

Chapter 2

PEAK PERFORMANCE

Would you like to improve your academic, athletic, or job performance? Would you like to



improve the important relationships in your life? These are easy questions for most people to answer but this next question may require some thought. Do you believe you can be content and still have a drive to improve? There are people who believe in order to keep a competitive edge one needs to be unsatisfied with life. They say to create a drive to be successful you need to be “hungry”. These same people argue Christianity is incompatible with success and is only for the weak. Following this reasoning you might want to make the argument if contentment means not wanting to change anything then

wanting to improve performance means you want to change something. Therefore you cannot be content and want to improve at the same time.

In order to understand how contentment and growth as a person are compatible you need to understand what attributes you will develop due to spiritual growth and how these qualities will make you better at what you do. You also need to understand the contentment Paul talked about in Philippians 4:12 comes from a certain degree of spiritual maturity. Total spiritual maturity is like perfection, something we often aim for and rarely is it achieved. Through spiritual growth you will become spiritually more mature. As we mature we will develop qualities that will help us to reach our peak performance in all aspects of our life. You may find you exceed your own expectations and accomplish things you never thought you could. Spiritual growth is a process. If you are “hungry” to improve, focus on improving your spiritual relationship through spiritual growth.

A catalyst for your growth will be your comprehension of God’s love for you. The more you comprehend His love the more you will want to know Him and you will have a greater desire to trust and follow His instructions. You will view God more like a good, loving parent or a coach that you know cares for you rather than an authority figure who just enjoys wielding their power and influence. Think about what this means. A good parent who loves their children wants them to be prepared to handle the challenges of life as well as reach their full potential as a person. They want their children to be successful and they want them to enjoy life no matter what the circumstances.

What is the primary objective of a good coach? You may be thinking - winning, and that would be true for many coaches, but a good coach will want to develop the maximum potential of those they are coaching. In other words, their goal is to help their players do their best (their job may depend on it). If you are an athlete or have been an athlete you will be hard pressed to think of anyone who has pushed you as hard to do your best, other than your parents, than your coaches. Also think about how knowing that your parents love you or your coach cares for you effects your motivation to perform for them – it does make a difference, and no one will love and care for you more than God.

The stronger your relationship with God becomes the closer you will be to achieving your potential as a person. The rest of this chapter will illustrate attributes you will develop because of your spiritual growth and how these attributes will improve your performance, improve your relationships, and help you in all aspects of your life. These attributes are:

SELF CONTROL / SELF DISCIPLINE

2 Timothy 1:7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

The one common trait you will find in anyone that achieves anything, anyone who is successful, is they have self-discipline and self-control in their life. Successful individuals will make the necessary sacrifices and choices in order to achieve what they want to accomplish in life. Being successful doesn't necessarily mean making a lot of money or having the adoration of others. A successful person is someone who makes the most out of the abilities God has given them. A successful person may be someone who has a life that is devoted to serving others. Conversely, those who seem to achieve little, those who are often a burden to others and society in general, are those with little or no self-discipline. These types of individuals typically live to satisfy their self-indulgences. They live only for today with little regard for tomorrow.

Self-discipline means you have the discipline to do what needs to be done to achieve what you want to achieve. Self-control, which basically is the same as self-discipline, means you have the discipline to give up what may be harmful or may stand in the way of being successful. Giving up things you enjoy now in order to do what needs to be done for success in the future takes self-control. Doing the unpleasant necessary things to be successful that unsuccessful people will not do takes self-discipline.

For example, when you go to college no one makes you study so you need self-control to give up a lot of fun time and activities in order to have the time to study and you need self-discipline to actually use this time for studying. Learning self-control, self-discipline, along with developing perseverance are major benefits of going to college and these traits will help you far more in life than what you actually learn in your courses.

The athlete with self-control will refrain from lifestyle choices such as smoking or drinking in order to keep their body well conditioned to do their best. In addition to their normal training they will have the self-discipline to do extra drills and conditioning not required by a coach or trainer. This work ethic is often what allows lesser talented athletes to outperform those with more natural ability.

The employee with self-control and self-discipline will not give in to the temptation to waste time when the boss is not around and will use any spare time to go above and beyond what is required of the job. A successful relationship like anything else also takes self-control and self-discipline. There may be times when self-control will be needed to resist the temptation to be unfaithful to the relationship and self-discipline will be needed to go the extra mile doing whatever is needed to prove that the other person in the relationship is important.

