



Training for Success



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Author – Steve Dulin

Summary

Everything we achieve in life requires time and training to learn how to accomplish our objectives. To reach Godly levels of success, we must focus on the right priorities and invest time into training. The best training we can receive is from God and His Word.

Outcomes

This lesson will show you the value of and reason for training and why it is crucial to our success both in business and in our personal and spiritual lives. You will learn how your investment in training will be invaluable to accomplish God’s purposes on earth.

Scriptural Basis

Proverbs 22:6: “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

All Scriptures are from the New King James Version of the Bible unless noted otherwise.

In 1990, Steve Dulin started Milestone Construction, Inc., an interior finish-out company, where he served as owner and president for 20 years. In 2009, he sold Milestone Construction to devote his time to business leaders in the church and throughout the world. In 2013, Steve joined the Gateway Church staff as the Executive Director of Kingdom Business Leaders, a ministry to equip Christian business leaders to run their businesses according to Biblical principles and fulfill their God-given purposes in every area of life.

Steve has been happily married to his wife Melody for 40 years, and they have been blessed with two daughters, Kristin and Kassie. Kristin and her husband Gabe have three children: Ella, Jack, and Carlie.



Have You Been Trained?

As I speak at seminars and events, I frequently ask the question, “How many of you want to be successful?” The response is always the same – every hand is raised. This should not be surprising. My experience has been that everyone wants to be successful, even if they do not know how. The Bible makes it clear that God wants His children to be successful. In Psalm 1:3, we are told that if we meditate on God’s Word day and night, whatever we do will prosper. Joshua 1:8 says that if we do what is written in God’s law, “*you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.*” John prayed in 3 John 1:2 “*that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.*” I don’t think there is any doubt that God wants His children to prosper and be successful.

Of course, we have to be clear about what we mean by success. God does not define success by how much money we have or how famous we are. He is not impressed with the size of our house or by the car that we drive. While there are many others, my definition of success is *obeying God, doing His will, and fulfilling His purpose in my life.* Even when I give people my definition of success and ask them if they want that type of success, almost all of them raise their hands. Most people know that God’s “success” is a lot better than any of their ideas of success.

I then ask people, “How many of you have been trained to be successful?” Usually, less than 5% of the people raise their hands. Think about that. People want to be successful. God wants us to be successful, but less than 5% of people have been trained to be successful, and it is very difficult to be successful without training.

Everyone Needs to Be Trained

The Bible tells us that everyone needs to be trained. Proverbs 22:6 instructs parents to “*train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*” God wants us to train our children because let’s face it, they need training. We all need

“It is very difficult to be successful without training.”

training. How can we know what to do and how to do it if we have not been trained? (By the way, the Bible talks much more about *training* children than it talks about *raising* children.) Even Jesus went through training! Hebrews 5:8 says, “*Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things*

which He suffered.” If Jesus had to learn things, how much more do we need training?



1 Corinthians 9:24 says, “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.” Life is a race, a race to become all that God wants us to become. If you are going to run successfully, you are going to need a training program. If you want to be the best you can be, you have to train. Can you imagine becoming a professional or world-class athlete without a training program? As I was writing this, a golf company sent me an email titled, “Tour level training aids.” The clear implication is that if you want to become better at golf, you need to train properly with the right equipment. It reflects the reality that, as a general rule, the more trained you are in an area, the more successful you will be.

As we discussed, it is the parents’ responsibility to train their children to run the race. If your parents did not train you, you will have to train yourself, or you will have to find someone to help train you. I encourage you not to lose time on your training. If you have not started yet, now is a great time.

While my father did not train me in a lot of life skills, I am grateful to this day for the training he did give me. My father was our assistant Scoutmaster when my brothers and I were in Boy Scouts. He taught us to work hard and not quit. He worked alongside us as all three of us eventually made the rank of Eagle Scout. My father also coached many of our sports teams until we entered junior high school. Like many of you, I would not be the person I am today without my parents.



