

**NO GAME PLAN,
NO
VICTORY.**



www.GamePlanForLife.com

Dennis & Wanda x

2011
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How to Use This Study

TEAM TRAINING

Team Training refers to the group experience that takes place during your weekly meeting. It includes the video teaching as well as the Bible study portion. A summary of each part of the group experience follows.

PREGAME

Each weekly session begins with a Pregame warm-up that includes prayer, an encouraging word from the Team Captain, and a brief review of the previous week's Personal Training. Every group member has a chance to participate from the start.

KICKOFF

The session continues with a video object lesson from the Joe Gibbs Racing (JGR) shop, followed by an icebreaker question or two that again give every member a chance to participate in the study and to connect with the other guys.

FIRST HALF

The bulk of the video teaching occurs during the First Half, in which Coach Joe illustrates the topic with experiences from his own life. Also, an "assistant coach" or expert shares more in-depth teaching on the topic in an interview format. Group members are encouraged to note things that stand out to them from the video so they can contribute to the Halftime and Second Half discussions.

HALFTIME

Halftime provides the men an opportunity to debrief the video and answer a question about the weekly topic.

SECOND HALF

The small-group Bible study occurs in the Second Half and focuses upon Scripture passages that connect back to the video teaching. Questions are experiential and guide members on a journey toward personal growth and spiritual transformation.

2-MINUTE WARNING

The 2-minute Warning is a time to wrap up the study by summarizing the main points and to encourage application in the coming week. The group also spends time in prayer at the end of the 2-minute Warning.



PERSONAL TRAINING

Personal Training is done individually as a follow-up to the group experience. Men may choose to study this deeper look into the topic throughout the week or in one sitting. You'll notice that Sessions 3 and 4 contain an additional article that illustrates the topic for that week.

DAILY WORKOUTS

These short reflections are for men who would like a guide from Game Plan for Life as they do their daily quiet time or devotions with God. Members are encouraged to share from these experiences during the following week's Team Training.

Additional devotion materials are available at Joe's Web site which can be accessed through www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan or directly at www.GamePlanForLife.com.

BONUS MATERIALS

Many additional resources can be found throughout each week's Personal Training, including suggested reading, movie ideas, Internet resources, and links to free video presentations.

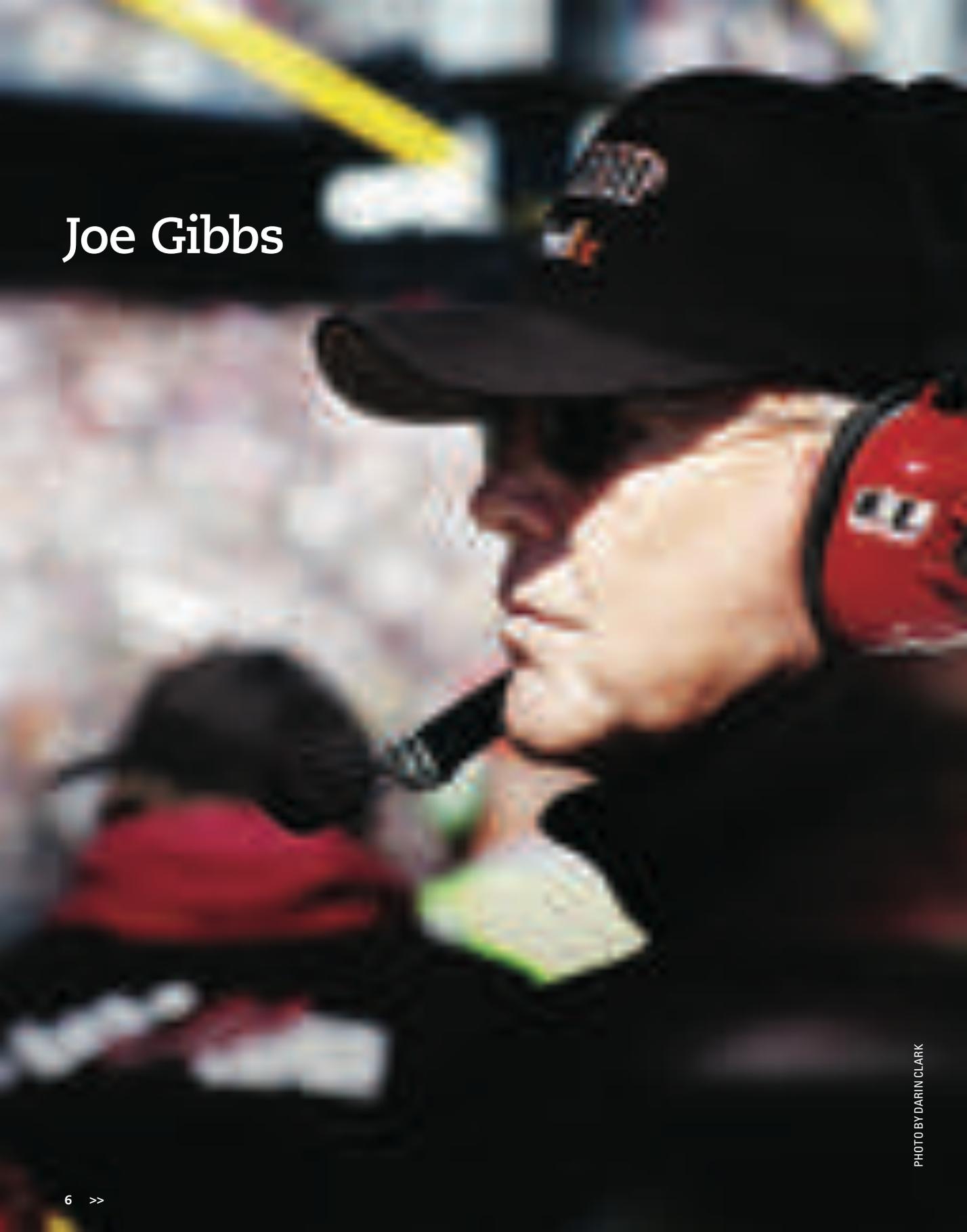
www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan is your home for anything related to the Game Plan for Life family of products. Links are included to sites referenced throughout the study to help the Team Captain and group members find supplemental resources.

To keep up with the latest news and events related to Game Plan for Life and the Gibbs team, you may also go to www.GamePlanForLife.com.

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Joe Gibbs





A successful organization starts with its people.

This has long been the philosophy of Joe Gibbs. It helped carry him to three Super Bowl championships and the Pro Football Hall of Fame as head coach of the NFL's Washington Redskins, and has been a defining principle behind building Joe Gibbs Racing (JGR) into one of NASCAR's most successful multi-team racing organizations.

It also guides Gibbs' latest project, *Game Plan for Life*, which is the title of his *New York Times* Best Selling book and its corresponding ministry (www.gameplanforlife.com). Once again, Gibbs assembled an amazing team of eleven experts to respond to the issues a national survey revealed to be the most pressing in men's lives. The results are a modern-day game plan for a successful life based on God's Word.

JGR has experienced amazing success and growth since Gibbs founded the operation in 1991. Beginning its first season of racing in 1992 with just 18 crew members, JGR now employs close to 450 people. Despite the immense growth, the company remains defined by the same principles of its founder: integrity, a relentless work ethic, determination, perseverance, and team building.

Those principles have been the driving force behind JGR's success, including over 160 overall wins in NASCAR, three NASCAR Cup Series championships (2000, 2002, and 2005) and back-to-back NASCAR Nationwide Series Championships (2008 and 2010 Owner's Champions and 2009 Driver and Owner's Champions).

Gibbs was applying character-based leadership long before he started in NASCAR. After 17 years of serving as an assistant coach to several college and NFL teams, Gibbs was hired as head coach of the Washington Redskins in 1981 and his determination and perseverance was immediately on display when the team lost its first five games. The Redskins rebounded to finish that season 8-8 and the following season, he would lead the Redskins to their first Super Bowl Championship in franchise history. Over the decade that followed he would lead the Redskins to two more Super Bowls, including victories in Super Bowl XXII following the 1987 season and Super Bowl XXVI after the 1991 season.

Over that time he became one of the winningest coaches in NFL history, but he retired from the NFL following the 1992 season to turn his attention to his family and the new race operations. Four years later, in 1996, Gibbs received the NFL's highest honor with induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

JGR made its debut in 1992, but it was a year later that JGR would claim its first victory, when Dale Jarrett won the 1993 Daytona 500, known as the Super Bowl of racing, in the No. 18 Interstate Batteries car.

From that first victory the growth and success of JGR has been extraordinary. In 1999 Gibbs realized that multi-car teams were becoming more prevalent and successful than their single-car counterparts. He brought Tony Stewart into the Cup Series with crew chief Greg Zipadelli and sponsor The Home Depot.

The collaboration was successful from the outset. Bursting onto the NASCAR Cup scene

in the No. 20 Home Depot car, Stewart became the winningest rookie in series history, with three wins en route to the Rookie of the Year title and a fourth-place position in the championship point standings.

In 2000, the No. 18 team with Bobby Labonte and the No. 20 team with Stewart proved to be a formidable one-two punch. The two drivers combined to win 10 of the series' 34 races, with Labonte winning four events en route to his first career NASCAR Cup Series championship. Just two years later it was Stewart's turn, as the Indiana native scored three wins during the 2002 campaign and captured his first NASCAR title.

In 2004, Gibbs shocked the sports world when he accepted an opportunity to return to the NFL for the team and fans he loved. With his eldest son J. D. running the day-to-day operations at JGR, Gibbs would be joined at the Washington Redskins by his youngest son Coy, who served as an offensive assistant on his coaching staff. Once again Gibbs went to work and in 2005 the franchise returned to the playoffs and earned its first playoff victory in six years.

While Gibbs was working to restore the Redskins winning tradition, the team he built at JGR continued to flourish. In 2005, JGR expanded to a third team as FedEx came on board to sponsor the new No. 11 team. That same year Stewart captured his second and JGR's third Cup Series Championship. Denny Hamlin joined the No. 11 FedEx team and went on to earn 2006 NASCAR Rookie of the Year honors.

One of the greatest challenges of Gibbs' career would come in his final season with the Redskins in 2007 when star player Sean Taylor

was murdered in his Miami home. Despite the tragedy, Gibbs managed to steer the Redskins to victories in their final four games to secure yet another playoff season for the team.

When the season concluded, Gibbs made the decision to spend more time with his family and is now back with son J. D. at JGR. Coy left his post at the Redskins following the 2006 season to start JGRMX, a professional motocross team based near JGR's NASCAR operations in Huntersville, NC. Just as JGR had done in NASCAR, in just the first race of only its second season, JGRMX captured its first victory in January 2009 when rookie rider Josh Grant won in the season opener in Anaheim, CA.

When Gibbs returned to JGR prior to the start of the 2008 season, he had a new manufacturer, Toyota, a new sponsor for the No. 18 team, M&Ms, and a new driver, Kyle Busch. In addition, JGR learned during the season that Tony Stewart would be leaving after the conclusion of the racing season to start his own race team. But despite all the changes, JGR proved its foundation strong once again as Busch won a remarkable eight times in the Cup Series and, for the first time, all three JGR drivers qualified for NASCAR's Chase for the Cup.

2009 saw the debut of Joey Logano, a talented driver who became the youngest ever to start the Daytona 500 at the age of just 18 when he climbed behind the wheel of the No. 20 Home Depot Toyota. Further, he became the youngest winner in NASCAR history when he captured his first win at New Hampshire in June. Surrounding Logano is a support system that includes not only his veteran crew chief, Greg Zipadelli, but a foundation of nearly 450 JGR employees that was

built over the past 19 years. The results speak volumes as Logano became the youngest ever to earn NASCAR Rookie of the Year honors. Hamlin also won a career-high four times and earned an impressive fifth-place finish in the standings, while Busch added yet another four victories.

