

# THE PROBLEM WITH PERFORMANCE

R M M N R E S O U R C E 2 0 2 4

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I started playing baseball when I was four. I liked it, but I think soccer was the first sport I fell in love with. My dad was a martial artist, and at an early age he began to train me. It didn't feel like training. It was fun! I loved to kick, and at an early age the form, technique, and strength came pretty natural to me. It wasn't uncommon to do a hundred or even hundreds of kicks a day. Even cooler, I got to hang out with my Dad! At the age of 7 my parents heard about the local youth soccer program and signed me up. I absolutely loved it! I got to kick over and over again and because of my previous martial arts training I was often able to kick harder, farther, and more accurately than the other kids. Ah, I'd found success... and with it, the approval of others!

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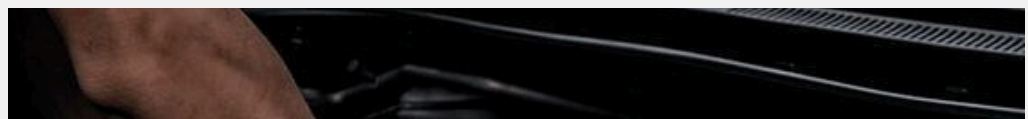
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Now, let me save you all the details of my life story, and suffice it to say that this started a trend in my life. Whether it was sports, work, or even in ministry I became driven to succeed and often looked for the approval of others. You see, society tells us that our value or our worth is based on our performance. It hinges upon our ability to contribute and produce whether it be at our job or for the greater good of those around us. Rejection, on the other hand, awaits those who fail to produce in the eyes of their peers. Now hear me out! You and I are called to be doers and co laborers in the kingdom. It's important that we produce and multiply with the gifts and talents that the Lord has given us. A good reminder of this is the parable that Jesus taught in Matthew 25:14-30. But, somewhere along the way the enemy has distorted the truth. This distortion has spread to some of our churches and even to the hearts of many believers. This has played out in numerous ways including competitiveness and believing that numbers are more important than bearing fruit. Where things can really get twisted is when we use the world's currency to determine our success. Or even worse, we buy into the lie that our value to the Father or in the kingdom can somehow increase or decrease with our apparent success or failure. Jesus actually taught against this way of thinking. This lie of the enemy is very subtle but just as a small amount of yeast can leaven the whole bread, it can taint everything we do. The root problem is self. Remember the two brothers James and John, the disciples of Jesus that asked to sit at his right hand? Their perspective was a worldly one. They wanted the prestige and honor of being next to Jesus, and if we aren't careful you and I can struggle with similar desires.



What if I told you that nothing you did would change the way that the Father loves you? What if I told you that He loved you as much yesterday when you sinned, as He does today? What if I told you that you've always had a seat at the table and it was never based on your merit, but His? You see, our broken flesh, sinful nature, and lies of the enemy are things each of us will have to overcome. The truth of God's love for us is something the enemy works diligently to keep us from discovering. We battle the fear of rejection. We struggle with perfectionism and comparison. Many of us spend years or even decades working to earn something that has already been given to us. It may seem strange but our value and our worth actually have nothing to do with our performance, but have everything to do with who He is and what He's done for us! Discovering and accepting God's love changes our reasoning and gives us purpose. It gives new life and perspective to "Why" we do what we do. Dying to self is a must and it changes our motives. This helps us to run our race with the freedom, joy, and the hope that can only come from His promises!





**We live in a broken world with a broken perspective. But, you and I are called to act and operate differently. We use a different set of metrics. The Word says that the last shall be first and the first shall be last. Our Father uses the things of the foolish to confound the wise. You and I are completely loved and totally pleasing to the Father and we've done nothing to earn it! The world doesn't comprehend these truths. Whether you're the pastor of a large church in suburban America, you're a stay at home parent raising your children, or you've spent years in a small jungle village working to convert just one believer, Colossians 3:23-24 reminds us to do everything as if we were doing it for the Lord not for people. The Father takes note of every sacrifice. He sees your efforts and the struggles and your reward awaits you in Heaven. So, run your race with excellence... keep your eyes on the prize... and know that your Heavenly Father is always watching because He's never missed a race!**

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Brandon Bradford is a Life and Leadership Coach at The Ranch of Hope in Westcliffe, Colorado. With a passion for guiding individuals through personal transformation and leadership development, Brandon combines his deep faith with practical coaching strategies to help people discover their purpose, overcome challenges, and lead with confidence.

