

“Go the Extra Mile”
Message by DD Adams
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The Old Testament lesson is from the book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 9, verse 10. “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.” The New Testament lesson is 1 Corinthians, chapter 9, verse 26. “So now this is how I run—not without a clear goal in sight. I fight like a boxer in the ring, *not* like someone who is shadowboxing.”

The gospel lesson is Matthew, chapter 5, verse 41. If someone compels you to carry his pack one mile, carry it two miles. When someone asks you for something, give it to him. This is God’s word.

Let’s pray together. God we pray blessing on these words that encourage us to do our best and to go that extra mile. Bless the reading, hearing, understanding, and doing of your word today. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen. Peace be with you!

Who was it anyway that said, “*Go the extra mile*”? I did a google search, and there it was—Jesus said it! We just read it in the gospel lesson. Here it is again. If someone compels you to carry his pack one mile, carry it two miles. Okay, well, if you agree to go the extra mile with someone you’re helping them,

and the more you help others, the more you set a standard in your life to support and serve others. It's important to set goals and have a vision for who you want to become.

I've read one of the most challenging things in life is to figure out who you are and what is it that you need and want in life. It can be a real fight to keep challenging yourself to meet those expectations you've set, but also to continue to exceed them. One thing is certain, we're called to do our best and to go that extra mile. You might ask yourself, how do I feel when I help someone do something they can't do for themselves? How do I feel about myself when I go the extra mile? Just some food for thought.

The verse in Ecclesiastes 9 says this. "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might." When we do more than we've been asked to do, we go that extra mile and it's so much easier if we do it with an attitude of kindness and generosity. Not only does it energize us but it encourages everyone around us. Going that extra mile will always bless us more than it blesses others.

When I was in the Army, I developed a real knack for getting flat tires. I probably got about a dozen a year. I just loved taking back roads on the way home. When I realized I'd gotten a flat (this is prior to cell phones), I'd stand beside the road next to my car, looking in need. Within minutes, and I mean minutes, ordinary people would stop to assist me in changing the flat tire and expected nothing in return.

They wouldn't take money for the good deed, they just knew the blessing of lending a helping hand. This is part of doing our best in life and going that extra mile. Going that extra mile always bless us more than it blesses others.

I love this verse from Corinthians we read; it's in reference to the Greek games that were played in the first century. It reminds us of our basic need for a vision of who we want to become and what we want the outcome of our life to say about us. Let me read the verse again. "So now this is how I run—*not without a clear goal in sight. I fight like a boxer in the ring, not like someone who is shadowboxing.*"

When we have a vision or goal to go that extra mile to do our best or to help someone, *we help ourselves the most, because it brings* an energy and inspiration into our own lives. It's not like shadow-boxing where you're throwing your energy around haphazardly. You keep your eye fixed on the goal you want to work toward for yourself, but also, and this includes doing more for others.

If we don't have an eye or a goal to help others, we may miss the opportunity; it's like shadow boxing. We make a determined effort, with a plan in mind, then, our efforts aren't wasted or scattered. We're not beating the air aimlessly, rather we're fixing our attention on doing our best to go that extra mile for others.

Look at the front cover of the bulletin. We see a young man running, and the reality is that we're all running a race, and we're doing it together. We choose our own direction, we make a plan, and we do our best. We go that extra mile with someone to help them, and in so doing, we help ourselves.

We run the race of life together, helping one another along the way, resolving daily to run toward the goal of *who we want to become*, and keeping that goal in sight not shadowboxing as one who just beats the air.

Caring for others comes from an inward love that's poured out of our life from the inside. Some have said it's the practical outworking of the great commandment ". . . loving God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind." Ecclesiastes 9:10 says it like this. "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might."

God bless you all as we discover giving and caring for others is one of the most important things we can do to bless ourselves. Amen.