In addition to his working daily with J. D. at JGR and Coy at JGRMX, as well as working to further spread the message of *Game Plan for Life*, Gibbs remains committed to Youth For Tomorrow, a home he founded in Bristow, VA that is now licensed to house up to 106 troubled boys and girls ages 11-18. He also added another championship to his resume when he coached his grandson Jackson's eight-man JEFA football team to a title this past fall.

Gibbs and his wife Pat currently reside near JGR's Huntersville, NC, headquarters and enjoy spending time with their eight grandchildren.

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TEAM TRAINING

SESSION 01

RUNNING WITH FOCUS



PREGAME



Open with prayer.

Goals:

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Kickoff

Topic: **Purpose**



TEAM CAPTAIN // PLAY VIDEO:
"Session 01 – Running with Focus"



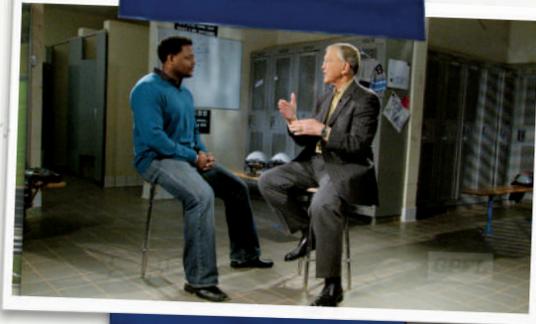
Do you believe God created you for a purpose in this life, whether general or specific? If so, when did you first begin to realize it?

First Half



TEAM CAPTAIN // RESUME VIDEO

Use the space provided below to take notes or jot down key thoughts that come from this video segment.



Check out the full-length interview. Tony talks more about how he found God's purpose for his own life and gives tips on how you can too!

www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan
SEE SESSION 1 VIDEO LINK ON THE WEB SITE.

Halftime



Listening to Pastor Evans is like drinking from a fire hydrant. What truth or word from Tony hit you the hardest?

What do you think God is trying to tell you?

Second Half



Background of key stories:

- ✗ By this time in David's life, he has already killed the giant, Goliath.
- ✗ David is extremely popular with the people of Israel.
- ✗ King Saul continues to disappoint God by not obeying His commandments.
- ✗ The prophet Samuel was supposed to make a sacrifice to God, but the impatient Saul took it upon himself to perform the work of the prophet.
- ✗ The rebuking words of Samuel spell doom for Saul's influence as king, yet at the same time reveal something special about David.

Read 1 Samuel 13:13-14 and Acts 13:22,36 out loud. Afterwards, answer the discussion questions as a group.

1 Samuel 13:13-14

¹³ *Samuel said to Saul, "You have been foolish. You have not kept the command which the LORD your God gave you. It was at this time that the LORD would have permanently established your reign over Israel, ¹⁴ but now your reign will not endure. The LORD has found a man loyal to Him, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not done what the LORD commanded."*

Acts 13:22,36

²² *After removing him, He raised up David as their king and testified about him: "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man loyal to Me, who will carry out all My will."*

³⁶ *For David, after serving his own generation in God's plan, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and decayed.*

- 1** Learning from the life of David, what do you think are the actions or attitudes needed to seek out God's purposes for your life?

- 2** Before David was king, he was only a shepherd boy. Yet the Bible records that David "shepherded them [God's people] with a pure heart and guided them with his skillful hands" (Psalm 78:72). How do you think David developed this kind of heart and skill to follow God?

-  **3** If possible, describe how you have developed a heart for God in the past. What things limited or supported that development?

- 4** In the video, Pastor Evans spoke of the experiences we have in life—the good, the bad, and the ugly. Have your experiences kept you from or helped you find God's purposes? Describe some of your own good, bad, and ugly experiences.

[COACH'S KEY POINT] OUR GOD-GIVEN PASSIONS, ABILITIES, PERSONALITY, EXPERIENCES, AND OPPORTUNITIES HELP US SEE OUR PURPOSE. GOD CAN ALSO USE THE BAD EXPERIENCES IN OUR LIVES TO HELP REVEAL OUR PURPOSE.

Of all the things on earth we could spend our time seeking after, Jesus gave us guidance by saying this:

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. ³⁴ Therefore don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own (Matthew 6:33-34).

⁷ Keep asking, and it will be given to you. Keep searching, and you will find. Keep knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who searches finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹ What man among you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! (Matthew 7:7-11).

5 Reflecting on these words from Jesus, what do these passages say about God's desire to reveal His purpose for your life? When have you known that to be true, if ever?

6 What do these passages reveal about what God expects from you?

[COACH'S KEY POINT] MAKE GOD THE CENTER OF YOUR LIFE. WALK IN HIS WAYS; DO WHAT HE WANTS DONE.

7 What needs to change in your mind, heart, or will to seek out your purpose in life with a no-holds-barred attitude? Write it down and pray for God's help to change it.

8 How would you expect your life to change for the better once you discovered and lived your God-given purpose? What will that life look like?

[COACH'S KEY POINT] THE RESULTS OF MAKING GOD THE CENTER OF YOUR LIFE ARE LIVING WITH PURPOSE, FRUITFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILY, AND EXPERIENCING TRUE COMMUNITY WITHIN YOUR LOCAL CHURCH.

2-minute warning



Main takeaways:

- ✕ Just as the CNC can turn a piece of raw steel into a well-designed part, God has taken each one of us and fashioned us for a great purpose.
- ✕ God has a definite and unique purpose for you.
- ✕ God can use anything and everything to lead you to find your purpose.
- ✕ You have a responsibility to keep on seeking and asking God.

As you embark on this journey with God, you will need His help. Scripture says, “God’s wisdom is something mysterious that goes deep into the interior of his purposes. You don’t find it lying around on the surface. It’s not the latest message, but more like the oldest—what God determined as the way to bring out his best in us, long before we ever arrived on the scene” (1 Corinthians 2:7, MSG). May you aggressively seek God’s wisdom for the world’s good and for God’s glory!

PRAYER REQUESTS

If you missed this session,
you can download the DVD teaching from www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan

SESSION 01

LIVING ON
PURPOSE





What is the purpose of Joe Gibbs Racing? The JGR mission statement is posted in the lobby of the facility. It reads: “Our goal is to field for our sponsors and fans competitive race cars on a consistent basis with the goal of winning races and championships. Our expectation is that we will be able to see in our growth and success things that would have never been accomplished except by the direct intervention of God.”

Good, winning organizations do not lose sight of their purpose. They keep it in front of their faces every day. They set goals to help them stay focused and centered on their purpose. They impose deadlines to ensure progress. They equip their teams to complete small missions related to their purpose. They hire and fire CEOs and key leaders in the organization because the livelihood of the organization depends upon whether or not those people fulfill their purposes.

The next time you enter your bank or visit your favorite restaurant, look on the walls and see if you can find the company’s mission statement. If it is not posted, ask any employee if they know it by heart and understand the purpose of the company they work for.

Depending on the organization, employees may or may not know how to answer your question. But what if

they did? What if the hostess seating your party knew exactly what she was supposed to do and why she was supposed to do it? What if the waiter taking your order kept in mind the purpose of the organization while he served your food? This would change the atmosphere completely—allowing the organization to actually accomplish its mission.

This example illustrates the power of knowing, understanding, and embracing our purpose. It’s important that we know where we fit in the big picture and why we fit there. In this week’s session, Tony Evans spoke about living for God’s purposes. That could be a daunting task, considering how big God is. His kingdom transcends time, space, language, and culture. His church is worldwide. His love can be felt from the heavens. But Scripture says:

Get the latest information on GPFL events and more. // www.GamePlanForLife.com

⁵ “God’s love is meteoric, his loyalty astronomic, ⁶ His purpose titanic, his verdicts oceanic. Yet in his largeness nothing gets lost; Not a man, not a mouse, slips through the cracks” (Psalm 36:5-6, MSG).

The apostle Paul once wrote this to a local church plant:

³¹ “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for God’s glory. ³² Give no offense to the Jews or the Greeks or the church of God ...

We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose.

– the apostle Paul, Romans 8:28

You see, it doesn’t matter how big God is; He still created each one of us with a specific purpose in mind. He hasn’t forgotten about us. We won’t slip through the cracks. We can’t slip through the cracks. Once we’ve been created with a purpose or design, that purpose is embedded into our identity. That means our purpose cannot be separated from us—it has been divinely fused to our hearts.

Jesus on the Big Screen

SECRETARIAT

Watch the movie Secretariat (2010) with your friends or family. When it’s over, talk about the unique purpose every character had to personally discover. Each character had a part to play in this true and inspirational story.

¹ Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:31-32; 11:1).

Our ultimate purpose is to glorify God in all that we do. It is what we were created to do. We aren’t a corporation. We aren’t employees hired by God to live on this earth. We are more valuable than that! We are God’s creation, members of His team, the church. God wants us to tap into His purpose for our lives—and He will work in us and through us to accomplish those purposes! Not only are we fused to our purpose, but when we realize that purpose, we are also fused to God.

Jesus did everything on purpose. Several times He explained that He was only doing the will of the Father. One time Jesus just spelled it out for the crowds who were pressing Him:

⁴² “When it was day, He [Jesus] went out and made His way to a deserted place.

But the crowds were searching for Him. They came to Him and tried to keep Him from leaving them. ⁴³ But He said to them, 'I must proclaim the good news about the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because I was sent for this purpose.'" (Luke 4:42-43).

Using Pastor Evans' illustration, ask yourself these questions to help you understand the different "highways" to finding your purpose:

(1) PASSION: What am I passionate about the most? If I knew I couldn't fail, what would I attempt to do for God? What are some things that frustrate me or break my heart?

(2) ABILITIES: What do I have a natural talent for? What am I educated to do? What spiritual gifts do I possess?

(3) PERSONALITY: What is my personality type? Am I more task-oriented or people-oriented? Am I more of a fast-paced or slow-paced person?

(4) EXPERIENCE: What experiences (good or bad) have shaped my life the most? My experience with God has impacted my life in what ways?

Find Out for Yourself

- 1) Google some of your favorite companies and see how long it takes to find their mission statements. Are they living it out?
- 2) Check Wikipedia for background on the "Mission Statement."



(5) OPPORTUNITY: Realistically, what significant things have I had the chance to do? What opportunities have I taken and succeeded at? What opportunities are in front of me right now?

Here is the challenge: Find God's purpose for your life through diligent prayer, Bible reading, and wise counsel. Once you start to understand it (even if it's only bits and pieces), write it down. For example, "I exist for this purpose:

_____."
or "I believed that God created me to _____."

After you have written it down, post it somewhere you can see it every day. You could place it on the dash of your car, post it over the door in your room or office, or make it the screen saver or desktop background on your computer. Keep your purpose in front of you. Add to it as God reveals more about it. This will help you set goals for your life. This will serve as a fixed point from which you can navigate through life as you follow God.

⁸ "So don't be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, or of me His prisoner.

Instead, share in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God. ⁹ He has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began" (2 Timothy 1:8-9).

God called us out by name. He has saved us and will continue to transform us. God showed grace to us through Jesus Christ. He called us toward a holy calling according to His purpose. God has something He wants you to accomplish, and He has something He wants to accomplish through you. The degree to which you pursue your purpose is the degree to which you and God can live it out for your good and God's glory. ❏

VIDEO REVIEW



Watch the full-length interview with Tony Evans at www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan

SEE SESSION 1 VIDEO [LINK](#) ON THE WEB SITE.

