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## **OUR DAILY LIFE**

by Tom Reilly

Just recently our local Kiwanis Club had one of our very own come and speak to us about today's kids, leadership and motivation. I truly wish all of you could have heard Keith Olsen's inspiring talk about his track team at Central, because it is more than a program at Central, it's about a condition in real life for all of us, its challenges, opportunities and disappointments and how it impacts our daily lives.

Every year kids come up to Coach Olsen and ask, "How can I be a distance runner and be a winner on your team?" I'm going to paraphrase Keith, but he says to the kids, "Can you put one foot in front of the other? All we ask is that you put one foot in front of the other a little faster each time." And by taking these steps, Coach Olsen said he sees kids do amazing things.

There were so many many inspiring messages that evening from Coach Olsen; everyone was so caught up in his message. He even shared one about parents. *"While it's not easy to be a teenager, it's not easy to be a parent of a teenager."*

So, where am I going with this? I see a life parallel in our daily lives.

As the kids take the little steps in their development, so too, we can take a few new steps in which we can become better Christians in our Long Distance Run to Christ in our daily lives.

What are those steps and guidelines that can help us in our daily lives?

Well, we all know the commandments, and they seem to be the overall guideline in our lives. But what about challenges that we face every hour of every day? We literally are being inundated with hundreds of messages every day on how material pleasures will make our lives better. But we want to make our spiritual lives better. It would be wonderful if we could pick-up our bible in every instance, but I don't know too many people that carry around a bible like an iPhone.

But there are daily steps that can guide you to make you a better Christian every day. Whether in the evening or the morning, certainly reading the

passages from the Bible are most beneficial. But what other helpful steps can help us on our run to become that Christian “Long Distance Runner” for Christ and to better our lives? For you and I are in it for the long run, the rest of our lives.

One of the resources and steps/guidelines you can turn to is **Mathew 5: 1-16**. Here is where Christ teaches the ethical guidelines that we should strive for in our daily lives and in our quest for complete happiness as well.

**The Eight Beatitudes.** The Beatitudes are a little different to study than ordinary story passages. Each saying is proverb like, enlightening, precise, and full of meaning. Each one of these “blessings” includes a topic that forms a major biblical theme. So you could spend a lot of time on each one these “blessings” – and that would be worth doing. This would be a great topic of discussion for a introductory Bible study on the “blessings”.

**Here are The Beatitudes:**

*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.*

*Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

*Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they will have their fill.*

*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*

*Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the Children of God.*

*Blessed are they that suffer from persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

So I think when Jesus says “blessed are they,” I think he is not only describing them as being filled with an inner sense of joy and peace, but they are right with God, and Jesus is praising them for their Christian character and pledging to them the divine reward for finishing the race.

But there are those everyday steps that we should be looking at to help us daily, hourly in becoming that total Christian that God wants us to become.

So again I'm turning to Mathew: **Mathew 5: 31-46**. Listen carefully, for these are the foundational steps to becoming that complete and happy person.

*Then the King will say to those who are on his right hand, Come, you that have received a blessing from my Father, take possession of the Kingdom which has been prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me food, thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you brought me home, naked and you clothed me, sick and you cared for me, a prisoner and you came to me. Whereupon the just will answer, Lord when was it that we saw thee hungry, and fed thee or thirsty and gave thee drink? When was it that we saw thee a stranger, and brought thee home, or naked, and clothed thee. When was it that we saw thee sick or in prison and came to thee. And the King will answer them, Believe me, when you did it to one of the least of my brethren on earth, you did it to me. Then he will say to those who are on his left hand, in their turn. Go far from me, you that are accursed, into that eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you never gave me food, I was thirsty and you never gave me drink. I was a stranger, and you did not bring me home, I was naked, and you did not clothed me, I was sick and in prison, and you did not care for me. Where upon they, in their turn will answer. Lord, when was it that we saw thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to thee? And he will answer them, Believe me, when you refused it to one of the least of my brethren here on earth, you refused it to me. And you shall pass on to eternal punishment, and the just to eternal life.*

Here are those vital steps:

### **The Corporal Works of Mercy**

Feed The Hungry.

Give Drink To The Thirsty.

Clothe the Naked.

Shelter the homeless.

Visit the Sick.

Visit the Imprisoned.

Bury the dead.

## **The Spiritual Works of Mercy**

Admonish the sinner.

Instruct the ignorant.

Counsel the doubtful.

Comfort the sorrowful.

Bear wrongs patiently.

Forgive all injuries.

Pray for the living and the dead.

These Works of Mercy or Acts of Mercy are daily actions and practices which Christianity, in general, expects all Christians to perform. These practices are commonly attributed to the early church as an act of both penance and charity. The Methodist Church additionally teaches that the **Works of Mercy** are a means of grace that aid in sanctification. And they are:

Doing Good.

Visiting the Sick.

Feeding and Clothing People.

Earning, Saving, Giving All One Can.

Opposition to Slavery.

In Methodist teaching, Works of Mercy, are a wonderful means of grace. Along with Works of Piety, they are necessary for us to move on to Christian totalness. In this sense, the Methodist concern for people at the margins is closely related to our worship. And as such, these beliefs have helped create the emphasis for social justice in the Methodist Church.

In what ways are we doing Corporal Works of Mercy? Can you name a few? You're not expected to do all these works; by doing so it could give you a sense of hopelessness and helplessness. But choose the step that you are comfortable with, the right fit in your race and journey in life.

And like Coach Olsen says, take that step and just get a little faster everyday.

And all that God asks is that you take that one step in Christian love, and make it better every day.

Amen.