

OCTOBER 8, 2017

STRETCH  
ENLARGE  
EXTEND

PART 1

Life

We are creatures of HABIT. We all want to get around like we used to. It is our tendency to resist being STRETCHED. We have gotten comfortable with our life's routine. Someone said, "Rut is a grave with no ends." But for most of us, Rut defines the way we live.

Albert Einstein once said, "Doing the SAME thing over and over again and expecting DIFFERENT results is called INSANITY." We didn't mean to, but we settle into routine.

If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten. For some of us, it means life barrenness. We didn't mean to, but we are empty. When we fall into those routines, our lives no longer bear the same kind of fruitfulness for God's purpose.

Have you ever been so EMPTY in your life? Your life has the same old things it had a year ago. You find yourself searching for meaning in the grayness that just seems to blend from day to day. The key to Christian living is: to GO when God asks you to go and to wait for Him when He is teaching you to be patient.

Isaiah 54:1-3 - <sup>1</sup> "Sing, barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband," says the Lord. <sup>2</sup> "ENLARGE the place of your tent, STRETCH your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; LENGTHEN your cords, STRENGTHEN your stakes. <sup>3</sup> For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities." (NIV)

### ENLARGE YOUR CAPACITY FOR GOD

Isaiah 54:2a - "ENLARGE the place of your tent..." (NIV)

The number one purpose God had in creating us was for us to know God in an intimate relationship. And the second reason God created us was to make Himself known through us.

God wants to expand your influence for His purpose. The measure of success in your life is not related to what you have but to what you allow God to birth through you. Here is a powerful principle in life: WE LIVE TO GIVE. Our life and everything we have is not for our own consumption. God gave us life to give it out. God blessed us to share it. It is a principle that is woven into the fabric of creation. God needs expandable tents. God uses elastic vessels who are able to change and grow with what God is doing.

### STRETCH YOUR COMMITMENT

Isaiah 54:2b - "...STRETCH your tent curtains wide, do not hold back..." (NIV)

When we stretch the tent, its cover widens. God wants to expand our influence. But before we can do that, we have to stretch our commitment to God and His people. Stretching has the tendency to cause pain. It sounds so powerful. But experiencing pain is not acceptable to us. But if you don't want to embrace pain allowed by God, there will never be growth. If we want to grow, we need to stretch our commitment to God and His church. Stretching your commitment is like developing muscles. Allow God to make you uncomfortable. Those growing pains will subside and your commitment will be larger.

### EXPAND YOUR INFLUENCE

Isaiah 54:2c-3 - <sup>2</sup> "...LENGTHEN your cords, STRENGTHEN your stakes. <sup>3</sup> For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities..." (NIV)

You need to make your mark on a land that does not yet know who God is. I think you may not realize how much your influence effects other people. People are watching us consciously or unconsciously. You can expand your influence by showing concern for others and anticipating their needs before they even realize they need your help. The best way to expand our INFLUENCE is to expand our circle of CONCERN. Churches that grow are churches that show a genuine concern for their community.

In Luke 6:32-33 Jesus even said, <sup>32</sup> "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup> And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that (NIV)."

**Go out of your way to show people the Love of God.**



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1.) What are the potentials that God has placed in you for His purposes?
- 2.) Are you maximizing those potentials in serving him, share?
- 3.) How do you think you can you stretch, enlarge and expand?

**Pray for each other in your group.**