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**Key Verses:** 2 Kings 13:14-19, 2 Kings 2:1-14, Luke 14:28-29

**Key Take Away:** Our maximum is God’s minimum.

**INTRO**

There’s something fresh about a new school year. It feels like you have energy for everything and so whatever comes your way, you’re ready to say yes to it! Homework seems easier to get done, new friendships start to form, and you feel alive just thinking about all the things you can accomplish this year. Starting a new school year can be fun even though school isn’t.

**WHEN PASSION FIZZLES**

But let’s talk about your last school year. Do you remember how much energy you had last September? It felt like anything was possible! And then November came and you were counting down the days for summer. Do you remember the goals you had last year? How many of them did you accomplish? You may have set out in the beginning with a ton of passion but eventually the chaos of school made you forget what you wanted to do.

Starting a new school year is fun and energetic but eventually our passion seems to fizzle. When passion fizzles, we stop trying as hard and the goals we had become distant memories. Sometimes our passion can go away because people tell us that we can’t accomplish our dreams. When other people believe we can’t accomplish big things, we tend to believe them. Sometimes our passion goes away because when we compare ourselves to the best, we know our lives will never match up.

But that’s not your story this year. This year is different because this is *your* year. This is the year where you’re going to accomplish the impossible and we’re going to help you. Do you want to make this year *your* year? Touch somebody next to you and tell them, “I’m all in.”

I know you can make this year yours because when I look at you I’m reminded of a young basketball player. There was this sophomore who had only one goal in life and that was to play basketball. He worked all summer long to earn his spot on the varsity team and when tryouts came and went, this 15-year-old boy checked the team roster to see if he made it.

His heart was broken when he didn’t see his name on the list. When asked, his coach told him that his shooting skills were okay and he was average in defense. The final nail of defeat was when the coach told this boy that he was 3-inches too short to be a starter.

Can you imagine being told you didn’t have the right skills or the right body to follow your dreams? This kid could have accepted defeat. He could've accepted that the people on his team where the maximum and he was the minimum. But this guy was all in. He wouldn’t allow this to stop. So, he trained and pushed himself until one day he finally earned his spot as a starter. This 15-year-old eventually grew up and became one of the greatest basketball players in the history of basketball. This sophomore was none other than Michael Jordan.

Michael wasn’t going to let his failure be final. He wasn’t going to let one bad moment define his career. Michael was all in and nothing would stop him from pursuing his dream. But the question is this: Are you all in? Are you willing to do whatever it takes to accomplish what others see as impossible?

When I hear stories like Michael Jordan’s, I’m reminded of a story told in the Bible about two men named Elisha and Jehoash. Elisha was this amazing prophet who had a deep relationship with God, and because he knew God so intimately he led his country through some tough times. Everybody knew that Elisha’s leadership could cause big changes and Jehoash knew it as well.

Jehoash was the king of Israel at the time and he was faced with a problem. Israel was constantly at war and Jehoash wanted to end the bloodshed. So, in **2 Kings 13**, we learn that Jehoash heard that Elisha as on his deathbed, and Jehoash knew that if Elisha died, then their chance of winning died with him. So Jehoash went to Elisha and wept on the floor screaming, “Elisha, Elisha, war is coming and you’re dying. What are we going to do?”

Elisha decided to test Jehoash and gave him the most unusual advice. Elisha told Jehoash to go grab his bow and his arrows. So, Jehoash did just that. Then Elisha told him to shoot an arrow eastward and Jehoash shot his arrow.

"The Lord's arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Syria! For you shall fight the Syrians in Aphek until you have made an end of them."

**2 Kings 13:17 ESV**

Elisha cast a vision for Jehoash. The arrow that you shot is where your victory is. You will fight your enemies until you have made an end of them. The vision that Elisha was giving is clear. Jehoash’s goal would not be complete until he had defeated everyone. This was pretty unsettling news. Jehoash probably wanted a magical solution like God sending a magical thunderstorm to strike down the enemy’s army. But instead Elisha told him that he was going to have to work like crazy.

