

Action Figures

From what I can tell, there are two types of kids: those who play with their toy figurines and those who collect them to display on a shelf. I probably would've made a fortune selling unopened, mint-condition Star Wars toys from my childhood. But back then, I couldn't rip open the packaging fast enough to start playing! In my defense, they are called "action" figures for a reason.

As we grow up in discipleship, we learn the truth and let it rewrite our hearts. But what comes next in [Cross Training](#) to be the Lord's disciple? At some point, we have to get off the shelf, unwrap our protective packaging, and take action for Jesus! So, let's talk about how Christ can shape our behavior and put us into play!

What You Need to Know

Faith works! As we grow, right thinking leads to right living. Christ calls us to a counter-cultural lifestyle. We forgive those who hurt us, go the extra mile when someone asks us, and give more than someone demands. We seek peace and joyfully endure insults (Matt. 5-7). We can talk about our faith all day long, but until our walk matches the talk, it isn't really living faith at all (James 2:14-17, 22-26; cf. Heb. 11).

Like a three-legged stool, we need to hear sound words of truth to form a wholesome heart and stir us to healthy behavior. If you take just one of these supports away, the whole thing falls apart. Without the truth, you're passionately following your own path rather than God's (Rom. 10:2-3). Eliminate a loving heart, and all your knowledge and sacrifice gain you nothing (1 Cor. 13:1-3). Remove action, and you're like those hypocritical teachers of Jesus' day who preached but didn't practice (Matt. 23:3).

What You Need to Do

Remember that change takes time. Don't get so distracted by lofty goals that you lose focus on the small steps you can take today. You'll have good days and bad ones, but don't give up! Develop Christ-like spiritual habits, filling yourself with God's Word, spending time in prayer, and finding support in the church.

Stop thinking that *someone* will take action or that *someday* you'll make the right choices. If not you, who? If not now, when? We've all spent enough time living in sin, and now it's time to let the old life go, embracing the new (1 Peter 4:3). Deny yourself, take up your cross, and offer yourself as a daily sacrifice to Jesus (Matt. 16:24; Rom. 12:1-2). *"Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven"* (Matt. 5:13-16; 6:1-4).

Through the Week

- **Read** — John 13:1-17; 1 Cor. 13:4-8; 1 Pet. 2:12; James 2:14-26; Matt. 7:17-27
- **Reflect** — Ask yourself, *"What one small change could make a big difference in my life?"*
- **Request** — Pray, *"Lord, let my daily conduct bring the glory all to you and not to myself."*
- **Respond** — Do something *extra* for someone today.
- **Reach Out** — Ask someone, *"What have others done for you that made a positive impact?"*