GO DEEP

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR DEEPER EXPLORATION ABOUT GOD

- » The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren
- » The Kingdom Agenda by Tony Evans
- » Desiring God by John Piper

DAILY WORKOUTS

MONDAY

Before we can move forward with God, we have to let Him deal with our past.

“We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

We cannot do anything about our past, but God promises that if we will respond to Him and follow Him, He will redirect our broken past to actually work for our good. What a promise!

Right now spend some time in prayer surrendering your past to Him. This is part of discovering God’s purpose for your life. Give everything over to Him—regrets, fears, failures, mistakes, and sins—and trust Him to begin the process of discovery in you. Trust in His Word and this promise so that you can move forward with God.

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For more team info and resources visit // www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan



TUESDAY

“There is an occasion for everything, and a time for every activity under heaven: a time to give birth and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to uproot; a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to tear down and a time to build” (Ecclesiastes 3:1-3).

There is a time and a purpose for everything. What window of opportunity is staring you in the face? What is God asking you to do today that you cannot put off until tomorrow? Spend some time in prayer about it. Ask God to reveal it to you today.

NOTES

WEDNESDAY

John the Baptist understood his purpose very clearly: to preach repentance and to prepare people for the coming of Christ. But once Jesus began His public ministry, John stepped aside and pointed people directly to Christ. Later, John summed up his position concerning Christ with this simple phrase:

“He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30).

Understanding God’s purpose for your life requires humility. To what degree will you allow yourself to decrease so Jesus can increase in your life? Spend time in prayer asking God to help you develop a habit of humility.

NOTES



THURSDAY

³⁷ “He said to him, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the greatest and most important command. ³⁹ The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands” (Matthew 22:37-40).

Part of God’s general purpose for your life is to love the way God loves. Who do you need to love unconditionally today? What “relational bridges” need to be built by you for the purpose of fulfilling God’s greatest commandment?

NOTES

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FRIDAY

¹¹ “God, You are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, because You have created all things, and because of Your will they exist and were created” (Revelation 4:11).

³¹ “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for God’s glory” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Commit this verse to memory. Whatever you find yourself doing, remember to give God all the honor and glory. He created us, and we should exist for Him.

NOTES

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Check out Coach’s video devotions at // www.GamePlanForLife.com

TEAM TRAINING

SESSION 02

THE DAILY
GRIND



PREGAME



Open with prayer.

Briefly discuss last week's *Personal Training*.

Kickoff

Topic: **Vocation**



TEAM CAPTAIN // PLAY VIDEO: →

"Session 02 – The Daily Grind"



Choose the phrases below that best describe your current job situation. Explain.

>> I'm running the race.

>> I'm on the right track.

>> I'm temporarily off track.

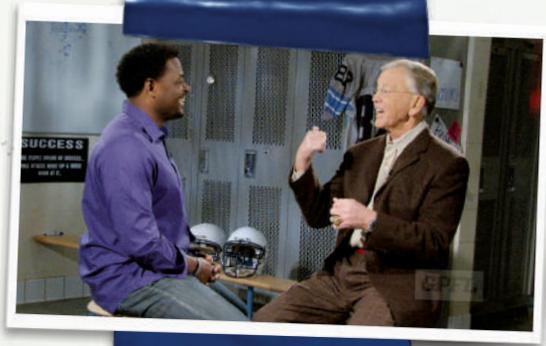
>> I'm on the wrong track.

First Half



TEAM CAPTAIN // RESUME VIDEO

Use the space provided below to take notes or jot down key thoughts that come from this video segment.



Check out the full-length interview. Os talks more about ways you can find your sweet spot at work. It's definitely worth your time!

www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan
SEE SESSION 2 VIDEO LINK ON THE WEB SITE.

Halftime



In the video, Os explains the idea of God being our "audience of One." What does living for the audience of One look like while you're at work?

Second Half



Background of key stories:

- ✕ The happenings in this story occurred before sin entered into the world.
- ✕ In the original language, the word for *work* (v. 15) is also used in various forms to describe priestly actions of temple worship (i.e., to serve God, perform duties, or worship before God).
- ✕ When God places a person in a specific location, it is for an intentional purpose and centers upon serving God.

[COACH'S KEY POINT] **HAVING A SUCCESSFUL CAREER BEGINS WITH UNDERSTANDING THAT WE LIVE AND WORK ULTIMATELY TO PLEASE GOD, OUR AUDIENCE OF ONE.**

Read aloud the following passage about our sinless beginning and then answer the discussion questions as a group.

Genesis 2:4-8,15

⁴ *These are the records of the heavens and the earth, concerning their creation at the time that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.*

⁵ *No shrub of the field had yet grown on the land, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not made it rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground.*

⁶ *But water would come out of the ground and water the entire surface of the land.*

⁷ *Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.*

⁸ *The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there He placed the man He had formed.*

¹⁵ *The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it.*



- 1** Some people associate work with the consequences of sin and the curse that followed. Yet Adam worked in the garden *before* sin entered into the world. What are the implications of this fact?

- 2** How do you respond to the notion that the purpose of a man's work has always been to provide spiritual service to God? How does this change your view of the daily grind?

[COACH'S KEY POINT] YOU ARE CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD, AND HE ASSIGNED YOU TO A UNIQUE CALLING—WHICH INCLUDES YOUR WORK.

- 3** List some practical ways the Enemy can and will discourage you at work.

- 4** How does living for the audience of One help combat the Enemy's tactics?

The following portion of this Bible study is a unique take on the life of Moses. As you view his life described in this manner, you will learn some valuable lessons concerning life and work. After going through a 40-year midlife crisis (as a shepherd), Moses found himself changing careers (becoming the leader of a nation). Moses took the job even though he apparently felt unqualified entering into this field of work at his age, with his skills, and with his work experience.

Read Moses' response to God's calling:

¹¹ ***“But Moses asked God, ‘Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’”*** (Exodus 3:11).

¹ ***“Then Moses answered, ‘What if they won’t believe me and will not obey me but say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you?’”*** (Exodus 4:1).

¹⁰ ***“But Moses replied to the LORD, ‘Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent—either in the past or recently or since You have been speaking to Your servant—because I am slow and hesitant in speech”*** (Exodus 4:10).

- 5** What is your first impression of a man who responds to God in this way?
Why do you think Moses was so reluctant to obey?

[COACH'S KEY POINT] A CENTRAL WAY TO DISCERN YOUR CALLING IS BY UNDERSTANDING HOW GOD HAS UNIQUELY GIFTED YOU. LET GOD USE YOU WHERE YOU ARE GIFTED.

Now read God's response to Moses:

¹² ***“I will certainly be with you”*** (Exodus 3:12).

¹⁴ ***“God replied to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you.’*** ¹⁵ ***God also said to Moses, ‘Say this to the Israelites: Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever; this is how I am to be remembered in every generation”*** (Exodus 3:14-15).

¹⁸ ***“They will listen to what you say”*** (Exodus 3:18a).



- 5 What characteristics are revealed about God in this conversation with Moses?

It was later written about Moses after he died that “No prophet has arisen again in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face. He was unparalleled for all the signs and wonders the LORD sent him to do” (Deuteronomy 34:10-11).

- 7 What do you think changed in Moses? How does that challenge you in your own life and career?

[COACH'S KEY POINT] YOUR OCCUPATION IS ONLY ONE PART OF YOUR CALLING. GOD HAS ALSO GIFTED YOU IN OTHER AREAS. HE DESIRES YOUR FAITH TO TRANSFORM MUCH ABOUT YOU AND EVERYONE YOU MEET.

- 8 At some point, Moses had to simply trust God at His Word and follow through with an obedient heart. How can we apply the things Moses learned to our own lives?

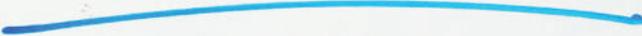
2-minute warning



Main takeaways:

- ✕ Just as the dyno operator is perfectly suited for his role, each of us must find our vocation and live out our calling for God.
- ✕ Living for the audience of One means your work can be your worship—no matter where you are.
- ✕ Becoming what God wants you to be is a process and journey. Living this truth will help you find your vocation.
- ✕ Vocational transitions can be God's way of preparing you for the future.
- ✕ Integrating your faith into everything you do gives God a chance to redeem hearts and change your culture.

Like Os talked about, integrating faith with the whole of life is the secret of how the Christian faith has been so dynamic in shaping history and changing cultures. If you are still seeking out your calling, engage God by faith. Allow Him to lead you through any transitions you might be facing. Trust that God will use you to reach your coworkers and influence the culture around you.



PRAYER REQUESTS

If you missed this session,
you can download the DVD teaching from www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan

SESSION 02

**DON'T BE
THE
GUY!**





Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived was searching hard for the meaning of life. He chronicled his journey in a book called Ecclesiastes, which is often translated “preacher.” The book has a message that we men need to hear. Solomon talks about wealth and pleasure, work and vocation—everything we have been learning about in this session.

If you have ever had one of those days, weeks, months, or years, then you can relate to King Solomon. As men, we all go through it. We want to tap into God’s plan for our lives. We desire to be used in a significant way. We want our lives to matter. We want to know that we’re making a difference. Many times, though, we feel that we’re stuck at our work. “There’s no place to go at this dead-end job,” you might say.

Solomon’s words in Ecclesiastes reveal his unique take on life. For the purpose of this article, let’s look at it like this: God might have allowed Solomon to live this life so you could learn from his mistakes and not have to! You’ve heard the saying, “Don’t be that guy.” Solomon is our example of *that* guy. If you even think you are going through a mid-life crisis, don’t be that guy. If you are struggling with your vocation and you

feel unsettled, don’t be that guy. If we see the king’s journey in light of our own pursuits to find our calling in a specific vocation, we can learn much from him and apply it to our lives without having to go down the same paths he did.

Before we get into the life lessons from Solomon, let’s take a look at what he said about gaining knowledge:

¹⁶ “I said to myself, ‘Look, I have amassed wisdom far beyond all those who were over Jerusalem before me, and my mind has thoroughly grasped wisdom and knowledge. ... ¹⁸ For with much wisdom is much sorrow; as knowledge increases, grief increases” (Ecclesiastes 1:16,18).

Down in the dumps, Solomon was expressing that we are accountable for what we know. Solomon asked for wisdom and he got it. But it was a heavy burden when he refused to apply it. Once God equips you to pursue the vocation

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to which He has called you, you must do something with it. You must walk by faith and follow God. King Solomon put it like this:

¹³ *“I applied my mind to seek and explore through wisdom all that is done under heaven. ... ¹⁴ I have seen all the things that are done under the sun and have found everything to be futile, a pursuit of the wind” (Ecclesiastes 1:13-14).*

If you analyze your situation to death, you will get depressed. Instead, act on what you know and let the rest go. Give it up to God.

No matter where we are on our vocational journey, we need to use our work for the right reasons. Let’s see how Solomon used it for the wrong reasons so we can choose the better path.

Using Work the Wrong Way

Solomon’s work became his source of pleasure, but he came up empty. Look at what happens when we seek only pleasure from our jobs:

¹ *“Go ahead, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy what is good.’ But it turned out to be futile. ² I said about laughter, ‘It is madness,’ and about pleasure, ‘What does this accomplish?’” (Ecclesiastes 2:1-2).*

Solomon’s job was to be king—so he tried to do it full on. He indulged in every way that a king could afford. But

his pursuits left him with an empty soul. It’s not that our work shouldn’t be fun and bring joy to our lives, but when we use it to find only pleasure, it will leave us wanting more.