As many of you know, I was in over one hundred fistfights by the time I graduated from college. At some point, I thought, “If I am going to keep getting in fights, I probably should get better at fighting.” I started boxing and learning very basic karate techniques. I started reading books on self-defense. I remember hearing the saying, “When you are not training, someone else is. When you meet them, they will win.” Well, I didn’t want to get beat up, so I

started training and was blessed to never lose a fight.

Growing up, I always knew I wanted to own a business. At a young age, I talked to every business owner I met about how they ran a business. I asked them questions such as, “What works in your business and why?” and “What doesn’t work in your business and why?” I asked them for the best advice they could give me if I someday ran a business. I knew that if I wanted to be successful in business, this was part of my training.



Training is the Biblical Equivalent of Equipping

Lexico defines training as the action of teaching a person a particular skill or type of behavior or of someone learning a particular skill or type of behavior. The Bible calls this equipping, and the Apostle Paul tells us that leaders are responsible for equipping others. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:11-12, “*He Himself (Jesus) gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the **equipping** of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.*”

Leaders are supposed to train others. We see a fascinating example of this in Genesis 14. Four kings went to war and ransacked the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and captured Abraham’s nephew Lot. Abraham was a very wealthy shepherd in Canaan. Genesis 13:2 says Abraham “*was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold,*” and he had many servants (employees). What is interesting is that Abraham clearly understood the value of training. When Abraham heard that Lot was taken captive,

*he armed his three hundred and eighteen **trained** servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people.*

Abraham so believed in equipping that he trained his servants ahead of time in the art of warfare and was able to defeat four military armies!

“Leaders are supposed to train others.”

Many times, we do not understand the need for training until a crisis happens. Like in Abraham’s case, a crisis reveals how well we are really trained. The Navy Seals like to say it this way,

“You don’t rise to a challenge; you fall to your level of training.” Obviously, we need to train on an ongoing basis for everyday life, but our lack of training will really show up when we most need it.

You Train to Vision

You may be thinking at this point, I understand the need for training, but how do I get started or how do I know in what areas to train?

Webster’s 1828 Dictionary has an interesting definition of training. Its main definition is: “to educate; to teach; to discipline; to form by instruction or practice; to bring up,” but it



goes on to say, “in gardening, the operation or art of forming young trees to a wall or causing them to grow in a shape suitable for that end.”

In other words, the latter definition of training is to get young trees or vines to grow up a wall to form a certain shape. This is how you know where to start or what to train.

Before you start training, you have to know what your end result looks like! If you want to train a vine to grow up a wall, you have to know what you want the vine to look like when it is fully grown. If you want to train your children, you have to know what you want them to look like when they are young adults. Actually, what is most important is what *God* wants your children to look like when they are young adults. To know, or be able to see, what God wants someone or something to look like is called a vision from God.

“Before you start training, you have to know what your end result looks like!”

Once you see it, you can start training toward it. To have an effective training program, you have to know the end result before an effective process can be put in place to achieve that result.

This is how we trained our two daughters, Kristin and Kassie. When our daughters were very young, perhaps three or four years old, we prayed and asked the Lord to give us a vision of what He wanted them to look like when they were young adults. Over some time, my wife, Melody, and I felt like we

knew what our girls were supposed to become. We then prayed about what qualities, skills, and character traits they would need to have to be successful in life and fulfill God’s vision for them. We came up with twenty-six different qualities, skills, and traits. Over the next fifteen years, we trained them on each of these items individually. We are grateful to say that both of our daughters turned out to be outstanding Godly women who have followed the Lord all of the days of their lives.

God wants us to get a vision from Him for every area of our lives. Habakkuk 2:2 tells us to “*Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it.*” Once you have a clear vision, you can “run” with it and begin training. Vision plus proper training helps you become successful in the area of life in which you are training. As a matter of fact, the King James Version of the Bible tells us in Proverbs 29:18, “*Where there is no vision, the people perish.*” God doesn’t want us to perish. He wants us to prosper. God wants us to become the people He created us to be, and it starts with vision.

