



## **“Am I Ready for Something New? Practices that Lead to Change”**

**Theme: 20/20 Vision - Leaning into a New Year with Hope**

**Sermon Scripture: Numbers 13:25-28**

**Instead of a Family activity this week, there are DAILY practices for everyone! Practices are essential to change and doing something new, so try these on your own or as a family.**

**Monday, January 20** – Read Luke 10:38-42. In the New Testament, to “sit at someone’s feet” meant becoming that person’s disciple. In this story, Martha did what the culture valued in women – cleaned the house and cooked the food. Mary did what the culture valued in men – became a disciple. Jesus wanted ALL his followers to grow spiritually, regardless of gender or status.

▲ The contrast challenged stereotypes about gender roles: one sister was “preoccupied with getting everything ready for their meal,” the other one, “sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his message.” Which one sounds more like the way you live your life? Jesus said, “Mary has chosen the better part.” Are there ways in which you are choosing, day by day, to sit at the Lord’s feet and listen to his message?

▲ Jesus told Martha, “One thing is essential.” What would making Christ the only essential thing in your life look like? How would it affect your priorities, time use, leisure activities and other choices? How might it offer you greater freedom in your life?

**Practice: Listen** – We can find it difficult to listen without interrupting others. Being attentive to the person in our presence can help us to hear something new. Sit with someone whose faith you admire and ask them how faith has shaped their life. Write out what you learned.

**Prayer:** *O Lord, I have a lot to do. It’s hard to stop all my doing to listen to you. Help me recognize how important that is to my growth as your follower. Amen.*

**Tuesday, January 21** – Read James 1:2-5 Every life has challenges. James urged Christians to meet life’s tests as, “occasions for joy.” He didn’t mean the tests were pleasant. Times that test us, in small or large ways, can be chances to grow endurance. God can use that endurance to, “complete its work so that you may be fully mature, complete, and lacking in nothing.”

▲ How can our faith shape the way we view hard times and prepare us for a new reality? James urged his readers to see the tests as, “occasions for joy.” When have you faced a trial in your life and learned from it? How have you seen God use hard times to test and grow your faith toward greater endurance and maturity?

▲ James knew human nature is not inclined to view tests as, “occasions for joy.” So, in verse 5 he wrote that God will freely give wisdom to anyone who asks. In what ways does God's ability to "grow you" through life's challenges help you view hard times differently? When has God given you wisdom to face a tough challenge?

**Practice: Endure** – Pray Romans 5: 3-5 which speaks of the power of endurance and the hope that we can feel. *We boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.*

**Prayer:** *God, I find it hard to see moments that don’t go my way as occasions for joy. Keep teaching me to view life your way, to value the endurance and trust you can grow in me tough times. Amen.*

**Wednesday, January 22** – Read 2 Timothy 2:14-15, 23-25. As Timothy’s spiritual mentor, Paul urged him to, “Present yourself to God as... a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” Doing that correctly also involved embodying its principles in the way he taught and shared. “Be kind toward all people” was an important part of teaching effectively.

*(Message Notes and Meditation Moments for January 18-19, 2020 – For more, go to [www.fumcdurango.org](http://www.fumcdurango.org))*

- ▲ You may have heard the saying, “if you don’t stand for something, you’ll fall for anything.” In what ways are you learning and understanding more of the Bible’s overarching message, and not just snippets here and there? How reading the Bible help you change into something new?
- ▲ Verse 14 says, “Keep reminding people of these things...” Paul didn’t just call Timothy to study the Bible for himself. He wanted him to accurately share its story with others. How is what you learn in the Bible shaping your life, especially the ways that you interact with others in your family, neighborhood, school or workplace? What spiritual subjects “trigger” in you a desire to argue? How does the Holy Spirit help you deal with those feelings?

**Practice:** Read – Lectio Divina means “divine reading” and is a way for us you to what God might be saying in Scripture. Practicing this can allow you to let go of your own agenda and connect deeper with what God might be saying. Read the passage 4 times by following these steps: Read – What word or phrase speaks to you? Meditate– What does your word or phrase means to you? Pray - How is God calling you to act in response to this passage? Contemplate – Silently reflect and even write down what you are feeling or hearing from God.

**Prayer:** *Lord of my life, help me to keep growing into a “tried and true worker” for your kingdom. Make me accurate, kind and gentle in sharing what I learn from you. Amen.*

**Thursday, January 23** – Read Psalm 119:11-12, 103-105. Change calls for us to open our heart as well as our mind to what God wants to say to us. Today’s passage offers a prayer model that can prepare us to “hear” and value God’s word on the pages of Scripture.

- ▲ “I have hidden your word in my heart,” the psalmist wrote. What does it take to move the word from the printed page (or the screen) into your heart?

**Practice:** Memorize – Memorization is a way to implant within our heads and our hearts something that we can turn to amid challenging and joyful times. It offers us an opportunity to center our thoughts on something that connects us deeply to God. Read your favorite passage of Scripture at the beginning of every hour today, and by the end of the day you will hopefully be able to recite it.

**Prayer:** *God, I find in the Bible how you’ve dealt with all kinds of people who loved and followed you. Help me learn more about how my walk with you is woven into that same story. Amen.*

**Friday, January 24** – Read James 1:22-25. James said God seeks, “doers of the word,” not just “hearers.” That idea shaped the life of John Wesley, Methodism’s founder. Based on what they studied in Scripture, he and his friends got actively involved in helping prisoners and widows in Oxford. Holding together personal and social holiness has remained important to Wesley’s spiritual descendants ever since.

- ▲ When have you discovered a mismatch between your words about faith and your actions? In what ways has your allegiance to Christ altered your activities, priorities and lifestyle?

- ▲ When have you found in your own life that ignoring God’s principles to do whatever you feel like produces, not freedom, but a hurtful kind of slavery? In what ways have you found that living out God’s calling increases your freedom rather than limiting or frustrating it?

**Practice:** Reflect – “How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives” – Annie Dillard. Read this passage at breakfast, lunch and dinner today. Does doing so change your perspective? Do your days reflect how you want to be spending your life?

**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, I want the true freedom you offer me. Help me use my freedom to serve and bless others, as you did. Amen.*

**Saturday, January 25** – Read Ephesians 4:11-16. God calls us to become spiritually mature so that nothing can knock us off course. Building this kind of community requires us to speak the truth in love, with our understanding of truth grounded in the Word and guided by the Holy Spirit so that we become more like our Savior Jesus Christ. All our different gifts need to work together so that we can strengthen and equip one another.

- ▲ What are some steps that have helped you grow toward greater maturity? What are you doing in your day-to-day life that nurtures spiritual maturity in you and others, building up the body of believers in love? What one or two items are most clearly on your growth horizon right now?

**Practice** – Pick one of the 5 practices from earlier in the week to try again!

**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, you are building me—you are building us—into a community of spiritually mature people, growing in every way into your life of love. Help me to do my part as a faithful builder growing more and more into your image. Amen.*