Solomon’s work became his source of significance, but he came up empty. Look at what happens when we try to find only significance from our careers:

¹⁸ *“I hated all my work that I labored at under the sun because I must leave it to the man who comes after me. ¹⁹ And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will take over all my work that I labored at skillfully under the sun. This too is futile” (Ecclesiastes 2:18-19).*

Solomon had the resources to build an empire. But he soon realized that someone else could possibly undo his efforts for a lasting legacy. He pursued true significance through his work, but his pursuits left him empty and depressed. It’s not that our work shouldn’t be significant to us and bring us a sense of accomplishment, but we cannot use our vocation to leave that ultimate legacy—it will leave us worried and weary.

Solomon’s work became his source for acquiring possessions, but he came up empty. Look at what happens when we try to replace eternal things with material things:

⁴ “I increased my achievements. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself.

⁵ I made gardens and parks for myself and planted every kind of fruit tree in them. ... ¹¹ When I considered all that I had accomplished and what I had labored to achieve, I found everything to be futile and a pursuit of the wind. There was nothing to be gained under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 2:4-5,11).

Once again, Solomon gave more time and attention to the things on earth than to the eternal things of God. Once this reality set in, he confessed his empty heart. He was no richer or wealthier than before. It’s not that our vocation shouldn’t allow us to make a living and provide for our families. But if we use our profession simply as a means to get more and more stuff, build bigger and better barns, it will be the undoing of our lives. Men, if we depend on our jobs to meet needs they weren’t meant to meet, we will be sorely disappointed and totally unfulfilled.

There are windows of opportunity— FIND AND TAKE YOURS!

In Ecclesiastes 3, Solomon records several verses that resonate with the heart of a regretful man who sees life passing him by. There is a time and a place for everything. There are opportunities that come and go. We need

to be ready to seize those moments:

⁹ “Enjoy life with the wife you love all the days of your fleeting life, which has been given to you under the sun, all your fleeting days. For that is your portion in life and in your struggle under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 9:9).

Our fleeting life is our portion. It’s up to us to make the most of it.

Money isn’t everything—FAMILY AND FRIENDS ARE!

Men, we need to be investing in our families, friends, colleagues, and fellow Christ-followers. We need to pursue the kind of career that allows us to put our money where God says it is important. King Solomon realized a horrible thing:

⁴ “I saw that all labor and all skillful work is due to a man’s jealousy of his friend. This too is futile and a pursuit of the wind” (Ecclesiastes 4:4).

No career is worth sacrificing your most precious treasures—the relationships you have with your family

Jesus on the Big Screen

SOUL SURFER

Watch the movie Soul Surfer (2011). Think about what it means to never give up on your passion and dreams. How far would you go in pursuing your vocational aspirations?

and friends. When seriously considering a certain vocation, weigh heavily the impact it will have on your life and the lives of your immediate family.

this article the next time you get called in for an interview. Take courage that God is leading you along the right path and He will reward you for trusting Him.

“There is nothing better for a man than to eat, drink, and enjoy his work. I have seen that even this is from God’s hand, because who can eat and who can enjoy life apart from Him?”

– King Solomon, Ecclesiastes 2:24-25

Worrying about and hoarding money is senseless—ENJOY IT & USE IT FOR GOD!

Solomon learned from experience that money and wealth are major distractions:

² “God gives a man riches, wealth, and honor so that he lacks nothing of all he desires for himself, but God does not allow him to enjoy them. Instead, a stranger will enjoy them. This is futile and a sickening tragedy” (Ecclesiastes 6:2).

We can live our entire lives worried about the piles of cash we’ve hoarded in this account or that property, never actually enjoying it. We know why God gives us wealth. We studied that in Volume 1 of GPFL. Looking for a better job with a bigger paycheck isn’t necessarily bad. But if that pursuit keeps you from enjoying life, you’re on the wrong track.

Listen to these words of wisdom, men. As you seek out the career God has called you to, keep it in perspective. Read

Heed Solomon’s final words:

¹³ “When all has been heard, the conclusion of the matter is: fear God and keep His commands, because this is for all humanity” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Don’t let your vocation sidetrack you. Don’t be that guy! Find the career that you can use to bring joy to your life and glory to God. ❏

VIDEO REVIEW



Watch the full-length interview with Os Guinness at www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan.

SEE SESSION 2 VIDEO [LINK](#) ON THE WEB SITE.

GO DEEP

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR DEEPER EXPLORATION ABOUT THE BIBLE

- » The Call by Os Guinness
- » Business by the Book by Larry Burkett
- » The 9 to 5 Window by Os Hillman

DAILY WORKOUTS

MONDAY

29 “Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand in the presence of kings. He will not stand in the presence of unknown men” (Proverbs 22:29).

Today (and every day), walk by faith and follow this spiritual principle concerning a man’s work and expertise. No matter what you are doing, aim to become skilled at your work not only to gain the attention of those who could promote you, but also—and most importantly—do it to promote God.

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For more team info and resources visit // www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan



SESSION 02

TUESDAY

Solomon expressed the importance of a hard day's work like this:

¹⁰ ***“Whatever your hands find to do, do with all your strength, because there is no work, planning, knowledge, or wisdom in Sheol [the grave] where you are going”***
(Ecclesiastes 9:10).

Life is short. Many of the things we spend time doing are only beneficial on this side of heaven. Putting in a hard day's work is one of those things. Remind yourself that though the job itself is temporary, God gives you the opportunity to make an eternal impact on others through your vocation. Take advantage of that every day.

NOTES

WEDNESDAY

Read this excerpt from Genesis 39 about Joseph:

²¹ ***“But the LORD was with Joseph and extended kindness to him. He granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. ²² The warden put all the prisoners who were in the prison under Joseph's authority, and he was responsible for everything that was done there”*** (vv. 21-22).

Joseph dedicated his work to the Lord and as a result, God was always with Joseph, even when he lost his job and was thrown into prison. Spend some time in prayer and ask God to give you the faith and will to do what is right even when it could cost you a promotion or your job.

NOTES



THURSDAY

²³ *“There is profit in all hard work, but endless talk leads only to poverty”*
(Proverbs 14:23).

Do you need to make more money to pay the bills? There is profit in work, not talk. Ask God to help you find ways to be more industrious and efficient. Rely on Him to show you how to get more work done. Then set your mind and will to get it done.

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FRIDAY

¹ *“So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. ² By the seventh day, God completed His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done. ³ God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it He rested from His work of creation”* (Genesis 2:1-3).

If God rested from His work (because He had finished His creative work—not because He was tired), you need rest too. Intentionally carve out time in your schedule to rest. Remember, the Sabbath (day of rest) was created for your benefit (Mark 2:27). Write down what you are going to do to find rest this week.

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TEAM TRAINING

SESSION 03



**TURN THE
UP!**

PREGAME



Open with prayer.

Briefly discuss last week's *Personal Training*.

Kickoff

Topic: **Health**



TEAM CAPTAIN // PLAY VIDEO: →

"Session 03 - Tune Up!"



If you had to choose only one word to describe the condition of your health, what would it be?

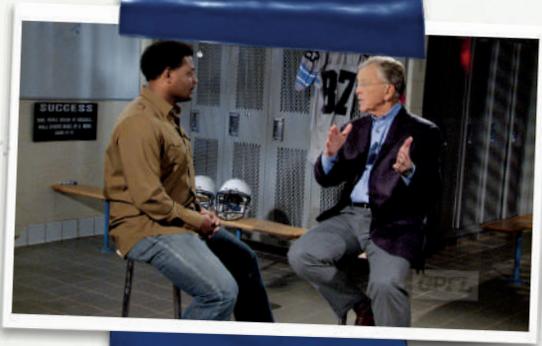
The lessons here can be immediately applied. For instance, you can choose to stop unhealthy habits right now. To what degree are you willing to start tuning up? Explain.

First Half



TEAM CAPTAIN // RESUME VIDEO

Use the space provided below to take notes or jot down key thoughts that come from this video segment.



Check out the full-length interview. Derwin & Walt talk more about fathers and what happens if you don't have one. It's powerful!

www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan
SEE SESSION 3 VIDEO LINK ON THE WEB SITE.

Halftime



Which of those four wheels of health that Dr. Larimore described in the video needs your attention the most?

Second Half



Background of key stories:

- ✕ The Bible (Old and New Testaments) speaks of health-related issues. Modern research continues to support these Scriptures.
- ✕ Passages from Paul were originally given to Greek Christians whose culture glorified the physical body.
- ✕ It's interesting that Luke, a physician, noted in his Gospel that Jesus grew up healthy in every way—physically, emotionally, relationally, and spiritually (Luke 2:52).

Begin with this passage of Scripture. Paul is writing to the Corinthian church. They were not using their bodies to glorify God. In his rebuke, Paul revealed something about us that we can apply to this topic.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

¹⁹ *Do you not know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,* ²⁰ *for you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body.*

1 Christ's blood purchased us back so we could live for God. What does this say about God's plan for your physical body on earth? How valuable do you think you are to God? Explain.

2 As Christ-followers, we do not own ourselves; God does. We are stewards of our bodies. How does this idea that God owns your physical body affect the way you look at diet, exercise, and pursuing a balanced, healthy life?

A few chapters later in the same book to the same church, Paul gave advice to the people in order to settle an argument about what was permissible to eat. In his instruction to the people, Paul revealed something that is important to our discussion about health.

³¹ ***"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for God's glory"*** (1 Corinthians 10:31).



3 To what degree do you believe these statements: "God really cares about what I eat and what I drink. He is interested in the details of my dietary life"? Explain.

⁶ ***"If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished by the words of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.***

⁷ ***But have nothing to do with irreverent and silly myths. Rather, train yourself in godliness,*** ⁸ ***for the training of the body has a limited benefit, but godliness is beneficial in every way, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come"***
(1 Timothy 4:6-8).

4 What can you do to be “nourished by the words of the faith”? How does godliness promote physical health?



5 Why does Paul say that training yourself in godliness is more valuable than physical training?

[COACH'S KEY POINT] **BEING SPIRITUALLY HEALTHY BEGINS WITH HAVING A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.**

6 Name some ways you can exercise spiritually.

7 Which of your four wheels is flattest right now: physical, emotional, relational, or spiritual? What led to the deflation?

Read this passage that Dr. Larimore spoke of in the video:

⁵¹ “Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His mother kept all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people” (Luke 2:51-52).

Jesus “increased” or continued to grow. In the original language of the Bible, this word means to literally “cut one’s way forward.”

8 Think about your own personal plan to move forward in pursuing the four wheels of health. Think about how each one affects the others. Ask God to show you one thing you can change right now to help you have four solid, healthy wheels.

• **Physically**, the one thing I can change is _____

• **Emotionally**, the one thing I can change is _____

• **Relationally**, the one thing I can change is _____

• **Spiritually**, the one thing I can change is _____

[COACH'S KEY POINT] GOD'S GAME PLAN FOR TRUE HEALTH INCLUDES THOSE THINGS THAT MAKE US WHOLE BEINGS—THE PHYSICAL, MENTAL/EMOTIONAL, RELATIONAL, AND SPIRITUAL.