It really saddens me to see so many waste their life because they have no direction or they have so little regard for their future. For these individuals self-discipline may simply be a matter of showing up for class or work, yet for many these are difficult things to do and their quality of life will greatly suffer because of this lack of discipline. Unfortunately, these individuals often impact

Eighty percent of success is showing up. – Woody Allen

other lives and cause grief for their family or anyone who depends on them for any reason, and it is hard to go through life without someone depending on us at some point.

Self-control and self-discipline are key attributes for being responsible. Being responsible generally means someone is relying or depending on you for something. This could be classmates, instructors, teammates, coaches, other employees, or someone you are involved in a relationship with. The more responsible you are in jobs, school, and relationships the more successful you will be because you will have value to those who depend on you. Responsibility is a key attribute needed for anyone in a leadership position.

Another benefit of these attributes is better health, and good health contributes to good performance. Eating the right foods, exercising, and refraining from drinking, drugs, and smoking all require self-control and discipline. Living a healthy lifestyle is important to God and it should be important to us. 1 Corinthians 6:19,20 tells us our body is not our own. Our body is a Temple for the Holy Spirit and we are to honor God with our bodies. I believe many of us don't fully understand the significance of what this really means. Our bodies are not our own to do what we please with it. We were created with a purpose – to love God and to be a spiritual light to others. When we pollute our bodies with excessive alcohol, drugs, and tobacco we are damaging that temple by shortening our lives and/or reducing the quality of our lives. Overeating or eating unhealthy foods can be just as damaging. If you are a high school or college student you may feel like your body can handle whatever you do to it but eventually you do pay a price, and too often a very heavy price, for abusing your body.

When we begin to suffer from poor health because of our lifestyle choices our relationship with God suffers. I know when I do not feel good physically my mental outlook is less positive and stressful circumstances get to me much easier. When I feel good physically I am also much stronger mentally and I believe you are no different. The bottom line is making good lifestyle choices will lead to a much higher quality of life physically, mentally, and spiritually.

It should be very evident that self-control and self-discipline are essential in order to achieve peak performance. Galatians 5:22 lists self-control as one of the fruits of the Spirit (when the Holy Spirit influences your life) and 2 Timothy tells us God gives us a spirit of self-discipline. So we actually have supernatural help in developing these attributes. I believe another reason why spiritual growth develops these attributes is because our love of God will give us a purpose in life.

If you notice, people around you who exercise self-control and discipline are the individuals who know what they want in life and who have goals they want to achieve. The flip side is that those who do not have a clue what they want to do are usually the type of individuals that struggle with self-discipline and control. For example, if a college student really knows what they want in life they will do much better academically than a student that does not have any idea what they want to do for a living.

When we develop a desire to please and know God, as well as a desire to tell others about God because of our increased love for Him, it will give our life a new meaning. In order to satisfy this meaning we will want to honor God. What does it mean to “honor” God? We honor God when we make it evident to others by our actions as well as our words that following God is a “good thing”, something others should want to do for their selves because they see what it does for us. Making good use of our life, using the talents and abilities God has given us, honors and pleases God, while wasting our life dishonors him.

I know my love for God has given me a very strong desire to make a difference in the lives of others, and in order to convince anyone God can make a difference, it has to be evident he has made a difference in my own life. I know he has on the inside, my hope is that it shows on the

outside. My desire to honor God has given my life a purpose that I have not had before and this purpose motivates me to make better use of my time (it's amazing how easy it is to waste our time), take better care of myself physically (also a struggle sometimes), to try and always be positive, and to give outstanding service to all those I serve.

The difference between the purpose you will develop because of your spiritual growth and any goals and aspirations you now have is that you will have a purpose that will last your lifetime. You never outgrow the motivation behind your self-control, unlike motivation for other goals that can change or diminish once you have achieved those goals.

LESS IMPORTANCE ON SELF

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

The verse above tells us what our spiritual growth should lead to – dying to self so Jesus



Christ can live in us. In other words our focus should not be on “self”. Again, this may seem like a contradiction because, after all, I am trying to explain how you can improve your self. What I am talking about is dying to selfishness, a selfishness that causes us to live for what we want instead of what God wants. Selfishness is one of the leading causes of problems in relationships, a real hindrance in giving us a desire to help and be of value to others, and can cause problems in jobs, sports, and all other aspects of life.

