



Stretch: Get on Your Mark; Get Set; Go!

Pastor Daren L. Barron | January 7, 2024

STRETCH, verb transitive [Latin]

- To draw out to greater length; to extend in a line; as, to stretch a cord or a rope.
- To extend in breadth; as, to stretch cloth.
- To spread; to expand; as, to stretch the wings.
- To reach; to extend.
- To extend mentally; as, to stretch the mind or thoughts.

Stretch: This year we won't quit when it gets difficult

Hebrews 12:1-3 Easy-to-Read Version

1 We have all these great people around us as examples. Their lives tell us what faith means. **So we, too, should run the race that is before us and never quit.** We should remove from our lives anything that would slow us down and the sin that so often makes us fall. 2 We must never stop looking to Jesus. He is the leader of our faith, and he is the one who makes our faith complete. He suffered death on a cross. But he accepted the shame of the cross as if it were nothing because of the joy he could see waiting for him. And now he is sitting at the right side of God's throne. 3 Think about Jesus. He patiently endured the angry insults that sinful people were shouting at him. Think about him so that you won't get discouraged and stop trying.

Stretch: 2024 will require committed training

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 Easy-to-Read Version

24 You know that in a race all the runners run, but only one runner gets the prize. **So run like that. Run to win!** 25 **All who compete in the games use strict training.** They do this so that they can win a prize—one that doesn't last. But our prize is one that will last forever. 26 So I run like someone who has a goal. I fight like a boxer who is hitting something, not just the air. 27 It is my own body I fight to make it do what I want. I do this so that I won't miss getting the prize myself after telling others about it.

Stretch: My Body

Romans 12:1 Amplified Bible

Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies [dedicating all of yourselves, set apart] as a living sacrifice**, holy and well-pleasing to God, which is your rational (logical, intelligent) act of worship.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Amplified Bible, Classic Edition

19 Do you not know that your body is the temple (the very sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you, Whom you have received [as a Gift] from God? You are not your own, 20 You were bought with a price [purchased with a preciousness and paid for, made His own]. So then, **honor God and bring glory to Him in your body.**

Stretch: My Soul

Romans 12:2 Amplified Bible

And do not be conformed to this world [any longer with its superficial values and customs], but **be transformed and progressively changed [as you mature spiritually] by the renewing of your mind [focusing on godly values and ethical attitudes]**, so that you may prove [for yourselves] what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His plan and purpose for you].

3 John 1-3 Amplified Bible

1 The elder [of the church addresses this letter] to the beloved and esteemed Gaius, whom I love in truth. 2 **Beloved, I pray that in every way you may succeed and prosper and be in good health [physically], just as [I know] your soul prospers [spiritually].** 3 For I was greatly pleased when [some of the] brothers came [from time to time] and testified to your [faithfulness to the] truth [of the gospel message], that is, how you are walking in truth.

Stretch: My Spirit

Galatians 5:22-23 Amplified Bible

22 But the fruit of the Spirit [the result of His presence within us] is **love** [unselfish concern for others], **joy**, [inner] **peace**, **patience** [not the ability to wait, but how we act while waiting], **kindness**, **goodness**, **faithfulness**, 23 **gentleness**, **self-control**. Against such things there is no law.

Romans 5:5 Amplified Bible

Such hope [in God's promises] never disappoints us, because **God's love has been abundantly poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**

Stretch: Our Faith

2 Corinthians 5:7 Amplified Bible

for **we walk by faith**, not by sight [living our lives in a manner consistent with our confident belief in God's promises]—

Romans 12:3 King James Version

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as **God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.**

Luke 17:5-6 Amplified Bible

5 The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith [our ability to confidently trust in God and in His power]." 6 And the Lord said, "If you have [confident, abiding] faith in God [even as small] as a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree [which has very strong roots], 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea'; and [if the request was in agreement with the will of God] it would have obeyed you.

Stretch with Intention

Luke 8:43-48 Easy-to-Read Version

43 A woman was there who had been bleeding for twelve years. She had spent all her money on doctors, but no doctor was able to heal her. 44 The woman came behind Jesus and touched the bottom of his coat. At that moment, her bleeding stopped. 45 Then Jesus said, "Who touched me?" They all said they had not touched him. And Peter said, "Master, people are all around you, pushing against you." 46 But Jesus said, "Someone touched me. I felt power go out from me." 47 When the woman saw that she could not hide, she came forward, shaking. She bowed down before Jesus. While everyone listened, she told why she touched him. Then she said that she was healed immediately when she touched him. 48 Jesus said to her, "**My daughter, you are made well because you believed. Go in peace.**"

Stretch with Expectation

Isaiah 40:31 Amplified Bible

But those who wait for the Lord [who expect, look for, and hope in Him] Will gain new strength and renew their power; They will lift up their wings [and rise up close to God] like eagles [rising toward the sun]; They will run and not become weary, They will walk and not grow tired.