

# Moving Beyond Mediocrity

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Over the past few years, I have had an opportunity to watch my sons, Alex and Peter, as they have progressed in their respective sports. Peter is in Tae Kwon Do and Alex plays baseball. As I have watched them compete, I have been impressed by the fact that, although everyone likes to win, the champions are those who have to win. It is not too difficult to tell the difference between those who want to win and those who need to win. Those who need to win do the extra little things that make the difference between winning and losing. They come early to practice, hustle when others are not, think about their tasks, and talk about them. In the dugout, some talk about school, others talk about the pitcher's curve ball. In a sparring match, some get angry when hurt, others focus.

In my life, I have been in both camps. In high school, I ran cross-country. I enjoyed it and was happy to finish ahead of other runners. When I began riding a bicycle, things changed. I no longer wanted to win races, I had to win. I knew that I was not good enough to win regularly, so I asked myself, "What would it take to be that good?" I began doing whatever it took to get better. If I got up earlier, then I could take longer rides and get into better shape. Done. If I lost weight, then I would ride better. No problem. If I ate better, then I would have more energy. I hired a nutritionist, to help me learn to eat better. As a result, I became an exceptional rider.

As far as I can tell, the primary difference between a mediocre running career and a memorable riding career is the need to do well and the willingness to change my lifestyle to accomplish that. What are you willing to do differently to be better? The more important a goal is to us, the longer will be the list of what we are willing to do differently. Ephesians 4 tells us that God has blessed the church with spiritual gifts so that the saints can be equipped for works of service and the church can be built up. How desperate are we to be equipped as best we can, to help build up the body of Christ? The answer will be found when we answer the more practical question, "What in our life are we willing to change?" If, as individuals, we do not change, then we will not grow. If we, as individuals, do not grow, then we will not grow as a church. If we do not grow as a church, then we will cease to be one. Is our attitude that we want to be a better church or that we have to be better? we will never move beyond mediocrity, never knowing what we could have been, if we allow our reach to exceed our grasp.