



Raleigh  
Breakfast  
Club

# To become better men in Christ.

Welcome to RBC!

Our goals are simple: To eat good food, enjoy time around the table, and **to become better men in Christ.**

That doesn't mean we are trying to live as good men doing good things in the world. It means are asking how can we become more like Jesus Christ? How can we grow, maturr, progress in this life as men?

To help us, over the fall we used two different paradigms from the Bible to help us think about how God can shape us to be the men he created us and calls us to be. (next slide)

# Fitness Battle

For this new series I want to consider another helpful paradigm from scripture that can help us become better men in Christ:  
(next slide)

# Fitness Battle Journey

**Journey.** This is an image that's intrigued me and challenged me in my faith a lot over the past year and I'll share more about that this morning. It has gripped me in part because it has to do with deep and important questions of significance and purpose.  
(next slide)

# Purpose

To go on a journey you have to know where you are going and why you are going there. So that's what I want us to start discussing this morning...

To get us started I want you to think about your own life, about your purpose and significance. Around your tables, in your groups I want you to each answer this question: (next slide)

**What is the most significant  
accomplishment of your life and why?  
(excluding marriage, fatherhood, relationship with Jesus)**

Take about 10 min to discuss.

This is a great question that can be very revealing when it comes to our own understanding of purpose and significance. It can begin to expose what we value, our motives and our goals. I encourage you to continue thinking about this question over the coming weeks as we talk about this idea of journey.



**I love hiking and backpacking.** Some of my fondest memories from growing up are hiking with my brother and my dad. At least two or three times a year we would go backpacking in Pisgah National Forest or the Smoky Mountains.

I remember as a kid when I would complain about the distance or difficulty of the trail, my dad would give me two bits of advice. Hike for the view and step where I step. Armed with his advice I would hike head down, focusing my eyes on each step of his Vasque Sundowner boots while holding in my mind's eye the amazing views from the ridgeline above.

My dad taught me to love love hiking. This week I was thinking about why it is I love hiking to this day:

**RISK/ADVENTURE  
DESTINATION/MILESTONES  
DEMANDED EFFORT/OBSTACLES  
SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT  
ALWAYS ANOTHER PEAK  
WITH MY DAD & BROTHER**

I came up with this list...

The Bible says our faith is like a path or quest or a journey.

Next slide

**Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners . . . For the Lord watches over the way (path) of the righteous, but the way (path) of the wicked leads to destruction.**

**Psalm 1:1 and 6**

The Psalms are full of examples. In fact, they begin with the image of a path...

**Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light  
for my path.**

**Psalm 119:105**

**How blessed is the man whose strength is in  
you, In whose heart are the highways to Zion.**

**Psalm 84:5**

More examples

**Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not  
rely on your own understanding. Acknowledge  
him in all your ways, and he will make your  
paths straight.  
Proverbs 3:5–6**

The Bible's descriptions of this life and our faith as a journey, got me to thinking - shouldn't there be parallels between what I love about hiking and my experience as a follower of Christ?

In other words, men, if we were to describe our faith would we use words like these:

**RISK/ADVENTURE  
DESTINATION/MILESTONES  
DEMANDED EFFORT/OBSTACLES  
SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT  
ALWAYS ANOTHER PEAK  
WITH MY DAD & BROTHER**

...The sad truth is for most men, the answer is no. The truth is their faith is quite the opposite of this...It's would be better describe by a list like this:

**SAFE & COMFORTABLE  
TAME/BORING  
PURPOSELESS/DIRECTIONLESS/  
UNLCEAR  
UNINSPIRING & UNDEMANDING**

I encounter a lot of men who use these kinds of words or similar ones to describe. And I know more men would if they were really honest.

I recently read a book called Manliness Harvey Mansfield (2006) a political science professor at Harvard. He is not a Christian but he makes some fascinating observations about the impact of modern culture on our understanding of what it means to be manly. Basically he argues that in western culture today, manliness is an unemployed or untapped virtue for men.

## **MODERNITY & UNEMPLOYED MANLINESS:**

**“The primary obstacle to manliness is rational control. Manliness must prove itself and do so before an audience. It welcomes the dramatic and whereas rational control prefers routine, predictability, and not to get excited . . . Rational control wants our lives to be bound by rules, but manliness is dissatisfied with whatever is merely legal or conventional. Manliness favors war, likes risk, and admires heroes. Rational control wants peace (safety), discounts risk, and prefers role models to heroes.”**

**Harvey Mansfield, Harvard University**

I don't agree with everything he says, but I do think Mansfield is tapping into something that resonates deep within us as men - that when we lead calculated lives of control and risk avoidance, we may be safe and comfortable, but we also miss out on a key part of who we are as men. We are missing out on full and meaningful lives.