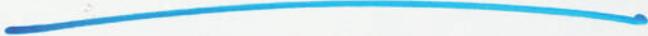
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Main takeaways:

- ✕ Just as a race car needs four well-balanced tires to run an effective race, so we must be healthy physically, emotionally, relationally, and spiritually.
- ✕ You are valuable to God—even your body.
- ✕ God cares that you develop a healthy lifestyle so you can glorify Him with all four wheels of health.
- ✕ Spiritual health promotes all the other areas of health. Overall health begins with a relationship with God.

Jesus once said, “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance” (John 10:9-10). No doubt that Jesus meant all life—including the life you are living today. The Enemy is out to destroy life, and he will use poor and unhealthy habits to do so. Stay alert and on guard. Keep pushing yourself toward God’s game plan for your life.



PRAYER REQUESTS

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If you missed this session,
you can download the DVD teaching from www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan

SESSION 03

**GOD CARES
SO**

**TAKES
CARE**

It would be absurd to say that God doesn't care about our physical health. In a time when disease was rampant and there was no such thing as Walgreens, God Himself declared to His people, "But I will bring you health and will heal you of your wounds—this is the LORD's declaration—for they call you Outcast, Zion whom no one cares about" (Jeremiah 30:17). Indeed, God cared about His people then and He cares about the health—physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual—of all who follow Him now.

In a time when hospitals, technology, and Z-Packs didn't exist, David acknowledged the very real healing power of God:

² "My soul, praise the LORD, and do not forget all His benefits. ³ He forgives all your sin; He heals all your diseases. ⁴ He redeems your life from the Pit; He crowns you with faithful love and compassion" (Psalm 103:2-4).

With nothing else to depend on, God was the people's only hope for healing.

King Solomon, in all his wisdom, saw a path that led to a long, healthy life. Proverbs 3:5-8 says:

⁵ "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; ⁶ think about Him in all your ways, and He will guide you on the right paths. ⁷ Don't consider yourself to be wise; fear the LORD and turn away from evil. ⁸ This will be healing for your body and strengthening for your bones."

Solomon echoes the same sentiment later, in Proverbs 4:20-23:

²⁰ "My son, pay attention to my words; listen closely to my sayings. ²¹ Don't lose sight of them; keep them within your heart. ²² For they are life to those who find them, and health to one's whole body. ²³ Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life."

Here the word "heart" means and encompasses one's value system. Solomon is saying that chances are, a morally good, God-fearing, wisdom-seeking, heart-guarding, evil-shunning person will live a long, healthy life.

What happens when we stray from living a godly, moral life? What are the effects of sin on our overall health? The Psalmist once said:

³ "There is no health in my body because of Your indignation; there is no strength in my bones because of my sin. ⁴ For my

sins have flooded over my head; they are a burden too heavy for me to bear” (Psalm 38:3-4).

Sin affects not only our spiritual condition but our bodies as well. Maybe that’s why James instructs us to pray for and confess our sins to each other:

¹⁵ “The prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will restore him to health; if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The urgent request of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect” (James 5:15-16).

Find Out For Yourself

JUST DO IT

Since God’s Word promises healing when we confess our sins to others, why not give it a shot? Get with a brother in Christ and reveal to him a sin you’ve been keeping inside. It may be hard at first, but notice the freedom you feel after it’s off your chest.

The words we say are powerful in the process of seeking healing and wholeness from God. If confessing our sins is simply us speaking the truth about what we have done, then encouraging words are what we should say to others:

²⁴ “Pleasant words are a honeycomb: sweet to the taste and health to the body” (Proverbs 16:24).

Dealing with Stress—Inside and Out

The exact opposite of confessing sin is keeping it hidden inside. When you think about it, confessing our sin daily is like a release valve that keeps our soul at peace with God. It keeps the stress away. It keeps us from mulling over our sin, obsessing over our failures, being consumed by our own brokenness. When David was preoccupied with his own faults, it drove him to an unhealthy state. He was worried about God’s wrath and it affected his emotional well-being. He said:

³ “When I kept silent, my bones became brittle from my groaning all day long.

⁴ For day and night Your hand was heavy on me; my strength was drained as in the summer’s heat” (Psalm 32:3-4).

¹ “LORD, do not punish me in Your anger or discipline me in Your wrath.

⁷ For my loins are full of burning pain, and there is no health in my body. ⁸ I am faint and severely crushed; I groan because of the anguish of my heart” (Psalm 38:1,7-8).

That is too much stress to carry! You want to say, “King David, enough already! Just confess your sin and be done with it!” How true that advice really is. We need to develop a consistent discipline of confessing our sins to God and to others.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

–John the Beloved, first-century Christ-follower, 1 John 1:9

If confessing helps us deal with the stress of what’s happening inside of us, then how do we deal with the stress of what’s happening all around us? Pursuing a stress-free lifestyle is really about how we choose to respond to this broken world. The brokenness inside us is sin, but the brokenness that surrounds us, well, that’s just called life.

Jesus gave us some simple advice on how to deal with life. In Matthew 6 He said not to worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. We must choose to acknowledge that we cannot control every situation around us and give up trying to live life on our own power. Not worrying about things that are out of our control will greatly reduce our stress. By faith, we need to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33)

Step Up

BE AVAILABLE

Just as confessing your sins to others allows God to heal you, others can be healed by confessing their sins to you. Consider the way you come across to others and make sure you’re someone they can come to with their sin. Serving in this role will require you to be gracious, trustworthy, and willing to forgive.

and then the other things of life that we are worrying about will be handled.

Dealing with Disease

But what if this isn’t enough? Many people live good, moral lives and pursue a stress-free lifestyle, yet sickness or disease affects them directly or indirectly. So what can we do? What should we do? Interestingly enough, Scripture is clear on this issue, too. When teaching a parable about coming judgment, Jesus Himself explained how ministering to people on earth is the same as serving Him:

¹⁰ *“Therefore, as we have opportunity, we must work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10).*

Paul’s explanation in this passage proves that there is value in caring for others. And we don’t have to look far to find someone in need.

Let’s take, for instance, someone who has Alzheimer’s. Many individuals and their families in America are struggling with the effects of this disease. It is very difficult to care for those with Alzheimer’s, as they often have extreme

physical, mental, and even emotional difficulty just performing and handling daily activities. Bathing might seem frightening. They might not remember when their last meal was—or why it's important to eat. Dressing might be

In other words, as we care for one another, we are the very instruments of God's grace. We are the ones God uses to touch those who need His grace. Think about that for one moment. People who need to experience God's grace in

“Dear friend, I pray that you may prosper in every way and be in good health physically just as you are spiritually.”

—John the Beloved, 3 John 2

disorienting and confusing. Requiring help to use the bathroom is humiliating and requires forfeiting privacy and independence. Helping an Alzheimer's patient with these tasks requires love, patience, and understanding.

It is essential for Christ-followers to have the love of Christ within them to guide and motivate them on a daily basis. Caring for those who cannot care for themselves is truly an act of love.

Following God's game plan for a healthy life doesn't just involve your health. It may require you to help care for others who are in need. This is also part of God's plan. Scripture says:

⁹ *“Be hospitable to one another without complaining. ¹⁰ Based on the gift each one has received, use it to serve others, as good managers of the varied grace of God” (1 Peter 4:9-10).*

their lives actually get to experience it through you.

Men, take care of yourselves physically, mentally, spiritually, and relationally. Take care of those in need, as well. God cares for you, and He cares for others, too. ❏

VIDEO REVIEW



Watch the full-length interview with Dr. Walt Larimore at www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan

SEE SESSION 3 VIDEO [LINK](#) ON THE WEB SITE.

GO DEEP

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR DEEPER EXPLORATION ABOUT SALVATION

- >> God's Design for the Highly Healthy Person by Dr. Walt Larimore and Traci Mullins
- >> The Wounded Heart by Dr. Dan Allender
- >> A Sacred Sorrow by Michael Card

DAILY WORKOUTS

MONDAY

⁷ *“Now the end of all things is near; therefore, be serious and disciplined for prayer.*

⁸ *Above all, maintain an intense love for each other, since love covers a multitude of sins”*
(1 Peter 4:7-8).

Making personal changes to live a healthier life can be the most challenging because it depends solely on you. Spend some time in prayer asking God for help as you truly seek to change for the better. Ask for an extra measure of discipline in your prayer life as you trust in God to help you make these changes.

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For more team info and resources visit // www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan



TUESDAY

³³ “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. ³⁴ Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matthew 6:33-34).

Don’t worry about what needs to happen tomorrow or next month. Just think about today. As you think about the five or six small changes that could help you pursue a healthier lifestyle, write them down below. Take it one day at a time—one change at a time. Once this change becomes a new healthy habit, decide to tackle another one.

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WEDNESDAY

¹ “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. ² After He had fasted 40 days and 40 nights, He was hungry. ³ Then the tempter approached Him and said, ‘If You are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.’ ⁴ But He answered, ‘It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:1-4).

Simply put, fasting helps you focus on God by replacing meals with prayer. Pray and ask God if this is something you should do. Consult your physician before going on any long-term fast. To learn more about the purpose and methods of fasting, visit Campus Crusade for Christ International’s Web site (ccci.org) and search “fasting” for several helpful articles.

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THURSDAY

³⁰ ***“A peaceful heart leads to a healthy body; jealousy is like cancer in the bones”***
(Proverbs 14:30, NLT).

Look at the next few weeks on your personal calendar. Have you carved out time for God? For yourself? What needs to be taken away so that you can find rest and experience emotional peace?

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FRIDAY

The relationships you have with others are important to God. Jesus once said:

²³ ***“So if you are offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift”*** (Matthew 5:23-24).

Take a look at your closest relationships. Ask God to reveal to you anything that needs to be mended. If anything surfaces, find some time in the next few days to reach out to those people. Ask for forgiveness and do your best to reconcile any issue with them.