When one focuses too much on self others become less important. You don't have to stretch your imagination to see how an inflated self-importance can damage relationships. Successful relationships require caring about the needs and desires of each other. Any activity or job that requires teamwork and the interaction of others, and most do, will also suffer from focusing too much on self. For example, a selfish, egotistical athlete can cause harm to the team by trying to dominate play. Most athletes know your real value is when you help your team to be more successful instead of seeking personal glory. Teamwork does not always show in the box score, game statistics, or a corporate bottom line but executives, coworkers, fans, coaches, teammates, and many others know how very important it is.

Beware of getting Galatians 2:20 only half right! If you do not replace a focus on self with an identity in Christ you can be setting yourself up for some big time disappointments. I really see this problem manifested in collegiate athletics where the demands of “the program” may make student athletes feel like they are not important as individuals. I see many great students who think as student athletes they will only be loved and valued by how they and their team perform. This problem is obviously not limited to athletics as too often we determine our value by how others perceive us, and those we want to please may not have priorities that line up with God's priorities.

You can die to self only to live for something no more meaningful! Your value should be as a child of God. If you can truly understand this it will free you from a misplaced identity, a very

important issue covered in Chapter 7 (Who Am I?). This new identity in Christ should make you feel good about yourself for the right reasons. Feeling good about yourself will make a real positive difference in all you do and in the lives of those you influence.

History has demonstrated that the most noticeable winners usually encountered heartbreaking obstacles before they triumphed. They won because they refused to become discouraged by their defeats.

- B.C. Forbes

Success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go.

- William Feather

PERSEVERANCE

James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops

perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Do you ever feel like just quitting - quitting school, quitting a relationship, quitting the team, or quitting a job? There will always be times when you should quit but far more often than not quitting is not the best thing to do. The problem with quitting is that once you quit something it is always easier to quit again. Learning to persevere, learning to fight through our problems, will reap major rewards for us in the long-run.

For many marriage will be one of the most important challenges in life that require perseverance. Nearly 50% of all marriages end in divorce (quitting a marriage) and too often when someone has given up on a marriage once, it becomes easier to give up on a marriage again. This is why it is not unusual to find very lonely people who have gone through multiple failed marriages.

I have a great marriage but over the last 20 years there has been some very difficult times that made me feel like quitting our marriage but the reality is persevering through these tough times have made our relationship much stronger and more meaningful. I am not alone! According to a study by the Institute for American Values you are more likely to be happy if you persevere through hard times in a marriage than if you get a divorce. According to this study two-thirds of husbands and wives who were unhappy in their marriage but remained committed to their marriage for five years were now happy. Only 19% of couples that chose separation or divorce were happily remarried after five years.

There were times I never thought I was going to make it through college and quitting became a real appealing option. Even though it has been over 20 years since I graduated from college I can still remember how often I was discouraged, thinking I will never make it through a class or test. Now I cherish my degree as it has allowed me to make a living doing something I enjoy.

I am willing to bet even the best of athletes have felt like quitting at some point in their career and/or have asked themselves if what they have to go through is really worth it. Many college athletes have had to learn perseverance like they never have had to before. These athletes have come from high schools where they were the stars of the team and now they struggle for playing time and this can be a very tough adjustment. Even those who play often can struggle because of conflicts with coaches or teammates and when the team loses. But it is these struggles that really cause them to grow as a person and prepare them to handle much greater challenges they will face in the future as well as current challenges.

History is full of examples of individuals who have achieved much in life and their journey often began with failures, and their perseverance helped them to get past those failures. J.C.

Penney, Conrad Hilton, Walt Disney, Henry Ford, and Sam Walton experienced financial and other set backs along their road to success. Charles Goodyear was so broke before he started the Goodyear Tire Company he was in prison due to his debts.

Sometimes failures occur late in life. Harland Sanders at the age of 65 had to sell all he had due to a new interstate highway bypassing his hometown of Corbin Kentucky. This highway would have spelled sure doom for his business, a service station where he served meals for travelers in the dining room of his attached living quarters. After selling his business he was reduced to living on \$105 social security per month. Colonel Harland Sanders did not give up his dream to have his own business. He started traveling across the country to sell his chicken recipe. His perseverance led to the creation of the multi-million dollar KFC franchise at an age when many were content to live off their retirement income.

