

# Star Power

## Taking the Lead by Taking Action

August 4, 2024

*Today we're focusing on defeating distractions by taking direction when our Director says action!*



### Ever feel left out of the action?

Relegated to an irrelevant role or, at best, a bit part? Basically living life like a background extra? Or worse yet, like you're just watching, from the back row? Sitting alone, in the dark, staring at the more glamorous, heroic, athletic, successful, award-winners of this world? **You're not alone.** Well, I mean, actually **you are alone**, completely and utterly; but, **we all are.** And that's why **you're not alone.** Because, **we're all alone in this together.**



[After all] None of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. ... For we will all stand [together] before God's judgment seat ... [and] every knee will bow ... [but] then, each of us will give an [individual] account of ourselves to God. – Romans 14:7-12 NIV

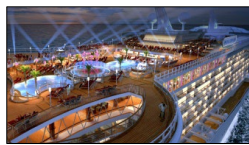
For each one shall bear his own load. – Galatians 6:5 NKJ

[So] Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. [To "love one another, as I have loved you" (Jn 13:34); and] If anyone thinks he is something [more than someone else] when he is nothing, [more OR less] he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. [According to God's directions] – Galatians 6:3-5 NIV

For it was fitting for Him, for whom ... and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one - Hebrews 2:10-11 NKJ



In other words: **we're all in the same boat!** I referred to that title of "Captain" last Sunday, when we pictured our planet, sailing around the sun through the darkness down here, like a big ol' cruise ship. And we discussed which role we choose by how we to relate to this world: **Entitled passenger**, or **Lowly deckhand**, or **Courageous captain.** But the word translated "Captain" in the NKJ, appears in other Bibles as "Author", because it holds both meanings. Cuz the Captain is the Author. In fact, Peter says that "the Spirit of Christ" wrote the Scriptures through the prophets. (1 Pet 1:10-11)



You may recall me telling about sneaking onto the set of "The Love Boat" at 20th Century Fox, back in college in the '80s. And being stunned how it was so fake and gross up close. Cigarette butts littering the floor and chewed gum stuck to everything. It was dirty and dingy and depressing – till the lights and lenses and movie magic made it look glamorous. It's called the Hollywood illusion. And the world is like that.



**Without Christ it can only offer an illusion of love.** It's all *showmanship*. So **be the captain and take action!** Chart the course, stride the deck, and encourage your passengers and crew!

For we are [God's] *workmanship*, created in Christ Jesus for *good works*, which God prepared beforehand that we should *walk* in them. – Ephesians 2:10 NKJ

[So] Come and let us walk in the [true] *light* of the Lord. – Isaiah 2:5 NKJ



It's easy to deceive yourself into thinking you're just sitting in the *crowd*; when, in reality, you're on *deck* and on *stage*. *Right now*. As we speak! And **not only are you not in the background, you're the center of attention for heaven's sake – literally!**

Therefore, since we are *surrounded* by such a *great cloud of witnesses* ... [don't just sit there] throw off *everything* that *hinders* and the *sin* that so *easily entangles*, and ... let us fix our eyes on [Captain] Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith – Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV

Because our *Creator and Perfector* isn't *only* the *Head Writer*; He's *also* the *Director*.

[For] Man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps. – Proverbs 16:9 NKJ

By way of the *only Script* that's *sure!* And turns out, **we're all producers**; cuz we're *directed* to:



Produce fruit [that's] *worthy* of *repentance!* ... [Cuz] Every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. – Matthew 3:8-10 LEB



... when our *Creator-Writer-Co-producer* and *Director* calls, "Cut!" So, *throw off* everything that *hinders!* Because, **taking action means taking direction**. Stop *staring* at everyone *else's* story, and **listen to the Director and Perfector of yours**. Know why He's called "the Father of lights"? (Jms 1:17) Cuz we're called His *stars!* So *wise up* and *stop settling* for less than what He *calls* the *lead role!*



[Because] Those who are *wise* ... those who lead many to *righteousness*, [will *shine*] like the stars for ever and ever. – Daniel 12:3 NIV



"I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God [at your *watch party* in the *clouds*] over *one* sinner who *repents*." – Luke 15:10 NIV

[So] Walk as *children of light* – Ephesians 5:8 NKJ

Get off your *back row*, and *stop staring*, and **start starring and shining by sharing!** Because, **you've been given a leading role in the ultimate reality show!** And it's the *role* of a *lifetime* and *beyond!* But *what* is your *life's current genre*? Cuz **action heroes don't settle for soap operas, slapstick, or tragedy**. For us, it's *all* about *developing a character* that *emulates Christ*. So:

Be *imitators* of God as *dear children*. And walk in love – Ephesians 5:1-2 NKJ

Cuz *that's* how we "*walk as children of light*" *despite* any *setbacks* or *defeats* our *characters* face.