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LOCAL PASTOR GETS FIT

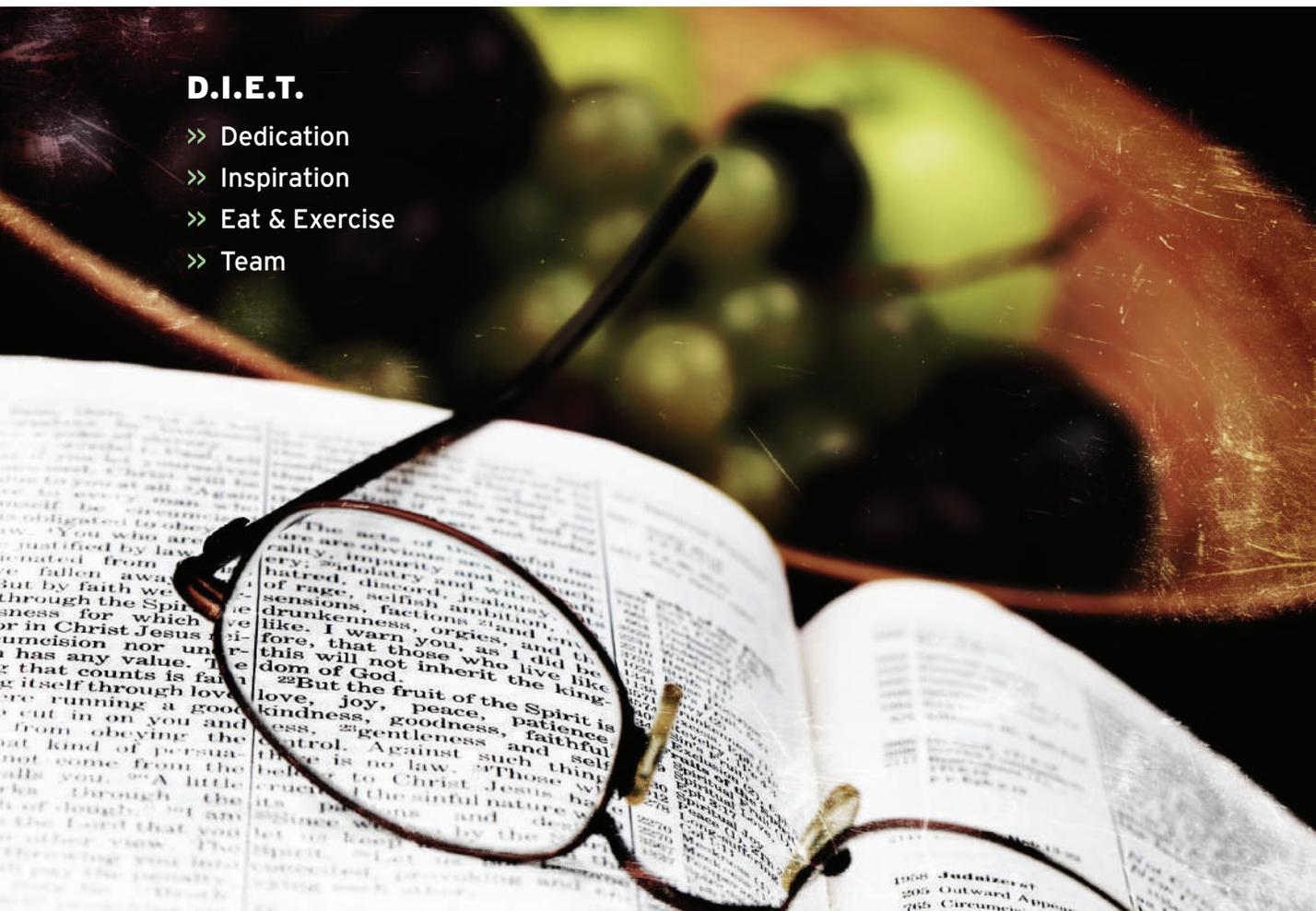


Steve Reynolds

In a world today where rock stars push for world peace and TV personalities fight to end world hunger, it is good to see a local pastor make a difference in a big way. Steve Reynolds, pastor of Capital Baptist Church in Annandale, VA, decided he was tired of being overweight. He began to preach a series at church entitled “Bod4God” that focused on his own D.I.E.T. (Dedication, Inspiration, Eat & Exercise, Team). But he didn’t just preach about it—Steve lived it and lost over 100 pounds.

D.I.E.T.

- » Dedication
- » Inspiration
- » Eat & Exercise
- » Team



“I had been overweight all of my life. I weighed over 100 pounds in the first grade. After playing football during high school and college, I vowed never to exercise again. That was one promise I kept, ballooning to 340 pounds and staying there for years.”

There are so many weight loss programs out there that it’s hard to keep count. The interesting thing about this program is that it was born out of a sermon series. The Bod4God program came later, encompassing weight-loss competitions and team-driven fitness campaigns. “I decided to develop a weight loss program to fight against obesity. ... I wanted to help others fight against being obese and to do it with God’s words.”

Steve’s weight loss program is now all over the nation. Steve has appeared on FOX News with Neil Cavuto, CNN, and CBN (Christian Broadcasting Network). He’s been labeled “the Anti-Fat Pastor.” There is even a program to fight childhood obesity in the works.

Reynolds’s church hosts the Losing to Live Weight Loss Competition on its campus. There is a commitment to this program, complete with weigh-ins and homework, too. Weigh-ins occur every Sunday. Provided are a nutritionist and a trainer to answer questions for competitors who are struggling in a specific area. The idea is to pull together as a team, encourage each other, and pray for one another.

“My eager expectation and hope is that I will not be ashamed about anything, but that now as always, with all boldness, Christ will be highly honored in my body, whether by life or by death.”
– *Philippians 1:20*

To find out more about Bod4God and how you too can get fit, visit bod4god.org and check out Steve’s book, *Bod4God: The Four Keys To Weight Loss*.

Coach’s Key Point



The Bible says that our physical bodies are temples of God and should be cared for. See a doctor regularly.

SESSION 04

DRAFTING PARTNERS



PREGAME



Open with prayer.

Briefly discuss last week's *Personal Training*.

Kickoff



Topic: **Relationships**



TEAM CAPTAIN // PLAY VIDEO:

"Session 04 – Drafting Partners"



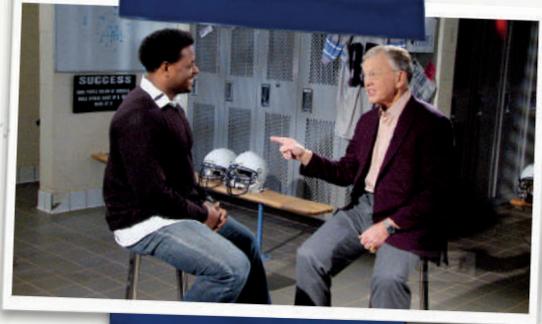
On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being strongly affected), how much are you personally affected by culture and the use of sex appeal? To what degree do you think it influences you in everyday life?

First Half



TEAM CAPTAIN // RESUME VIDEO

Use the space provided below to take notes or jot down key thoughts that come from this video segment.



Check out the full-length interview. Derwin & Don talk more about relationships and sex. It gets good!

www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan
SEE SESSION 4 VIDEO LINK ON THE WEB SITE.

Halftime



After listening to Don's advice based on Scripture, identify something God used from this video segment to most challenge you.

Second Half



Background of key stories:

Ephesians 5

- ✗ Paul begins this chapter by saying that we should all be imitating God (5:1).
- ✗ This passage deals with family relationships—husbands and wives, parents and children.
- ✗ Paul instructs wives to submit to their husbands—not in subordination, but in recognition of the husband’s role to lead in oneness.
- ✗ Husbands should love their wives sacrificially as Jesus loves the church.
- ✗ There is a spirit of mutual submission and humility that needs to be pursued by everyone (5:21).

1 Peter 3

- ✗ Submission does not mean that women are to be subordinate to men. With “submission,” Peter is referring to the function of order within the home—between a husband and a wife.
- ✗ When Sarah obeyed Abraham calling him “lord,” she was simply recognizing him as the leader of their household. (Don’t ask your wife to call you “lord”!)
- ✗ Peter was probably not teaching that women shouldn’t wear jewelry, makeup, or nice clothes. He wanted to emphasize that Christian wives should not think of all of those things as the source of genuine beauty.

From your Bible, read aloud Ephesians 5:25-31 and 1 Peter 3:1-7. Then answer the discussion questions as a group.

Ephesians 5:25-31

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word. ²⁷ He did this to present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In the same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, ³⁰ since we are members of His body. ³¹ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.

1 Peter 3:1-7

¹ In the same way, wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, even if some disobey the Christian message, they may be won over without a message by the way their wives live ² when they observe your pure, reverent lives. ³ Your beauty should not consist of outward things like elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold ornaments or fine clothes. ⁴ Instead, it should consist of what is inside the heart with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very valuable in God's eyes. ⁵ For in the past, the holy women who put their hope in God also beautified themselves in this way, submitting to their own husbands, ⁶ just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You have become her children when you do what is good and are not frightened by anything alarming.

⁷ Husbands, in the same way, live with your wives with an understanding of their weaker nature yet showing them honor as co-heirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

1 Think about the three purposes of marriage that Don talked about: to reflect, to reproduce, and to reign. How do the above passages of Scripture help you, as a husband, understand those three purposes and follow God's game plan for marriage?

2 Paul said to love your wife "just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her." What are some practical ways you can show Christlike love to your wife? What does unconditional love look like in everyday life?

[COACH'S KEY POINT] LOVE YOUR WIFE UNCONDITIONALLY; STOP FOCUSING ON HER IMPERFECTIONS AND TRYING TO CHANGE HER. ASK GOD TO GIVE YOU FAITH TO SEE YOUR WIFE'S WEAKNESSES AS A BLESSING TO YOU.

3 Why is it so hard to love unconditionally? What past experiences are hindering your ability or desire to pursue God's game plan for marriage?



4 If God can reach a husband without words from the wife (1 Peter 3:1), then God can unleash a wife's inner beauty through her husband's humble spirit. 1 Peter 3:7 says to live with your wife with understanding. What does that take? Describe the difference between being understood and trying to understand.

5 What causes you to be critical of your wife? What kind of faith does it take to stop being critical of your wife's weaknesses and to start believing that God's game plan for marriage can really work for you?



6 Read 1 Peter 3:3-4,7. In the video Don explained that in his own marriage, focusing on each others' weaknesses had become like a cancer. What are you doing—as an interested husband—to focus on the inner beauty and strength that is hidden within the spirit of your wife?

There is another passage that instructs us in God's plan for marriage. From your Bible, read aloud 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 and answer the following questions as a group.

1 Corinthians 7:1-5

¹ Now in response to the matters you wrote about: "It is good for a man not to have relations with a woman." ² But because sexual immorality is so common, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. ³ A husband should fulfill his marital responsibility to his wife, and likewise a wife to her husband. ⁴ A wife does not have the right over her own body, but her husband does. In the same way, a husband does not have the right over his own body, but his wife does. ⁵ Do not deprive one another sexually—except when you agree for a time, to devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again; otherwise, Satan may tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

[COACH'S KEY POINT] **SEXUAL INTIMACY IS A GIFT FROM GOD. ENJOY IT IN YOUR MARRIAGE.**



- 7** This passage contains one of the most practical teachings in the Bible concerning marriage and sex. But it takes a leap of faith toward God's principles and trust in your wife's intentions to sincerely follow these instructions within the bounds of your marriage. Where do you struggle in the area of self-control in particular?

- 8** Based on everything you have heard and read during this session, what needs to change in you for you to follow God's game plan for your marriage? What steps do you need to take to make these changes?

2-minute warning



Main takeaways:

- ✘ Just as the beauty of a race car is superficial without the high-powered engine within, so is your marriage without Christ as your source of strength.
- ✘ Always be aware of the Enemy's schemes. Sex sells, but you are not buying it!
- ✘ To follow God's game plan for your marriage, you need to stop focusing on your wife's weaknesses and ask God to help you see her strengths.
- ✘ It takes true humility to lead your wife. Seek to understand her first. Then, be understood.
- ✘ Loving your wife like Jesus loved the church is your priority, purpose, and the single-most important thing you can do to pursue oneness in marriage.

Men, marriage is not easy. Relationships in general are not easy. But by following God's game plan, you can find success in this important area of life. We can do this together!



PRAYER REQUESTS

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If you missed this session,
you can download the DVD teaching from www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan

PERSONAL TRAINING

SESSION 04

GREATEST COMBO EVER





Which two teammates (quarterback and wide receiver) make up the best combo in NFL history? It could be a dynasty team from decades past, or one more recent.

- Consider the Dallas Cowboys' Troy Aikman and Michael Irvin. They helped lead Dallas to three Super Bowl victories in the 90s.
- What about Joe Theismann and Art Monk of the Washington Redskins? This talented, dynamic duo helped lead the Redskins to two Super Bowl championships over four seasons from 1982-1985.

- What about the San Francisco 49ers' Joe Montana and Jerry Rice? With that west coast offense, they led the team to winning an average of 12 games per season, and they captured back-to-back Super Bowl titles in '88 and '89.
- And who can forget the sweet combo of Terry Bradshaw and Lynn Swann of the Pittsburgh Steelers? They spearheaded one of the best offenses in NFL history—winning four Super Bowls from 1974-1979.

