finances
- Career
- Health
- Faith

THIS IS WHY...

- our resolutions fail.
- we are discouraged.
- We fall short of achieving what we believe is possible.
- Our strong start always fizzles...

If only there was an answer...

Jesus has something to say about our beliefs and behaviors.

In Matthew 7:24-27, Jesus tells symbolic story of two builders:

24 “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

Did you catch the key phrase?

“Puts them into practice.”

It’s not enough to hear or believe; we have to do.

The difference between the wise builder and the foolish builder wasn’t their knowledge—it was their action.

This is good news.

You probably already have RIGHT BELIEF

Right Belief

I need to be healthy...

I need to get out of debt...

I need to make a difference...

Congrats! You have the right beliefs.

But you must turn your beliefs into behavior.

Another moment from Jesus drives this home. In John 13:17, after washing His disciples' feet, Jesus says:

“Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”

Knowledge isn't the endgame. Action is.

Jesus repeatedly connects belief with behavior because He knows the human tendency to stop at belief.

Not belief only

Read the Gospels... make a list...

Every time Jesus addresses belief.

Every time Jesus addresses and models behavior.

The Gospel is more than belief!

The Gospel is ACTION!

So why don't we act?

-Cognitive dissonance gets in the way.

We rationalize, delay, or avoid because action is uncomfortable. But the truth is, our beliefs only matter if they show up in our behavior.

How do you turn your BELIEFS into ACTION?

Let me give you three simple steps you can start today:

#1 Assess the Gap

Take a moment to ask yourself: where am I out of alignment? Think about your faith, your finances, your relationships. Write down one belief you hold and compare it to your behavior.

For example: I believe God wants me to forgive, but I'm holding onto a grudge. Or I believe in putting God first, but my calendar says otherwise.

Awareness is the first step to change.

#2 Adjust the Input

Our behavior often reflects what we focus on. Romans 12:2 reminds us:

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

If we focus on the world we conform...

If we focus on Jesus we are transformed...

#2 Adjust the Input

What are you consuming?

-social media

-news

-conversations?

If it's not aligning with your beliefs, it's time to make a change.

#3 Act Small, Act Now

Start with one small action today. James 2:17 says:

“Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

#3 Act Small, Act Now

If you believe in generosity, give something small today.

If you believe in building relationships, send that text or make that call.

If you believe in getting out of debt and mastering your money... SIGN UP TODAY FOR THE FINANCIAL PEACE GROUP CLASSES.

If you believe God has more for you... SIGN UP FOR NEXT STEPS.

Learn about God's call... learn about baptism... learn how to use your gifts to glorify God.

Small steps create momentum.

Meet Charles

Alley Meeting – Keep me in your prayers.

Cancer & depression...

“Let’s pray right now.”

100% of Christians believe prayer is important.

The Majority of people have NEVER been prayed for by a Christian.

Charles – Cancer in remission, delivered from depression, he will greet you at the front door, and pray for you in the altar.

Imagine what 2025 could look like if we all aligned our beliefs with our behaviors.

What if your family saw you not just talk about faith but live it out?

What if your coworkers noticed your integrity because your actions matched your words?

What if your community saw the church as a place of action, not just talk?

What if you saw miracles from simply having an active faith?

Musicians

Call to Action

#1 Compare your belief and behavior.

-Right belief? Give it an action.

#2 Act Small

-1% daily change, makes big change.

-Enjoy the difference you are making.

#3 Act Now

-Repent, Ask God to forgive your actionless faith.

-Worship, pray, be transformed