

Series: The Gospel of Freedom and the Things That Hinder

Message: "The Performance Trap"

Galatians 5:2-7

Central Thought: *When we value ourselves by our successes or our failures, we are caught in a cycle that will destroy us.*

- 1) What is the performance trap?
 - A lie saying, "I must meet certain standards in order to feel **good** about myself."
 - Believing that we are more valued by obeying the **rules**.
 - It puts "doing" before "being" – what I do **defines** who I am.
 - It essentially tells God that His creative intention in my life doesn't **matter**.

- 2) Why is performance a "trap"?
 - Because once we give into that way of thinking, we cannot **escape** on our own.
 - Both success and failure can destroy us.
 - Success can **deceive** us to think this way "works", leading to perfectionism.
 - Failures can fill us with hopelessness / worthlessness making us **withdraw**.

- 3) How does it hinder us in following Jesus?
 - Performance hinders our ability to understand God's **grace**.
 - We find ourselves running in the **wrong** race or hindered in the right race.
 - Either way, we are hindered in following Jesus because we don't have our **eyes** on the prize. Hebrews 12:2

- 4) What can the performance trap produce if undetected and unaddressed?

When we succeed:

 - **Perfectionism**.
 - Pride.
 - Chemical dependency.
 - Loss of **identity**.

When we fail:

 - **Passivity** – withdrawal from all risks.
 - Anger at others, self and God.
 - Immoral choices.
 - Low **motivation**.

- 5) How does Jesus provide a "highway" out?
 - Real success: Jesus reminds us that He has already performed **for** us.
 - Real value: A proclamation of our **value** to God and to ourselves.

For LIFE Groups and personal reflection

- 1) How does our response to both failure and success reveal the performance trap?
- 2) When we value ourselves by performance – how well or poorly we do – what does that say to God?
- 3) When we value ourselves by how well or poor we do, what does that say about Jesus' performance on our behalf?
- 4) What does it mean to "fix our eyes on Jesus" in daily life?

Resource – Robert McGee, [The Search for Significance](#).

Word bank: deceive, defines, escape, eyes, for, good, grace, identity, matter, motivation, perfectionism, passivity, rules, value, withdraw, wrong