

Make Progress, Don't Expect Perfection

Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from Chapter 6 of Steve Reynolds' book Get Off the Couch.

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. (Hebrews 12:1)

Picture this: a guy is sitting on the couch on Sunday afternoon wearing his favorite team jersey. He's screaming at the TV and the players on the field. He yells to his wife, "Hey, honey! Bring me the chips and a drink . . . and don't forget the dip!"

"Get it yourself!" she yells back.

"I can't get up!" he answers over the roar of the TV. "I might miss a big play!"

How many times have you been watching a football game and found yourself on the edge of the couch waiting for that one big play? The Hail Mary pass to the endzone to win it all. The long-distance field goal just as time runs out. The 99-yard pass play or kickoff return that goes all the way. The interception and runback to score the winning touchdown. Those plays are amazing! They get the adrenaline pumping.

But honestly, guys, how often do those plays happen? How many games are really won by the "big play"? In fact, as of the writing of this book, there have only been 13 successful 99-yard pass plays in NFL history. By far, more games are won by one team methodically pushing the ball yard-by-yard down the field at a slow and steady pace. They are won with players who have their heads in the game who are focused on reaching their

goals through incremental steps.

This is where your focus needs to be right now as well. You need to stop waiting for that “big play” in your life. There isn’t a magic pill that is going to completely erase all of your health issues, concerns and all those extra pounds. There isn’t a magical contraption that for four easy payments of \$ is going to vibrate the fat right off your belly.

(Don’t laugh, guys—years ago I actually bought a device like this.) There are no Hail Mary passes when it comes to your health.

Remember, you didn’t get this way overnight, and you aren’t going to erase the damage from years of neglect overnight either. It’s going to take time, hard work and developing new habits and routines that produce lasting change. Men, your new battle cry has to become “*Progress, NOT perfection!*” It’s all about getting rid of the bad habits that are weighing you down, just as the author of Hebrews 12:1 states.

Think of yourself as the quarterback of a football team. Your job is to slowly move the ball down the field to your endzone. You do that by grinding it out, one play at time, to slowly start producing change in your life. In the beginning it may feel as if you aren’t making any progress, but don’t give up—you are now in the game now and you will start seeing results. Remember, your goal is to just start seeing progress, so don’t focus on perfecting everything right away. If you keep working at it and drilling down on each new play that you implement in your life, you will eventually reach your goals and have success.

Stop Procrastinating

But first, you have to stop procrastinating and putting off taking care of your health. The bottom line, guys, is you have to start *sometime* . . . so why not start *today*? James teaches this very idea in your ultimate Playbook, the Bible:

"Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin." (James 4:14-17)

In these verses, James tells you that there is no promise that you will see tomorrow. Your life is like a vapor; you could be here today and gone tomorrow. For this reason, you can't put off things you should be doing today. Not only do you have to stop procrastinating, but you also have to start doing those things that you know are right. If you don't, you are sinning against God and your body, the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Steve Reynolds, the "anti-fat pastor," has served as the senior pastor of Capital Baptist Church in Annandale, Va., since 1982. He launched a weight-loss campaign in his church and community after he lost more than 100 pounds. His story has been featured in local, national and international media, including *FOX News, CNN, the Washington Post and the Chicago Tribune.*