I think that there is truth in that. And I think as men in Christ, we often experience uninspiring and boring spiritual lives because we choose controlled, calculated, routine and failed to experience our faith as a journey, as a quest, as an adventure.  
(next slide)

## Spiritual life as a path / journey / quest

I think we need to recover this idea of the Christian life as a journey. That we can mine this rich biblical tradition to help us reimagine the Christian life as something we *want* to pursue. Something less like a class or therapy group and more like a band of men setting off on a great adventure.

How many of you have read or seen the movies of Lord of the Rings?

*Synopsis:* And of friends somewhat who set out from the comforts of their home on a quest to save middle earth by stopping Sauron and the dark forces of Mordor. The adventure is beyond anything they could have ever imagined, it's full of danger and challenges but it will be also me the most thrilling and incredible thing they ever do. They build these amazing friendships and accomplish impossible tasks. And in the end, after significant sacrifice and effort they complete their quest and return home.

I want to show you two clips and the first is a scene from the local pub before the Frodo and his friends set out on their quest. The second is after they return from their journey. I want you to notice how they act and what gets said.



Watch video clip at <https://youtu.be/JZUxc-Cb5LM>

# Before the Journey

Observed:

**“War is brewing... none of our concern what goes on beyond our borders...**

**keep your nose out of trouble and no trouble will come to you**

*War is brewing but here in the pub we can live obliviously, safe, comfortable, happy*

**How does Sam react to Rosie, the bar maid?**

**Looks away. No guts, no girl**

**“Don’t worry, Same, Rosie knows an idiot when she sees one”**



Watch video clip at <https://youtu.be/J3oXr7XVuhc>

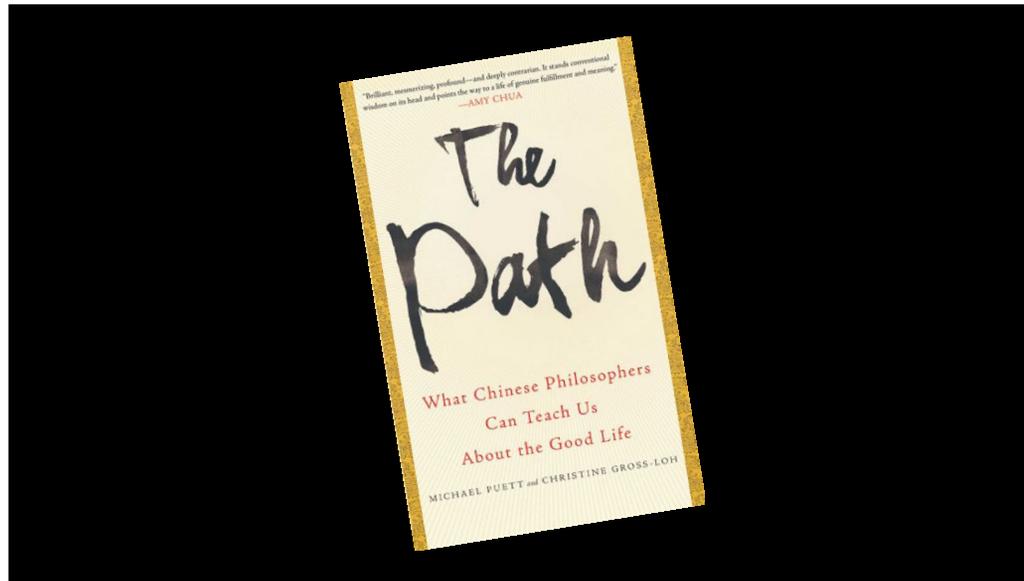
## After the Journey

They are all different, changed, they know there's more now, a world beyond the pub and the shire  
They have a profound shared experience  
Quiet confidence, matured  
Unspoken bond of true friendship  
No fear, guts to get the girl

**The cost of passivity,**  
**Living a purposeless, risk-avoidant life leads**  
**to undeveloped, weak, and fearful men.**

Here's my point. We may be able to live spiritual lives that are comfortable and safe. We may choose a path that mitigates risk, maintains control. You may never lose, rarely suffer, and never get lost. But if you approach faith this way, you'll be the shadow of the man you could be.