This would be like Michael Jordan going to God asking for a magical potion that made him instantly great, but instead God told him that his mission should be the NBA and his mission wasn’t finished until he as the number one player in history. To a 15-year-old, that would sound impossible. But we know that it happened for Michael, so it can happen for you.

Now this next part is important. Elisha moved on and told Jehoash, “Now take your arrows and strike the ground with them.” So, Jehoash took out his arrows and struck them on the ground three times. When Elisha saw what Jehoash had done, he got super angry. “Why do you only strike three times? Why didn’t you strike the ground five times or six times? Because of what you’ve done you will only defeat your enemies three times.”

The arrows that Jehoash had, were a test of how much he would invest in his mission. Elisha wanted to see if Jehoash was all in, but Jehoash fell short of what was available to him. Jehoash was only willing to give some of what he had to accomplish his task. That’s why Elisha was angry and that’s why we always end up disappointed with ourselves. Are you willing to invest everything you have to accomplish your goals? If God gave you arrows that represent your vision, how many times would you strike the ground for your mission? Vision will tell us where to go, but if you’re not all in there’s no point in trying.

**OUR MAXIMUM IS GOD’S MINIMUM**

Elisha laid down some heavy truth for us, but the way Elisha came to this truth should encourage us. In that last story, we saw Elisha as an old man, but I want to take you to another story where Elisha was much younger. Elisha started out being mentored by one of the greatest prophets in the Bible, Elijah.

Elijah was on fire for God. This guy was so close to God that his life looked like he ate miracles for breakfast. So, in **2 Kings 2**, we find Elijah talking to his pupil Elisha. Elijah is about to make one of most miraculous retirements ever seen as God was going to take Elijah directly to heaven. He’s had this crazy journey ahead of him so he told Elisha, “I’ve got a long road ahead of me, so if you want to stay behind you can. This journey might be too long for you.” But Elisha refused to stay behind and told him, “As the Lord lives and as you live I will not leave you.”

So, the two of them went to a town called Bethel, and the sons of the prophets of Bethel came out to Elisha and they told him, “Do you know where Elijah is going? Don’t you know that you can’t follow him where he’s going?” These guys discouraged Elisha from going further and if it were you or I, we would probably listen to them and let their words steal our passion. But Elisha responded, “Yes I know. But keep quiet.” Elisha responded with a biblical “haters gonna hate” type mentality. He didn’t allow their words to keep him from following Elijah, In fact, he let it fuel him further.

Again Elijah comes up to Elisha and tells him, “The Lord is sending me to Jericho, you can stay behind. You don’t have to follow.” But Elisha responds again, “Where you go, I’m going to follow.”

So, the two of them went to Jericho and people flocked around Elisha again to discourage him. “Don’t you see what’s happening Elisha? Elijah is the greatest man who has ever talked with God. Do you really think you can follow him?” Elijah responds the same way again, “Yes I know. But be quiet.” Elijah approached Elisha again and told him, “The Lord is sending me to Jordan, please don’t follow.” But Elisha was persistent and told him again, “Where you go I will follow.”

So, the two of them went to the Jordan river and Elijah beat the river with his cloak and the waters parted making a dry pathway for Elijah and Elisha to cross. And when they reached the other side Elijah finally asked Elisha the most important question of his life. He asked Elisha, “The Lord is about to take me away. Ask me what I can do for you before that happens.”

The question was simple, but Elisha’s response is what unlocked the mystery of what it truly means to be all in. Elisha has been discouraged five different times from following Elijah to this point. Five different times he had been told that where Elijah was going, and he could not follow. And five different times he proved them wrong because he was all in. Elisha had, in essence, struck the ground with his arrows five times, and his answer to Elijah’s question was his striking the ground for the sixth time. Elisha responded, “Let there be a double spirit of you in me.”

Elijah was taken aback and he answered the request, “What you have asked of me is a hard thing to do.” Every person that knew Elijah thought that Elijah was the maximum of what God could do in their life. Elijah was the best prophet and no one could draw closer to God than him. But Elisha responded that he wanted God to do more in his life than what He did in Elijah’s. He wanted to make double the impact of what Elijah had made.