It is safe to say the bigger your dreams, the more important perseverance will become. This is because the likelihood of experiencing failures and setbacks grows as your challenges grow. Big dreams present big challenges! Conversely, those who aim for nothing will hit their target every time! Perseverance makes you tougher and when you are in a real battle during a game or any of life's challenges do you want to have quitters for teammates, coworkers, or friends, or someone known for getting tougher when the going gets tough? Do you want to be known as a quitter or someone not afraid of a challenge?

James 1:2 tells us to rejoice during trials and tribulations. Why? James 1:3,4 tells us the testing of our faith develops perseverance and when perseverance finishes its work we will be complete, not lacking anything. Chapter 9 (Dealing With Failure) will cover in far more detail how our trials and disappointments can strengthen and benefit us. Just being able to fight through our trials is a major benefit because of how it builds our perseverance. Perseverance will make us stronger mentally and emotionally which will help keep us going when we feel like quitting. In the long-run this strength will improve our quality of life.

FAITH

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Who would argue against the statement “confidence is essential in order to be successful”? Confidence is essential but it depends on who or what that confidence is in! Confidence in self can actually hold you back if there are areas in your life you need to work on and over confidence causes you to be blind to these weaknesses. Lack of confidence can cause you to make mistakes due to being unsure of yourself or worrying too much about failing. Trusting in others can lead to major disappointments because people are human and they can let you down.

Spiritual growth will give you the true confidence you need because you will learn to put your trust in God. Trusting in God completely will take away your worries and anxieties in everything you do. You will know the creator of the universe loves you and wants to be in control of your life. You will know He wants you to be content and have life to the full. You should know He just may give you the desires of your heart because of his supernatural intervention or he may be setting you up for something better.

You will see a much bigger picture for your life and it will cause you to not sweat about all the small stuff we worry too much about. You will not worry so much about one exam, one job

interview, one date, or making a mistake or bad play in a game when you trust God and I'm sure you know worrying about these things will only hinder you and never helps.

You will understand the great power you have when you have faith in God and you will know even in bad times and failures God is working on you to make you stronger. Faith in God will give you a much deeper confidence than a confidence in self and this will make a tremendous difference in your performance. Chapter 10 (Expect To Win) is a very important chapter that covers the power of faith and how faith can impact our lives. Jesus indicates the real power of faith by stating in Mark 9:23 "everything is possible for those who believe".

HUMILITY

Matthew 23:12 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted

Humility is another one of those concepts that on the surface seems to contradict our conception of what it takes to be successful. We can easily label someone with humility as someone who is not confident and there is nothing farther from the truth. The New World dictionary defines humility as the absence of pride. The same dictionary defines pride as an over high opinion of oneself. Pride, thinking too highly of our self, is a major obstacle that prevents us from reaching our spiritual and performance potential and this is why there are so many scriptures that deal with humility and pride. Chapter 8 (Pride – a Major Stumbling Block) will discuss pride and humility in more detail.

Pride is often mistaken for confidence, and we need to understand the difference. We too often mistake someone who is all into their-self, who is egotistical, for someone who is confident. The reality is a prideful person is just out of touch with reality. For example, the egotistical, or prideful, person will think – "how can I improve on perfection?" This person has an inflated view of him or her self and they will not recognize areas in their life where they can improve their talents and abilities. The truly confident person, who in addition to their confidence has a sense of humility, will say – "I know what I can do and I also know I can always do better". Which person is more likely to do what it takes to live up to their potential? When you are humble you can be confident and content with what God has given you while at the same time recognizing through practice, discipline, and hard work you can always do better.

The reason our spiritual growth helps develop humility is because the more we understand God's standards the more we understand how far short we come in living up to these standards (see Chapter 4, The Only Way). Our spiritual life affects all aspects of our life so an inflated spiritual view of ourselves will also inflate our view of ourselves in everything else we do. We need to be very careful to not to have an unbalanced view of our shortcomings because if we do we can go around feeling we are unworthy and failures at whatever we are doing. Chapter 9 (Dealing With Failure) and chapter 10 (Expect to Win) are very important chapters that will help you understand the balance between faith and failings and this understanding will have a tremendous impact on helping you reach your potential as a person. Humility is an integral part of this balance and is essential in order to achieve peak performance in our lives.