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of [the good fruit of] righteousness and peace [but only] for those who [let the Lord direct their steps and walk 'em through it, and] have been trained by it. – Hebrews 12:11 NIV

[So] Consider it pure joy ... whenever you [and your character] face trials – James 1:2 NIV



Speaking of slapstick, I was a huge fan of Harold Lloyd, a silent movie star known for wild stunts. And when I was a senior, the old Burlington City Hall was vacated. And I got 'em to let me use it; decorated it with antiques on loan from local shops; and I made my own Harold Lloyd type short for school. In one scene, my Harold is so excited to get his first job, that he rushes to a gate-type swinging door, not realizing it's locked, and flips over it. I practiced the stunt till I was confident. But when we filmed it, the hinges tore off the wall. It was painful. But the first thing I said was, "Did we get it on camera!" Tell me it was recorded! **I wouldn't have chosen it to happen, but I was thrilled it had.** Life will be like that ... in hindsight. **We just can't appreciate it during the flip.** But afterwards we sure will! So, until we're given the foresight or hindsight, **we must trust our Director to develop our character.** Cuz you alone choose how you'll act in the moment.

And whether we admit it to ourselves or not, **we more often than not absolutely know His direction.** We just don't want to follow it. Like Jonah, we often cut and run when we hear Him call, "Action!" Because it mostly has to do with interactions with people. If it was pets, we'd be fine. But it's those hard-to-lovables. But, believe it or not, **even the most off-putting are appealing when we remove the distractions.** I learned this lesson in a powerful, emotional way, years ago in the lobby of the old Roosevelt Hotel in Seattle. I was working on a script, on a stormy day, facing these huge windows. And I had on headphones with music to drown out distractions. And I happened to look up just as the dramatic song "Forgotten Dreams" came on. And it instantly synchronized with what I was seeing. Shockingly so. So much so, that my throat cinched up, and tears unexpectedly ran down my cheeks. And I'm not a crier, so it was weirdly cool. So I tried it again. And again. And it did it every time! And it was just ordinary things: a man running to board a bus; a girl opening an umbrella in the wind; an older couple holding hands; and a mumbling bag-lady with her life in a cart. But there was no other sound besides this song scoring their actions.

My subconscious was likely selecting who to focus on, based on what the song was evoking. But that only explains how it synced up. **Why was I bawling at these instantly deeply-moving, mesmerizing moments?** And when I took the headphones off, I couldn't force myself to feel it. I think I stumbled onto simply **sitting still and seeing humanity without any distractions.** And with this music intensifying my feelings. You should try it. Ever watch "LOST"? The composer of LOST, said music can't make anyone feel anything; it can only amplify what we already feel. Which is likely why I realized that day, that **I love the lost far more than I thought.** And that bag lady was the most poignant of all! Cuz **I could see a deep beauty to which I'd been blind.** And it made me blubber!



But, every time our Writer-Director-Perfector calls: “Action!” the world immediately calls: “Distraction!” So, **what’ll it be: action or distraction?** Because, as Jesus said, *only*:

“Those who remain in Me ... will produce much **[good]** fruit.” – John 15:5 NLT

**[Cuz]** Whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him. – 1 John 4:15-16 NAB

So how do we remain in love and in Christ? By remaining in the Word of truth (and life).

[Jesus said] “If you remain in My Word, you will truly be My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” – John 8:31-32 NAB

“What is truth?” Pilate asked. **[Just before the cross]** – John 18:38 NIV

**[And]** Jesus answered, **[just after]** “I am ... the truth and the life.” – John 14:6 NIV

And then He said, “You can’t handle the Truth!” Not really. Actually just the opposite. He said:

“Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see” – Luke 24:39 NKJ

So, **the question isn’t, “Can you handle the Truth?” but “Will you?”** The Apostle John writes:

We have seen ... and our hands have handled ... the Word of life – 1 John 1:1 NKJ

Have you? How often? Because, **the more you remain in it, the more it remains in you.** It’s our #1 action for remaining true. Because, **if we remain in it, we’ll believe in it.** And **if we believe in it, we’ll act on it.** “But I’m so far from acting like Christ, and I fail so often.” You’re not alone. **It takes a lot of takes before it takes.** So for heaven sakes, **stick to the only Script that’s sure!** Because, believe it or not, **you are the story that God is telling.** And **without setbacks and sorrows to overcome, there’d be no story.** And no inspiration. But it’s all recorded! And your reruns will be in syndication forever! So **choose to be the action star that deep in your heart you know that you are.**

For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather **[a spirit]** of power and love and self-control. **[To direct and focus that power of love]** – 2 Timothy 1:7 NAB

**[Because]** He has delivered us from the power of darkness ... into the kingdom of the Son of His love **[which means you’ll never ever be alone]** – Colossians 1:13-14 NKJ

**[Because]** He will be with you; **[and]** He will not leave you – Deuteronomy 31:8 ESV

**[So]** Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ **[How?!]** – Romans 13:14 NIV

**[Well]** Walk in the light, as He is in the light – 1 John 1:7 NIV

**[And how’s that? Well]** He wraps himself in **[the]** light – Psalm 104:2 NIV

So shut out the distractions, **wrap your mind around His Word** and **wrap His love around your heart**, and spring into action at His direction, and shine the light of life that lets this ol’ world know what true star power looks like! And you might just hear Him say, “Now that’s a wrap!”