



Course 8, Session 3 Student Notes: Raise Your Floor, Be Honest and Quit the Wrong Stuff

Stop Trading Your Birthright for Stew

Big Idea: Your floor is your standard, what you will and will not accept. Most people keep a high ceiling of dreams and a low floor of habits. Scaling means raising the floor, telling the truth, and quitting the wrong things faster.

How to use these notes. These are yours to study on your own, before or after the session. Read each section slowly. Under every principle there is a **Notes** space to write what stands out to you, and a **Reflect** question to answer honestly in writing. Keep your Bible nearby. Take about 30 minutes, and end in prayer. Bring your notes and questions to the group. In the last two sessions you set a bold goal on a short timeline. This session may be the most honest one in the whole course, because now we raise the floor beneath the dream.

Open in Prayer

Before you begin, pray this simple prayer, or your own: "Father, give me honesty about what is weighing me down, and the courage to lay it aside. Show me the pottage I keep accepting, the low standards I have tolerated, and help me stop trading my future for a moment's comfort. Amen."

The Scripture for This Session

Read these slowly, out loud if you can:

- **Hebrews 12:1**, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."
- **Genesis 25:32 to 34**, "And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? ... and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright."

Reflect: What is one hard truth about your work that you have been avoiding, something you know but have not wanted to say out loud?

The Big Picture

Here is a picture that explains why so many people stay stuck. Imagine a room with a very high ceiling and a very low floor. The ceiling is your dreams, your big goals, your vision of what could be. Most of us have a high ceiling, we can imagine wonderful things. The floor is different. The floor is your standard, what you actually will and will not accept in your daily habits, your work, your relationships. And most people keep a low floor, they tolerate mediocrity, dodge hard truths, and hold onto things they know should be cut.

The problem is that you do not live in your ceiling, you live on your floor. Your results are determined not by how high you can dream but by how high your daily standard actually is. A high ceiling with a low floor keeps you perpetually stuck, always dreaming big, always living small. Scaling requires raising the floor. And raising the floor starts with two hard, unglamorous disciplines, telling yourself the truth about what is not working, and quitting the wrong things faster than feels comfortable. This is where the real breakthroughs happen, and the Bible gives us both a warning and a command, a man who traded his future for a bowl of stew, and a call to lay aside every weight.

Principle 1: Your Floor Is Your Real Standard, What You Actually Tolerate.

Be clear about what “floor” means, because it is easy to fool yourself here. Your floor is not what you wish for, not what you say you value, not the inspiring vision on your wall. Your floor is what you actually tolerate, day after day, without doing anything about it. It is the quality of work you let slide, the late client you keep excusing, the habit you keep promising to fix, the standard you have quietly accepted as “just how it is.” That, not your dream, is your real floor.

And here is the sobering part, your life tends to rise or fall to the level of your floor, not your ceiling. You do not consistently perform at the height of your best hopes, you consistently perform at the height of what you refuse to accept. If your floor is low, if you tolerate a lot of mediocrity and avoidance, then that is roughly where your results will settle, no matter how high your ceiling of dreams. This is why raising the floor is the real work. You do not scale by dreaming bigger, you have probably done plenty of that. You scale by refusing to accept what you have been accepting.

Reflect: What is one thing you have been tolerating in your work that reveals where your real floor actually is?

Notes:

Principle 2: A High Ceiling With a Low Floor Keeps You Stuck. Raise the Floor.

Now put the two together, because this is the trap that holds so many good people in place. A high ceiling with a low floor is not a balanced life, it is a stuck one. The high ceiling gives you enough inspiration to keep dreaming, and the low floor guarantees you never actually get there. You feel like a visionary and you produce

like someone half asleep, and the gap between the two is a constant, quiet frustration. You keep setting bigger goals when the problem was never the size of your goals, it was the height of your floor.

The way out is not another dream, it is raising the floor. Raise the standard of what you will accept in your daily work. Refuse the mediocrity you have been excusing. Decide there are things you will simply no longer tolerate, in your habits, your commitments, your quality of work. When you raise the floor, something remarkable happens, the whole room rises with it. You do not have to strain toward the ceiling anymore, you lift the floor and your results come up to meet it. The most reliable path to a higher life is a higher floor, not a higher dream.

Reflect: If you raised your floor by one notch this month, refusing one thing you have been tolerating, what would rise with it?

Notes:

Principle 3: Honesty Comes First. You Cannot Fix What You Will Not Admit.

Before you can raise the floor, you have to see where it actually is, and that requires brutal honesty. This is the step most people skip, because it hurts. It is far more comfortable to keep dreaming about the ceiling than to look hard at the floor and admit the truth about what is not working. But you cannot fix what you will not admit. As long as you refuse to name the problem, the problem stays, quietly draining your future while you look the other way.

