

## Essentials to Leadership: Passion and Perseverance

Lesson designed by: Bob Turner

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### Course description: Passion and Perseverance – part 7

This course continues the discussion of passion and perseverance. The ideas from this lesson assist students to learn what passion and perseverance involve, how passion and perseverance factor into our daily lives, and why it is needed in the church.

### Course Objectives: By the end of the class students will have:

- A. Studied the four ways *Grit* suggests people increase their passion and perseverance.
- B. Developed a model for the church using the four areas studied in *Grit*.
- C. Shared components of the model and how we can increase our passion and perseverance in the church.

### Outline of the class:

- A. Angela Duckworth describes four areas that relate to how one can increase their passion and perseverance. Each of these areas need a little explanation. If you do not have the book, it would be good get it, read, and review each area. A little information is provided for each below.
  - 1. Interest (there are multiple areas included)
    - a. Most people are told to pursue their passion first. The problem is that most do not know what they are passionate about yet.
    - b. Research shows a couple of areas that need to be considered at this point:
      - i. “People are more satisfied with their jobs when they do something that fits their personal interests” (p. 97 Kindle).
      - ii. “People perform better at work when what they do interests them” (p. 97 Kindle).
    - c. Duckworth suggests fostering a passion.
    - d. In actuality, people need to spend more time exploring several different interests. Eventually, something tends to occupy their thoughts, which often becomes an area they are passionate about.
    - e. It is challenging to understand why certain people with interests in one area and others have no interest in that area at all.
    - f. Duckworth suggests the following solution: “Passion for your work is a little bit of *discovery*, followed by a lot of *development*, and then a lifetime of *deepening*” (p. 103 Kindle).

- i. Children are too young to know what they want to do when they grow up.
  - ii. “Interests are triggered by interactions with the outside world.”
  - iii. “What follows the initial discovery of an interest is a much lengthier and increasingly proactive period of interest development.”
  - iv. Interests thrive when there is a crew of encouraging supporters, including parents, teachers, coaches, and peers...who provide stimulation and information that is essential to actually liking something more and more” (pp. 103-104 Kindle).
2. Practice (key to remember here is *deliberate* practice)
- a. The key to remember is that we are not just talking about quantity of time spent on a task. This goes beyond the thought of “more time on task.”
  - b. We are talking about quality, the idea of “better time on task.” Research indicated that experts practice differently. Here are some of the findings about how experts practiced:
    - i. “They set a stretch goal, zeroing in on just one narrow aspect of their overall performance. Rather than focus on what they already do well, experts strive to improve specific weaknesses. They intentionally seek out challenges they can’t yet meet” (p. 120 Kindle).
    - ii. “With undivided attention and great effort, experts strive to reach their stretch goal. Many choose to do so while nobody’s watching” (p. 121 Kindle).
    - iii. “As soon as possible, experts hungrily seek feedback on how they did. Experts are more interested in what they did *wrong* – so they can fix it – than what they did *right*” (p. 121 Kindle).
  - c. The idea here is “deliberate practice.”
    - i. “If you judge practice by how much it improves your skill, then deliberate practice has no rival. If, however, you judge practice by what it *feels* like, you might come to a different conclusion” (p. 126 Kindle).
    - ii. “The basic requirements for deliberate practice include: 1) a clearly defined stretch goal, 2) full concentration and effort, 3) immediate and informative feedback, and 4) repetition with reflection and refinement” (pp. 136-137 Kindle).

- d. The following suggestions will be helpful:
  - i. Know the science behind deliberate practice.
  - ii. Make it a habit.
  - iii. Change the way we experience it.
3. Purpose (think about the why)
  - a. Interest is one source of passion and purpose is another. Purpose is the intention to contribute to the well-being of others.
  - b. Purpose goes deeper than mere intention, it is not just goal-oriented; the nature of the goal is what counts here. This purpose involves helping others or putting the needs of others first.
  - c. “At the core, the idea of purpose is the idea that what we do matters to people other than ourselves” (p. 144 Kindle).
  - d. Distinguish between selfish and selfless.
  - e. People who have the most grit are people who “see their ultimate aims as deeply connected to the world beyond themselves” (p. 147 Kindle).
  - f. When purpose exists, we see that what we do has a greater meaning to the overall good of others and the society in which we live. We know we make a positive contribution to the world.
4. Hope (if we do not have this piece, then nothing else really matters)
  - a. Duckworth defines hope as an “expectation that our own efforts can improve the future. *I have a feeling tomorrow will be better* is different from *I resolve to make tomorrow better*. The hope that gritty people have has nothing to do with luck and everything to do with getting up again” (p. 169 Kindle).
  - b. The way we communicate, how we speak to others, plays a critical role in developing the type of grit that has this kind of hope. “Our language is one way to cultivate hope. But modeling a growth mindset—demonstrating by our *actions* that we truly believe people can learn to learn—may be even more important” (p. 182 Kindle).
  - c. Another good resource for this point is Carol Dweck’s book *Mindset*.
  - d. “Collectively, the evidence I’ve presented tells the following story” A fixed mindset about ability leads to pessimistic explanations of adversity, and that, in turn, leads to both giving up on challenges and avoiding them in the first place. In contrast, a growth mindset leads to optimistic ways of explaining adversity, and that, in turn, leads to perseverance and seeking

out new challenges that will ultimately make you even stronger” (p. 191 Kindle).

e. Suggestions:

- i. “Update your beliefs about intelligence and talent” (p. 191 Kindle).
- ii. “Practice optimistic self-talk” (p. 192 Kindle).
- iii. Ask for a helping hand” (p. 193 Kindle).

B. The last section of her book explores ways to develop grit. It is worth the time to read the book and focus on additional ways the class can make application.

C. Ask the class to divide into groups of four. Then, ask each group to take about 15 minutes to develop an abbreviated model for the church using the four areas described in Duckworth’s book, *Grit*.

1. How can we create interest within the church and for the community? How do we get the community interested in Jesus?
2. Describe two ways we can encourage the practice of specific areas of interest to develop greater passion on the part of those within the church.
3. In a few sentences, provide direction for the purpose that drives the passion we have as Christians.
4. Contrast the idea of hope in the world and biblical hope. How can we communicate the idea of hope to the world?

D. Once the groups complete the task, encourage each group to share one area in each of the four categories with the class and discuss what we can learn from each other in these areas to increase our passion and perseverance.

Conclusion:

- A. The four areas described by Angela Duckworth provide a great foundation for developing the model needed for Christians to understand the role of passion and perseverance in their faithfulness.
- B. Based on the models described in today’s lesson, we can find pieces that fit for all of us to increase the ways we persevere for the cause of Christ and build up the kingdom.
- C. Next week, we move into another area that is essential for the development of our leadership.

Recommended Reading:

Duckworth, Angela. *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*

Dweck, Carol. *Mindset*

Moore, Steve. *Who is my Neighbor? Being a Good Samaritan in a Connected World*

Maxwell, John. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*