LOVE OF GOD

Matthew 22:37,38 (when asked what was the greatest commandment) Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.

There is a reason Jesus makes the point our number one spiritual priority should be to love God, because when we do that is when our spiritual relationship will have meaning and the power to impact our lives. It will be unlikely we will truly love God until we know God, and it is our spiritual growth that will lead to knowing God.

When we love God we are then motivated (we want to instead of feeling we should) to obey him, and obeying God will lead to making better choices, choices that will produce the "abundant life" Jesus promises us a spiritual relationship will bring. It is poor choices that keep us from reaching our potential – choices that cause us to waste our time or develop destructive habits and attitudes. Sometimes we do learn and grow from our bad choices, but we learn quicker when we make good choices in the first place. It is also a less painful way to learn. It hurts less when we observe someone else getting burned from putting their hand in the fire that if we learn from firsthand experience.

I have already discussed in this chapter how our love for God should give us a desire to honor God. I will add just as parents are pleased when they see their children live good and productive lives, we please God when we make good use of our lives. Just as these children "honor" their parents by showing others they were raised right, we honor God when we show others he makes a positive difference in our life.

How many times have you seen professional athletes praise (give credit to, honor) God when interviewed after a great performance? An interesting thought is perhaps God has blessed these athletes just so they can publicly witness to others how God can do great things with our lives.

LOVE OF OTHERS

Matthew 22:39 And the second (greatest commandment) is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 describes the kind of love spiritual growth will help develop. It is a love that is not self-seeking which only inflates our ego, it is patient, it is kind, it doesn't envy, it keeps no record of wrongs, it protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. Love builds up!

The love God wants us to have is to benefit others and their love should benefit us. Wanting to please others out of love and desiring to earn a reciprocal love can be a great motivator to do well in whatever we do. I enjoy the approval of my wife when I can do something to please her out of my love for her. Earning the approval of bosses, coaches, teammates, or teachers through good work gives us a great deal of personal satisfaction. Hearing a great roar from the crowd from a great play can really pump up an athlete.

To visualize this point, imagine playing in a football or basketball game and you score the winning points at the end of the game. You look to the stands and bench and you discover no one is watching because no one cares! Would you feel like there is something missing? Support and encouragement from others who care can make a difference in our performance and our support and encouragement of others can make a difference in their performance, whatever that may be.

Wanting to please others because we love them and enjoying the pleasure of being loved by others is what life should be about.

You need to be aware of the fine line between seeking love and self-promoting adoration. Desiring self-seeking adoration can lead to an ego that can be a turn off to all those around you and this is contrary to God's will for our lives. The right kind of love will motivate us and give us a life worth living.

Putting our heart into what we do in order to achieve top performance is how God expects us to lead our lives. Another word for putting all your heart into what you do is "passion". A common trait found in those who have achieved great things in their lives is they had a passion for what they were trying to achieve. Michael Jordan and Jerry Rice had a passion to succeed in their sport and their passion is what contributed to their greatness. Successful business owners have a passion for what they are doing. Successful students may have a passion for what they are learning. Jesus had a passion to change hearts.

Keep in mind, as I have stated in the beginning of this chapter, having a passion for what we do may not lead to a materialistic prosperity or may not raise our status as the world defines social status. Our passion will increase our value to this world, a value that others will notice, and this value is what makes our life special and pleasing to God. Think about people you know in all walks of life - teachers, clerks, secretaries, salesmen, waitresses, missionaries, pastors, construction workers who are effective at what they do, people who achieve peak performance, and you will find these individuals love their jobs and/or they love those they serve. It doesn't matter what their occupation is, their lives will have a positive impact on this world. They will make a difference!

This reminds me of one unnamed person who works as a chauffeur, an occupation some would consider of low social status that serves those of a high social status, who was able to help bring about a life changing impact on the heart of a very famous movie star, Jane Fonda. This movie star's life was not a life that pointed to God in any way, in fact her former husband Ted Turner, has shown outright hostility toward Christianity. Many in my generation know her as "Hanoi Jane" because during the Vietnam War she took a trip to Hanoi in North Vietnam, our countries enemy during this war, and she gave the appearance she was supporting North Vietnam in their war efforts against the United States. This is one woman most people would predict would never become a Christian, yet because of a chauffeur, this is exactly what happened.