So tell yourself the truth first. What is genuinely not working? Which client relationship is costing you more than it gives? Which habit is slowly undermining you? Which project have you been pretending is fine when you know it is not? Honesty is not negativity, it is the doorway to change. The most successful people are not the ones who avoid problems, they are the ones who face them soonest and most plainly. Give yourself permission to write down the hard truth you have been avoiding. That single act of honesty is often the beginning of the breakthrough.

Reflect: What is the truth about your work you already know but have been unwilling to say plainly to yourself? Say it now, in writing.

Notes:

Principle 4: Quit the Wrong Stuff Faster. Lay Aside Every Weight.

Once you have told the truth, the next move is to quit the wrong things, and to do it faster than feels comfortable. Notice what Hebrews 12:1 actually says: “lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us.” It names two categories, not one. There is sin, the clearly wrong things, and there is weight, which is different. Weight is not necessarily evil. Weight is anything that slows you down, even good things that are simply not your race, habits and commitments and projects that drag on you and hold you back.

This is important, because the hardest things to quit are usually not the obviously bad things, they are the good but wrong things. The decent client who is not the right client. The worthy project that is not your calling. The comfortable habit that is quietly costing you. These are hard to let go precisely because there is nothing evil about them, and so we keep them, and they keep us stuck. Raising the floor means quitting these faster. It means being willing to lay aside a good weight for the sake of the better race. The runner in Hebrews does not carry a backpack of nice things across the finish line, he strips down to what is essential and runs. So must you.

Reflect: What good but wrong thing is hardest for you to quit, and why has it been so hard to let it go?

Notes:

The Story: Esau and the Bowl of Stew (Genesis 25:29 to 34)

Read the passage. Esau comes in from the field, exhausted and hungry. His brother Jacob has a pot of red stew simmering, and Esau wants it desperately in that moment. Jacob asks for Esau's birthright in exchange, and Esau, feeling like he is about to faint, says, “what profit shall this birthright do to me?” So he trades it. His birthright, his whole future inheritance as the firstborn, everything that was coming to him, sold for a single bowl of stew. Scripture ends the scene with a devastating line: “thus Esau despised his birthright.”

It is one of the saddest trades in the whole Bible, the eternal sold for the immediate, an enormous future given away for a moment of comfort. And it is a perfect picture of a low floor. Every time you tolerate a low standard, dodge a hard truth, or cling to something that should be cut, you are making Esau's trade. You are handing over a piece of your future for a bowl of present comfort, the comfort of not having to change, not having to have the hard conversation, not having to quit the thing you know you should quit. The pottage looks small and harmless in the moment. That is exactly why the trade is so easy to make, and so costly.

Raising your floor means refusing that trade. It means valuing your birthright, the future God has for your work, more than the momentary comfort of avoidance. It means being brutally honest about what is not working, and quitting the wrong things, the wrong clients, the wrong habits, the wrong projects, faster than feels comfortable. Do not despise your birthright for a bowl of stew. Lay aside every weight, tell the truth, raise the floor, and run.

Reflect: What "bowl of stew," what momentary comfort, have you been accepting in exchange for a piece of your future? Name the trade you keep making.

Notes:

Put It Into Practice

1. Write the hard truth. Write down one hard truth about your work that you have been avoiding. Do not soften it. This is the honesty that comes before any change.

2. Name what to quit. Name one thing, a client, a habit, or a project, that you need to quit. It may be a good thing that is simply not your race. Write it plainly.

3. This week's assignment. This week, quit that one thing, or take the first concrete step to end it, the conversation, the email, the decision. Raise your floor by one notch. Then write one sentence about what it cost you and what it freed up.

The step I will take to quit it:

What it cost, and what it freed up:

Go Deeper (Optional)

- **Read:** *Essentialism* by Greg McKeown, on the disciplined pursuit of less but better, and the courage to quit the nonessential.
- **Listen:** *Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast*, on honest self leadership and hard decisions.
- **Study:** Hebrews 12:1 to 2; Genesis 25:29 to 34; Philippians 3:7 to 8 (counting good things as loss for the better prize).

Close in Prayer

"Father, give me honesty about my own floor, the standards I have quietly accepted, the truths I have avoided, the weights I keep carrying. Forgive me for the times I have been like Esau, trading a piece of my future for a bowl of present comfort, choosing the easy avoidance over the hard change I knew I needed. Give me

courage to lay aside every weight, even the good ones that are not my race, and to quit the wrong things faster than feels comfortable. Raise my floor, and lift my whole life with it, so I can run the race You have set before me with patience and with a whole heart. In Jesus' name, Amen."

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