We need to see the spiritual life as a journey.



This idea of path or journey isn't unique to Christianity.

Other religions and philosophies talk about seeing life this way.

Lots of folks talk about "Finding your own path" or "making your way in the world"

You'll even here people say things like it's not the destination its the journey that matters.

This way of seeking "the path" holds that life's journey is all about personal development and self-actualization. It's about becoming the you you really want to be.

But that is not how the Bible talks about journey.

**“The path” in the Bible is about the destination.**

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners . . . For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked **leads to destruction.**

**Psalm 1:1 and 6**

How blessed in the man whose strength is in you, In whose heart are the **highways to Zion.**

**Psalm 84:5**

There are paths that lead to destruction and there is a path that leads to Zion, to a place of glory in the presence of God forever.

Path to something worth reaching  
leads to a life worth living

In other words in the Christian understanding of path it is a....(see above)

Not that we don't grow and develop through the experience, but for the Bible the experience is never ***the point***. ***The destination is the point***. And it is a destination worth reaching.



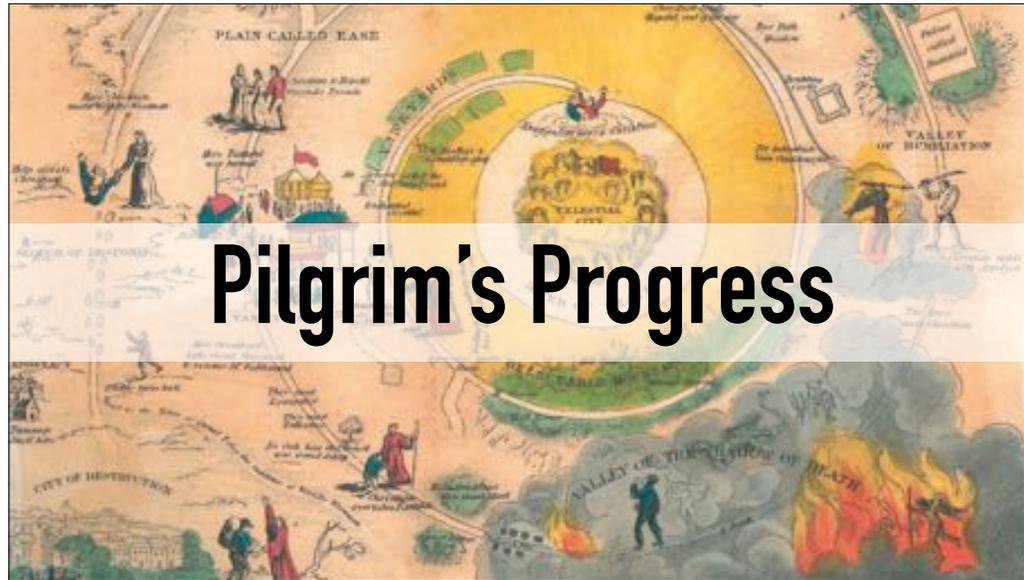
For most religions and philosophies they employ this idea of path the destination is basically a mirror. When you get to the end of the long and challenging journey, you stand and gaze upon the new and better you that has arrived.

For the Christian man, the path leads to an incredible view. The Christian life offers us a destination like no other. A view worth striving to reach. A view so glorious and overwhelming that it brings us to our knees in worship. A view of the eternal glory of God Almighty.

# **What is the ultimate destination (purpose) of the Christian life?**

In the coming weeks we will press into this idea of journey and our ultimate glorious destination as men.

As we do, I encourage you to consider how you would answer the question above and how it shapes your understanding of your faith.



**I also want to challenge you to pick up and read a copy of Pilgrim's Progress from the back table.**

How many have ever read Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan? I "rediscovered" this last year. For almost 300 years this book was the second most published book in the English language next to the Bible. I read this in high school and didn't get it. But this year I've read it several times since and it has gripped me. And I think it's a must read for each of you.

It's the story of a man and his journey to faith. It's full of remarkable characters and adventure. It has really helped me think about my spiritual life in a completely difference way and so I want to challenge you to read it over the next few weeks.

I'll be using this as a jumping off point for our discussion but you won't have had to read it to track with me over the next few weeks.

# **What is the ultimate destination (purpose) of the Christian life?**

We are going to talk more about the answer to this question in the coming weeks and to do that I want to challenge you to do something.



**THURSDAYS**  
5:30-6:15am  
Capitol Bldg  
Edenton St. side

Join us!