

D.A.N.C.E.

LESSON BY REED LINAM (FOR LADS TO LEADERS/LEADERETTES)

Have you ever thought to yourself, “I’m not good enough”? Have you ever felt like giving up or throwing in the towel? Like you couldn't take it anymore? Maybe you’ve thought to yourself that you’ve made too many mistakes or that you’ve sinned too many times for God to forgive you. Well, trust me....You are NOT the only one.

Every human being has feelings of inadequacy. We all struggle with how to live our life and how to recover from the mistakes we’ve made. I think one of the differences that separates Christians and non-believers is our mind set. We are sorry for our sins. And, we have experienced the grace of God.... Therefore, we WANT to do better. Godly sorrow leads us to repentance.

The theme for this year’s Lads to Leaders convention is “We’ll Work Till Jesus Comes.” Most of us have probably thought about that theme and have studied the texts found in James, I and II Peter. We realize that there is much work to do, especially if we want to be ready for the day Jesus comes again. Therefore, I want to share with you some thoughts about how to improve our spiritual life. It is my prayer that these points will help to contend with these feelings of not being good enough.... And I hope that you will leave here feeling better about your Christian life.

My entire speech can be summarized with one word....DANCE. That’s right.....dance! Solomon teaches that there is a time to dance in **Ecclesiastes 3**. Now, I know what you are probably thinking.... “We are church of Christ. We don’t dance, you crazy kid!” I know. I know. But, bear with me for a few moments....I want to share with you this acronym, and maybe you will learn to appreciate the time to DANCE.

First, let’s start with the letter “D.” “D” stands for Determination. To do anything successfully in this life we must have determination. Anyone who has ever made anything, or left a mark on this world, has done it with determination. We need to live a determined life as a Christian. Just think of a few examples..... Thomas Edison = It took him over 400 times before he got things just right to create the light bulb. Abraham Lincoln = Think about how many times he failed in politics and in his personal life before he could be labeled as successful. And, what about Scott Boilen = Oh, you don’t know who he is? He invented the Snuggie! His products are all over television. BUT, MOST IMPORTANTLY, consider Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. He could have called 10,000 angels, but for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross. Now that is true....spiritual....determination.

The “A” in DANCE stands for Action. Our actions speak louder than words. You’ve heard that phrase before that goes something like this....”I’d rather SEE a sermon any day, than HEAR one.” There is power in our example. As a Christian we WEAR CHRIST everywhere we go! We should act like Christ. Talk like Christ. And, people should see Him in us. This is why James tells us that “faith without works is dead.” We need to do good deeds and make good choices. Paul calls this bearing the fruit of the Spirit in **Galatians 5:22-23**. We can talk the talk, but can we walk the walk? Can we walk by faith, and not by sight? James not only shows us that we need faith AND works to live a good Christian life, but he also tells us that we should count it all joy when we experience various trials in **James 1:2**. We need to press on and just serve the Lord, not matter what comes our way!

The “N” in DANCE stands for “Never giving up.” Winston Churchill would say, “Never, never, never give up!” James wrote his book to Christians that were struggling with persecution. They were living in very difficult times. The temptations and trials seemed to be coming from every direction. **James 1:12** says, *"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."* As a child of God we have to be prepared for people to make fun of us. They will talk bad about us and rebuke us for living differently from the world. Paul gives some great advice in **II Timothy 4:6-8** when he shows us that he fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith. He knew that in the end the reward would be well worth it. He spoke of it as a crown of life, that would be given to all those who love the appearing of Jesus. That means he was working until the coming of Jesus!

The “C” in DANCE reminds us to be courageous. We need “courage.” Maybe you remember that VBS song we sing that tells us to “Dare to be a Daniel.” We have to dare to stand alone. It takes courage to begin a new walk with God as a new babe in Christ. It takes courage to follow the Word of God and walk by faith. It also takes courage to preach the gospel and teach others the good news. It takes courage to be a missionary, or a teacher, or a ministry leader in the church. When I think about courage I think about David. Remember the story of David and Goliath? He was ready to face that giant, no matter the consequences, because he had courage. Courage leads us to follow God with all that we have in us. **Deuteronomy 6:5** says, *"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength."* Jesus taught this in His ministry, didn't he? That takes courage....to love Him means to follow Him. Like the song says we need to TRUST & OBEY!

The final letter in DANCE is the “E” which stands for “Eternal” salvation. All of these previous steps lead us in the right direction. Do you ever catch yourself looking up into heaven, waiting for Jesus to come back? We have this great hope, if we are in Christ. But there are many who walk this earth that DO NOT have this hope. John tells us that we can know we have eternal life. Do you know it? Are you confident in your salvation? If not it's probably because you never learned to DANCE! Think about the descriptions we are given in the Bible about heaven! Wouldn't you want to know that's where you're headed? **Romans 6:23** says, *"for the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord."* What an amazing promise!

When is the time to DANCE? Now! Now is the time to have Determination, Action, Never give up, seek Courage, and work out our Eternal Salvation. **James 5:8-9** says, *"You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!"* We must be patient while we wait for Jesus to come again. If we are right with Christ, we don't need to fear the Judge. Just remember to do your best and let God do the rest! Let's keep working until Jesus comes.....and spend some quality time learning to DANCE!!!!