Everyone saw Elijah as the maximum of what God could do. But Elisha saw Elijah as the minimum. Here’s the key: if you want to really be all in you need to know that **our maximum is God’s minimum.** If you look to people like Lebron James or Adele and you think that there will never be anyone better, then you’re not all in. If you want to be all in you need to start looking at those people as the minimum of what God can do. *The greatest people of the world become the greatest because they believed there was something greater to be seen in this world.*

It’s okay to look up to those people, but don’t assume that greatness stops with them. Our maximum is God’s minimum. We serve a God of infinite power and He wants to invite you into His infinity. The world doesn’t want another Einstein or another Lebron. The world is waiting to see the first YOU.

**COUNT THE COST**

I want to end this with a challenge to you. What are your goals for this year? What is your goal in life? Can it be condensed into one solid goal? If you know that goal, how much are you willing to invest your life for it? Are you all in, because Jesus has a lot to say about accomplishing goals:

For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.

**Luke 14:28-30 ESV**

No one likes to chase dreams, because we fear we will fail. It’s hard to tell others about our goals because when we don’t reach them, others will know we didn’t achieve them. Before you even begin this journey, you need to figure out what the costs are. So, I want to leave you with two practical ways to count the cost and be all in.

1. **Map It Out** - If your goal needs to be accomplished this year, you need to start mapping out what you need to do now. Perfect practice makes perfect. Maybe you need to look to who is the best and you need to start figuring out how you can do it better. Our maximum is God’s minimum. What can you start practicing this week to accomplish this year?
2. **Learn To Subtract**- If you only have a few arrows, you need to figure out where you’ll be shooting them. There’s only 24-hours in the day so you need to figure out where your time will be invested. School is a no-brainer. Your school work deserves your attention. But maybe you need to start saying “no” to some other things in life. Maybe it’s the club that you joined or the sport that you’re playing and you no longer enjoy it. Most of you are so spread thin with your time because you are constantly saying yes to every opportunity. But maybe you need to start saying No. If you want to make this year, your year, then you need to start investing your arrows in the areas you need most.

Find the one thing you want to accomplish. You can’t try and be a world class chef, the best lacrosse player, and master five musical instruments in one lifetime. You don’t have to do it all. But you need to give your all in the area that you are most passionate about.

**THE MOST COSTLY PRICE OF ALL**

This entire time we’ve been talking about practical ways to make this year the best year. You don’t have to be religious to start practicing this today. But I want to switch gears for a second. Last week I challenged you to consider trusting Jesus to be the vision for your life. I asked you to trust Jesus to love you the way that you’ve always wanted to be loved.

I hate it when people try to sell me on something amazing and there ends up being a catch, which is why I want to be really honest about trusting Jesus. The love He has for you is unconditional, meaning there’s nothing you could ever do to earn it; He gives it to you freely. His love for you is free, but following Jesus comes with a price. Just like we mentioned earlier about counting the cost before setting out, if you want to follow Jesus you need to consider the cost.

To follow Jesus means that you will no longer make your life about yourself, but you live in a way that demonstrates you are for others. Just as Jesus loves us freely and He sacrificed his life for you, the cost mirrors what He’s already done. To follow Jesus means that you love others freely and that you live in a way that you’re sacrificing your comfort for loving others. The cost for following Jesus is pricey, because He requires you to give your whole life and trust that He can do something bigger with it. Remember, our maximum is God’s minimum. What if you trusted God to take your dreams, and bring them to a level of greatness that you thought was impossible?

To do this it will cost you everything that you are. But it’s even more expensive to never give your life to Jesus. If you never give your life to a God who is infinitely great, your life would settle for the minimum. It would be a life of regret and wondering if you could have experienced something better. But the greatest cost is this: when we refuse to trust Jesus with our lives, we’re actually surrendering our souls to an even worse fate. It’s true that a life without Jesus could cost you an eternity of suffering and loneliness.

So tonight, I want to be clear that there are two different costs on the table that you need to consider. There is the cost of trusting Jesus with your future and there is the cost that will consume your eternity. That second one will cost you far more than the first. Last week I challenged you to consider trusting Jesus as your vision for your life. I don’t want to pressure anyone into any decision because this is not a limited-time-so-act-now offer. But I want to challenge you with this: will you consider counting the cost of your eternity?