Look at any area of your life that you are not satisfied with. What is your clear, detailed vision and your plan to train and accomplish your vision in that area of your life? The odds



are you do not have one. I encourage you to get a vision from God for your life and start planning out the training it will take to get there.

Training Takes Time

There is no getting around it. Everything that has value in life takes time. It takes time to build a relationship with God and others. It takes time to read the Bible. It takes time to minister. It takes time to obey God and do His will. It takes time to train, no matter the area. If you are going to be successful, it will take training, and it will take time. If you don't have enough time to train, you are going to have to cut something out of your life.

I remember when a friend of mine asked me, "Do you know why you have been so blessed?" I said, "I'm not sure. I would be interested in your perspective." He said, "I believe one of the reasons you have been so blessed is that you have been ruthless about cutting out the negative influences in your life." As I thought about it, I had to agree with his assessment.

One of the things that I believe I have done well is managing my time by eliminating things that would keep me from training. I have often wondered why people waste so much time. The average Christian watches approximately two to three hours of television a day and is on social media one to two hours a day. Three to five hours a day! How can this be when Ephesians 5:15-16 tells us, "*See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*" God doesn't want us to waste time; He wants us to redeem the time for His purposes and for us to become all that we are supposed to be.



Years ago, I thought about the positives and negatives of spending my time watching TV. I came up with a lot of negatives and very few positives, so for fifteen years, Melody and I did not watch any TV. This was back in the days when there was no social media, so we did not spend time on that either. Instead, we spent our time training on the vision that God had given us for our lives. God has honored that commitment we made to Him to redeem the time and do what He was telling us to do.

One of the reasons people waste time is explained in the New King James Version of Proverbs 29:18, which says, "*Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint.*"



Many people do not have a vision from God for their life or even different areas of their life. Because they do not have a vision from God, they “cast off restraint” regarding the use of their time. In other words, when you have a vision from God, the desire to accomplish the vision actually constrains you from wasting your time and allows you to accomplish the vision.

Train to Priorities

One other thing I believe I have done well is living out my priorities. The main reason I have been able to do this is that for over twenty-five years, I have gone away every four months on a sabbatical. During that time, I have evaluated if I have been living according to my priorities. If I have not, I make a course correction. This periodic evaluation has been critical in maintaining my priorities.

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If you are not successfully living out your priorities, it is probably because you are not spending the time to train and become proficient at those priorities. You can usually tell what your priorities are by looking at your checkbook and your calendar. If you looked at my calendar and checkbook, you would find out that my priorities in order of importance are:

- 1) God
- 2) Marriage
- 3) Children
- 4) Ministry
- 5) Relationships with others
- 6) Health
- 7) Work

Since God is my number one priority, I have spent more time training to be a Christian than any other area in my life. I have also invested more money in God’s Kingdom than in any other area of my life. Since marriage is my number two priority, I have spent the second most time learning and training to be a husband than in any other area. Next is my children, and so forth.

You might say, why is work listed at number 7? Work is an anomaly. It is an exception to the rule. God created us to work and be productive (Genesis 2), which allows us to do our other priorities. As such, work doesn’t easily fit into my list of priorities. I list work as my number 7 priority. It requires a tremendous amount of time, but it also produces income.



What I would like you to note is that during work hours, I train to become proficient at work. Outside work hours, I train on the other six personal priorities.

The main principle I am sharing is that you train to your highest priorities. I have also spent a lot of time trying to train myself to think in a biblical manner, which, of course, positively affects all of my priorities.

Conclusion

As we discussed above, training starts as a child and continues through the end of our lives. I cannot overemphasize the importance of getting trained. As disciples of Jesus, we should seek to be skilled, wise, educated, and excellent in whatever we do, and the only way to do this is to be trained. The best training we can get is from reading the Bible and learning to be led by the Holy Spirit. We also need to have Godly friends, mentors, and people who will speak the truth in love to us.

The disciples trained under Jesus for three and a half years and then went out and changed the world as they accomplished God's will. I am totally convinced I cannot accomplish God's purpose in my life without training, and neither can you!