She was a guest on a Christian talk show and talked about her conversion to Christianity (note- I did not witness this event, this story was told to me by a very reliable source). It wasn't a famous preacher who turned her heart, it wasn't a well-known celebrity or wealthy businessman, it was her chauffeur! He had been steadily witnessing to her for about a year and a half and she saw a peace in him that got her attention. This man used his passion for God and the opportunities of his very low profile (even though he was a chauffeur of a celebrity he was working basically as a servant) occupation to turn the heart of a very high profile and very famous actress.

We can apply the qualities discussed in this chapter to the life of this man, qualities that equipped him to use his humble occupation to have an impact on this world. He must have had self-control because if he were not reliable he would not have been able to keep his job or be hired as a chauffeur for a celebrity. I am certain high standards were in place for whoever would be Ms. Fonda's driver. He obviously was responsible.

Without knowing this man I don't think of someone working as a chauffeur as being all into himself, a prideful person, and if he was I can't image a movie star like Jane Fonda having

any meaningful conversations with him, they would more than likely only have a confrontational relationship. I believe this man put more importance on helping others than his self. I believe this man was humble yet not ashamed of what he was doing for a living. I don't believe he ever felt inferior to Ms. Fonda in anyway. This is speculation on my part but the type of man just described would be the type of person that could get the attention of a famous movie star like Jane Fonda in such humble circumstances.

Do you think he had a love for God and a love for others? Of course he did, this much is obvious and the results of how he impacted Ms. Fonda's life offers proof. And his love for Jane Fonda was not the star worship adoration movie stars are typically used to. This was a genuine, unconditional love, the type of love God wants us to have. His love was a sincere concern for the well-being of whom he was serving.

Finally, he must have had faith and the perseverance faith produces. His faith gave him a peace that Jane Fonda noticed. If his faith did not make a difference in his life why would he have anything Jane Fonda would want? Could that have been something missing in her life? Here again is someone that has everything you would think someone could want, yet there was still something missing in her life that her chauffeur had and she didn't. His perseverance kept him from giving up and after a year and a half his perseverance was rewarded because he then knew his life made a difference because of his passion for God.

And this is the key to peak performance - our passion first needs to be directed to God. This is why Deuteronomy 6:5 tells us to "love God with all your heart and all your soul and all your strength". This sure seems like the bible is telling us to love God with a passion to me. This is also why Jesus referred to this commandment in Matthew 22:37-40 when asked what is the greatest commandment. In order to love God you need to know God and that is why taking steps toward spiritual growth is so important. The bible is how we know God and this is what God promises if we make the effort to know Him -

Psalms 1:2,3 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

God loves and accepts us just as we are so His love is not based on what we achieve or do. In fact our desire to achieve can stand in the way of an effective spiritual relationship because we may not have time for God, so a balance needs to be maintained. Balance is a key ingredient for a healthy life. For example, drinking water is good for us, but we can even overdo drinking water as studies have shown an obsession with drinking water can cause an electrolyte unbalance in our bodies, an unbalance that can be fatal. If we focus on changing our hearts and not on what we do, the Spirit of God will direct our lives and we will have the balance between spirituality (we can be so heavenly good we have no earthly value) and achievement.

God is our creator and it is He who gives us our talents and abilities. God equips us with the tools needed to help us do our best at whatever we do, and he will bless our efforts if our efforts point to God. The Apostle Paul encourages slaves to do their best in Ephesians 6:7 when he tells them to serve wholeheartedly as if they were serving God. In 1 Corinthians 9:24 Paul tells us we need to act like someone in a race that runs to win!

It is our sins – pride, lack of self-discipline, and our focus on self instead of others and God that prevent us from reaching our potential, from “winning”. Much of this book expands on these obstacles to achieving our best as well the attributes that equip us to reach our potential.

There are countless professional athletes, coaches, businessmen, and world leaders who credit God for their success. No one would describe these people as weak, underachievers. The attributes listed in this chapter helped them to achieve peak performance. If you commit yourself to spiritual growth you may be surprised at what you can accomplish and as I said before you may find you will exceed even your own expectations.