This kind of question will never have a universally-accepted answer. The question itself is flawed, giving way to the opinions of each football enthusiast. The NFL fanatic—ready and willing to promote his favorite QB-WR combo—will build his case against anyone who has a different opinion.

What we can all agree upon is how each tandem became great in its own right. Teammates care about the well-being of one another. Whether they are practicing or playing on the field, teammates are committed to each other. After playing on the same team, they know each other's strengths and weaknesses. The beauty is when they are able to bring out the best in each other. There is chemistry between them that just works. They love to win, and they play to the same end—victory.

Husbands, ask yourselves this question: Could the same be said of you and your wife? Do you genuinely care for each other? Are you committed to each other? Do you bring out the best in each other? Are you both living for the same thing, working toward the same victorious goal?

Get the latest information on GPFL events and more. // www.GamePlanForLife.com

Well, if God has a say concerning who's the greatest combo on His team (or should be the greatest), He would undoubtedly point to the relationship that you have with your wife. This kind of dynamic duo was designed to advance God's kingdom. If a husband and wife are centered on Christ and His game plan for their lives, they have the potential to battle the Enemy's schemes and pull off the impossible. Montana and Rice won't have anything on you!

Don't Forget the Fundamentals

In the game of football, there are certain things you just cannot forget. No matter what position you play or how long you have played the game, the fundamentals stay the same. Once the fundamentals are mastered, individual positions are defined, offensive plays can be learned, and defensive schemes can be formulated.

Plan Your Work

AND WORK YOUR PLAN

Carve out some time ASAP to read the article on pages 76-77. When you're done, grab a notepad and a pencil and map out specific ways you will pursue your wife daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly. After planning your work, work your plan! You will be amazed at how your marriage environment changes when you take even the smallest steps to show godly love to your wife.

In marriage, the same principle applies. There is a certain lifestyle of love that needs to be weaved into everyday life. God's ground rules for marriage are found in 1 Corinthians 13. It defines God-centered love like this:

⁴ "Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not conceited, ⁵ does not act improperly, is not selfish, is not provoked, and does not keep a record of wrongs. ⁶ Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never ends" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a).

Notice the ground-breaking atmosphere this kind of love enables you to create for you and your wife:

- Because it is patient, love gives time for you both to change for the better.
- Because it is not provoked, love allows your hearts to remain free from the chains of anger and bitterness.
- Because it bears all things, love keeps each of you from trashing each other in the presence of your friends.
- Because it believes all things, love leads you to choose to believe the best about each other—paving the way for a deeper level of trust.
- Because it endures all things, love leads you both to never quit on each other.

These are the fundamentals that you can never forget or abandon. This kind of godly love ensures there's going to be a chance for a future with you and your wife. Men, the challenge here is twofold: (1) love your wife with this kind of love, and (2) create the kind of atmosphere in your home where your wife will have the freedom to choose to love you back in the same way. There can be no coercion here. The decision to love your wife is a faith step toward God.

Practice, Practice, Practice!

Great on-field combos practice on a daily basis. The WR runs the route over and over again. The QB throws the ball until each pass is delivered with accuracy and precision. Together, they study defensive schemes so that when the ball is snapped, each player knows what the other is thinking. Both players are on the same page, and they give it their all for the love of the game.

One of the "plays" from God's Word shows how a husband and wife should love by the way they talk to each other. If you don't offer a blessing to your wife, you're missing a powerful reactive force of love. Even in the face of an insult or verbal slight, God's Playbook records several instructions for you to follow.

First, don't have a contentious spirit—one that picks a fight or bullies:

²¹ *"As charcoal for embers and wood for fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife" (Proverbs 26:21).*

Scripture is very clear about the powerful and destructive force our tongues can be. What we say can leave lifelong scars:

⁵ *"So too, though the tongue is a small part of the body, it boasts great things. Consider how large a forest a small fire ignites. ⁶ And the tongue is a fire. The tongue, a world of unrighteousness, is placed among the parts of our bodies. It pollutes the whole body, sets the course of life on fire, and is set on fire by hell.*

⁷ *Every sea creature, reptile, bird, or animal is tamed and has been tamed by man, ⁸ but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ We praise our Lord and Father with it, and we curse men who are made in God's likeness with it. ¹⁰ Praising and cursing come out of the same mouth. My brothers, these things should not be this way" (James 3:5-10).*

Jesus on the Big Screen

FIREPROOF

Watch the movie *Fireproof* (2008) and put yourself in the shoes of Caleb, the main character. Take note of the good and bad decisions he made. Discuss the things that stood out to you with your wife.

Controlling the tongue can be extremely difficult, but that's why God outlined the pattern for you to mimic. The pattern is there to follow, but you must choose to practice it over and over.

⁸ “Now finally, all of you should be like-minded and sympathetic, should love believers, and be compassionate and humble, ⁹ not paying back evil for evil or insult for insult but, on the contrary, giving a blessing, since you were called for this, so that you can inherit a blessing.

¹⁰ For the one who wants to love life and to see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit, ¹¹ and he must turn away from evil and do what is good. He must seek peace and pursue it, ¹² because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are open to their request. But the face of the Lord is against those who do what is evil” (1 Peter 3:8-12).

If we return insult with insult, we strain our relationships. But when we return insult with blessing, we strengthen them. First, when we give a blessing, we inherit a blessing. Second, we gain better days and a fuller life when we speak blessings to our mates. Third, we gain the ear of God, our Head Coach. And finally, when we bless our wife, God will take care of the situation.

Take God's game plan to your wife. Choose to break the cycle of insult for insult and humbly ask her to join you in this endeavor. Practice what's in the Playbook so you and your wife can be the combo God intended for you to be. ❏

VIDEO REVIEW



Watch the full-length interview with Don Meredith at www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan

SEE SESSION 4 VIDEO [LINK](#) ON THE WEB SITE.

GO DEEP

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR DEEPER EXPLORATION ABOUT CREATION

- » Two Becoming One by Don and Sally Meredith
- » The Love Dare by Stephen Kendrick and Alex Kendrick
- » The 5 Sex Needs of Men and Women by Dr. Gary and Barbara Rosberg

DAILY WORKOUTS

MONDAY

The Bible says this about a godly wife:

28 “Her sons rise up and call her blessed. Her husband also praises her: 29 ‘Many women are capable, but you surpass them all!’ 30 Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the LORD will be praised” (Proverbs 31:28-30).

Here are a few questions to think about after reading that Scripture:

1. When was the last time you publicly praised your wife?
2. How are you teaching your children to grow up and do the same?
3. What are the things your wife excels at? Find a sincere way to champion those things for her and become her biggest cheerleader.

(If you are currently single, think about this passage now and bank it for the future. Your future wife will love you for it!)

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For more team info and resources visit // www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan



SESSION 04

TUESDAY

²⁵ *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her”* (Ephesians 5:25).

Marriage is a tool God will use to make you like Christ. What qualities do you need to learn so you can love your wife (or future wife) like Christ loves the church? Spend some time in prayer asking God to help you develop these more consistently.

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WEDNESDAY

³³ *“To sum up, each one of you is to love his wife as himself, and the wife is to respect her husband”* (Ephesians 5:33).

The other side of loving your wife is for her to respect you. It’s not that you need to earn the respect that she should show, but at the end of the day, it’s about you leading your wife to the place she needs to be, too.

For you, it is easier to love what is lovable. For her, it is easier to respect what is respectable. Identify ways you can improve yourself and tell your wife that you want to take steps to become the best man you can be for her.

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THURSDAY

²⁶ *“She opens her mouth with wisdom and loving instruction is on her tongue. ²⁷ She watches over the activities of her household and is never idle”* (Proverbs 31:26-27).

When you see your wife working hard, let her know you appreciate her. Show your appreciation for the good she is bringing to your family by planning a date night for the two of you or a night where she can go out and do something she enjoys. Also, listen to her loving wisdom. God wants to use your wife in your life, marriage, and job. Are you listening?

NOTES

FRIDAY

King Solomon recorded some steamy stuff in Song of Solomon. Look at these verses from chapter 4:

¹ *“How beautiful you are, my darling. How very beautiful! Behind your veil, your eyes are doves.”*

⁷ *“You are absolutely beautiful, my darling, with no imperfection in you.”*

⁹ *“You have captured my heart, my sister, my bride. You have captured my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace.”*

Romance can come in various forms—meaningful conversations, thoughtful gifts, sexual encounters. Communicating in such ways often can help bridge the gap between couples. Before the weekend is over, take some time to ask your wife what kind of romantic gestures she prefers. And then act on them!

NOTES

MEN, LISTEN UP!

What is your plan for pursuing your wife? How are you going to continually keep her heart close to you? As men, we chase many things—dreams, goals, work, pleasure. We need to make sure we're pursuing our wives with more passion than those other things. That's why it's important that we set measurable goals in this important area of our lives.



It has been suggested that you and your wife build into your personal calendars things that should occur daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly. For instance, you should pray together daily, and go to church together weekly. Maybe you have gotten into the habit of dating each other monthly. But what should you do that is meaningful every year?

What if you planned some time at least once a year to get away (even if it's just for one night) and really listen to your wife? Would you know what to say to her or ask her?

Our friends at All-Pro Dad suggest that you set aside a time at least every year to retreat with your wife and ask the 10 questions below. Obviously, this isn't the only time you should listen to your wife. The idea is to take some extended quality time to continue to build a solid dialogue—to communicate with your wife and listen to her heart. Here are the questions:

- 1** What do you think is going right in our relationship?
- 2** Where would you like our relationship to be this time next year?
- 3** Will you please marry me, all over again?
- 4** I'd love to hear about your dreams for the future.

- 5** Is there anywhere you'd like to visit this coming year?
- 6** Do you think we're doing OK financially?
- 7** How are you doing health-wise?
- 8** If you could change one thing about our priorities as a family, what would it be?
- 9** Is there anything I devote regular time to that you see as a possible threat to our family/our relationship?
- 10** Are you happy?¹

Good questions serve as great conversation starters. Remember, you are interested in her. But once you start talking, she's going to ask stuff too. The deeper you know each other, the easier it is to fall in love all over again.

Coach's Key Point



Your wife is the perfect provision from God for you—there is no better mate. Trust God's plan.

For more free fatherhood tips, tools and resources, go to www.AllProDad.com.

1. "10 Questions Every Husband Should Ask His Wife Every Year," *AllProDad* [online], [cited 20 Jan. 2011]. Available on the Internet: www.AllProDad.com. Reprinted with permission. © 2011 Family First. All Rights Reserved. Family First and All Pro Dad are registered trademarks.

TEAM TRAINING

SESSION 05



**THE
TROPHY CASE**

PREGAME



Open with prayer.

Briefly discuss last week's *Personal Training*.

Kickoff

Topic: **Heaven**



TEAM CAPTAIN // PLAY VIDEO: "Session 05 – The Trophy Case"



Describe your favorite championship game or moment in sports history. It could be from your perspective as a player, a coach, or a spectator. Explain why it means so much to you.

Second Half



Background of key stories:

- ✗ John (the youngest of Jesus' 12 disciples) was in exile on the island of Patmos when he wrote Revelation.
- ✗ Apocalyptic literature can sometimes be mysterious, but there is still much that we can easily understand.
- ✗ These verses about heaven are clear and revealing, not unclear or concealing.
- ✗ If we let Scripture guide our imagination and we still get it wrong, God won't be mad.

[COACH'S KEY POINT] HEAVEN WILL NOT BE BORING. WE WILL NOT BE SITTING AROUND STRUMMING HARPS. HEAVEN IS A PLACE WE SHOULD LOOK FORWARD TO AND BE EXCITED ABOUT.

Read aloud Revelation 21:1-4 and answer the discussion questions as a group.

Revelation 21:1-4

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea no longer existed. ² I also saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.

³ Then I heard a loud voice from the throne:

“Look! God’s dwelling is with humanity,
and He will live with them.

They will be His people,
and God Himself will be with them
and be their God.

⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.
Death will no longer exist;
grief, crying, and pain will exist no longer,
because the previous things have passed away.”

- 1** Like a driver finishing a race or a football player watching the game clock tick down to 0:00, there is anticipation that the end of the world is near. Thinking ahead to the end of your life's journey, what does this passage of Scripture do for you personally?

- 2** How should the truth about heaven affect the way you live your life? How does it affect your view of your physical body?

[COACH'S KEY POINT] WE WILL KEEP OUR PHYSICAL BODIES IN HEAVEN. THE DECAYED OR WORN-OUT ONES WE HAVE NOW WILL BE RESTORED AND MADE EVEN BETTER.



- 3** When this new heaven and earth are ready for us, someone will shout, "Look! God's dwelling is with humanity!" Why do you think this is significant?

[COACH'S KEY POINT] HEAVEN IS A REAL PLACE AND GOD WILL DWELL AMONG US.

John records another glorious vision of future life with King Jesus:

¹ Then he showed me the river of living water, sparkling like crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the broad street of the city. The tree of life was on both sides of the river, bearing 12 kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree are for healing the nations, ³ and there will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His slaves will serve Him. ⁴ They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ Night will no longer exist, and people will not need lamplight or sunlight, because the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever (Revelation 22:1-5).

- 4** In Genesis, Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat from the tree of life. In Revelation 2:7, the saints are promised “the right to eat from the tree of life.” If there will no longer be a curse, what do you think John is trying to communicate to us about life in heaven?



- 5** This passage reveals that Jesus (the Lamb) will be in the city, and that we will see His face. What is the one thing about heaven that piques your interest the most, if not that?

Looking at God’s plan for redemption, Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:9: “What eye did not see and ear did not hear, and what never entered the human mind—God prepared this for those who love Him.” With these words, quoted from Isaiah 64:4, Paul was communicating that no one would have ever thought of this because it came from God.

Let’s apply Paul’s words to how we think about heaven. It doesn’t mean that heaven is incomprehensible—we see a clear picture of it in Revelation. It just means that whatever is left to our imagination is limited. God’s plans go infinitely beyond our wisdom and imagination.

- 6** Imagine how incredible God must be if His presence alone can illuminate heaven. Scripture says, “Night will no longer exist” (Revelation 22:5). Describe to your group what you see in your mind’s eye when you imagine heaven.

[COACH'S KEY POINT] **WE WILL SEE FRIENDS AND FAMILY IN HEAVEN.**

- 7** What friends or family members are you excited to see again in heaven? Describe how you’ll feel when you first see them.
- 8** Based on Randy’s video teaching, we can expect to have friends and family, passion and purpose, relationships and responsibilities, and even new bodies in heaven. With that in mind, what kinds of things do you see yourself doing there while you serve God?

2-minute warning



Main takeaways:

- ✘ Just as we are rewarded in life for a job well done, heaven is a place full of trophies for those who have followed God's game plan for life.
- ✘ Heaven is a real place where God will dwell with us.
- ✘ The promise of God's presence in heaven should affect how we live our lives here and now.
- ✘ Because heaven is God's idea, it's going to be more amazing than we can even start to imagine.

The author of Hebrews said it best:

¹ Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, ² keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that lay before Him endured a cross and despised the shamed and has sat down at the right hand of God's throne (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Heaven is a real place where saints have gone to live with their Champion. They surround us now as if they were in a large stadium, cheering us on to finish strong. The key is to keep our focus on Jesus and set our minds on eternal things. The championship celebration awaits!

PRAYER REQUESTS

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If you missed this session,
you can download the DVD teaching from www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan

PERSONAL TRAINING

SESSION 05



**CATCHING A
GLIMPSE**



If your best friend told you he had an out-of-body experience and that he saw heaven, what would you think? And what if after he saw heaven, he said something like, “God told me I couldn’t say anything about it.” It would be hard to believe, right? You would want to know the details of what he saw. You would ask for some kind of proof. It would be very hard not to be skeptical.

What if the only proof you saw was a changed life—a life that was turned upside-down for God? Would you believe your friend then? What if he wasn’t afraid to die anymore—as if this life was holding him back from experiencing true life? Would it be easier to believe him then? It makes you wonder what it would take for you to believe that heaven truly exists in the same way.

In 2009, LifeWay Research conducted a study on what American young adults (“Millennials”) believe about heaven and the afterlife. Here’s what they found:

- 1/3 of respondents said, “no one really knows what will happen after we die.”
- 7 out of 10 believe that heaven exists; only 6 out of 10 believe hell exists.
- 48% believe they will go to heaven.
- Of that 48%, 26% believe it is “because they have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior”; 16% say it is because

they have tried their best to be a good person; and 4% say it’s because “God loves all people and will not let any of them perish.”¹

Where do you fall in these statistics? What do you believe?

The apostle Paul caught a glimpse of heaven with his own eyes. He was taken to a real place he called “the third heaven” (2 Corinthians 12:2). It was at the beginning of his journey as a Christ-follower, and he didn’t know if he was physically there or experiencing this apart from his body. But it was real to him. It changed his life forever. It convinced him of serious realities like “dying is gain” (Philippians 1:21).

If we believe God and the revelation of things to come, then we have to believe that heaven is a REAL place. And if it is a real place, then there are some things of which we can be certain. The

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What Many Assume About Heaven	What the Bible Says About Heaven
Non-Earth	New Earth
Unfamiliar	New, with old improved
Disembodied	Embodied
Foreign (won't be like the home we know; utterly different)	Home (all the comforts of home, with many innovations)
Leaving behind what we love	Retaining the good; finding the best ahead
No time and space	Time and space
Static, unchanging	Dynamic, developing
No art, culture, or progress	Art, culture, and progress
Neither old (like Eden) nor new and earthlike; just unknown and unhuman	Both old and new, familiar and innovative; nostalgia and adventure
Nothing to do but float on clouds, strum harps; old life and relationships forgotten	God to worship and serve; friends to enjoy; universe to rule; purposeful work to do
Instant and complete knowledge; no curiosity, learning, or discovery	An eternity of exciting learning and discovery of God and His creation
Boring	Fascinating
Unhuman; no individuality; desires lost	Fully human individuals; desires fulfilled
Absence of the terrible (but presence of little we desire)	Presence of the wonderful (everything we desire and nothing we don't)
Story over	Story continuing forever

following five REAL aspects of heaven should help us believe God's Word and stay centered on His reality.

Real Paradise

Paul had only enough words to describe it like this:

² *"I know a man in Christ who was caught up into the third heaven 14 years ago. Whether he was in the body or out of the body, I don't know, God knows.*
³ *I know that this man—whether in the body or out of the body I don't know, God knows—*
⁴ *was caught up into paradise. He heard inexpressible words, which a man is not allowed to speak"* (2 Corinthians 12:2-4).

Whatever Paul experienced, God would not allow him to tell us. It was that beautiful. Keep this in mind as you imagine what God has in store for you.

Real Perspective

Catching just a small glimpse of heaven through Scripture will do us good. Paul's experience made him believe that:

Find Out for Yourself

Check Amazon's product description of *90 Minutes in Heaven*, the amazing story of Baptist pastor Don Piper. Do the same for Todd Burpo's *Heaven is for Real* for another personal story about heaven. What do you think about encounters like these?

¹⁷ *"Our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory"* (2 Corinthians 4:17)

and also:

¹⁸ *"The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us"* (Romans 8:18).

Jesus called heaven "paradise." He spoke words of hope and comfort to the thief hanging on the cross:

⁴³ *"I assure you: Today you will be with Me in paradise"* (Luke 23:43).

Once you see something that beautiful, like Paul did, and you know that place is waiting for you when you die, it makes the broken moments of life seem a little more bearable. Keep the thought of heaven in your mind and let God change your perspective on life.

Real Home

Jesus said He would come back for us some day. Before He was crucified on the cross, Jesus reassured His disciples:

¹ *"Your heart must not be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me.*
² *In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if not, I would have told you. I am going away to prepare a place for you.*
³ *If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and receive you to Myself, so that where I am you may be also"* (John 14:1-3).

Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us where God the Father dwells, and He is coming back because we belong there with Him:

¹⁹ *“Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame. They are focused on earthly things, ²⁰ but our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:19-20).*

We can live above the circumstances of this world because our future, permanent residence is with God.

Real Hope

Hoping isn’t just wishful thinking. It’s based on what’s real. Peter wrote that we have a living hope found in heaven:

³ *“Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to His great mercy, He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ⁴ and into an inheritance that is imperishable, uncorrupted, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. ⁵ You are being protected*

by God’s power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:3-5).

We can live our lives knowing that Christ has secured for us an inheritance that can never be corrupted or taken away. Our hope is in what heaven can and will bring to us.

Real Change

Paul reveals that we get to experience the completion of what God began in us. He made us a new creation when we believed in His Son, Jesus Christ. Our physical bodies will eventually experience what our minds, hearts, and spirits experienced the day we believed:

²¹ *“He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of His glorious body, by the power that enables Him to subject everything to Himself” (Philippians 3:21).*

We get to exchange our broken, used, and abused bodies for new ones that will be like Jesus Christ.

It’s no wonder that we are fascinated by the concept of the afterlife. We just need to decide who or what shapes our views and beliefs about it. Movies, songs, and books—they all have the ability to impact our beliefs. The challenge, then, is to remain alert and aware of what the

Coach’s Key Point



To get into heaven, you must have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Three Eras of Earth and Mankind

PAST Genesis 1–2	PRESENT Genesis 3–Revelation 20	FUTURE Revelation 21–22
Original mankind	Fallen mankind; some believe and are transformed	Resurrected mankind
Original Earth	Fallen Earth, with glimmers of original	New (resurrected) Earth
God delegates Earth's reign to innocent mankind	Disputed reign with God, Satan, and fallen mankind	God delegates Earth's reign to righteous mankind
Mankind given dominion, with intended stewardship of Earth	Mankind's dominion thwarted, frustrated, and twisted	Mankind's dominion fulfilled; redeemed stewardship of Earth
God in Heaven, visiting Earth (walking in Eden)	God in Heaven, cut off from fallen mankind (indwells believers by His Spirit)	God's face gloriously seen, as He dwells with mankind on New Earth
No curse	Sin and the curse	No more curse
No shame	Shame	No shame or potential for shame
Tree of life in Eden (mankind can eat)	Tree of life in Paradise (mankind cut off from)	Tree of life in New Jerusalem (mankind can eat again)
River of life in Eden	Rivers and nature, with glimmers of past and future	River of life flows from God's throne in city
No death	Death permeates all	Death forever removed
Mankind created from the earth	Mankind dies, returns to the earth; new life to some	Mankind resurrected from the earth to live on New Earth
First Adam reigns	First Adam falls; mankind reigns corruptly, with glimpses of good; second Adam comes	Last Adam reigns as God-man, with mankind as co-heirs and delegated kings
Serpent, Satan, on Earth	Satan judged but still present on Earth	Satan forever removed from Earth, thrown into eternal fire
Creation and mankind perfect	Creation and mankind tainted by sin	Creation and mankind restored to perfection
Mankind names, tends, rules the animals	Animals and mankind hurt each other and suffer	Animals and mankind live in complete harmony
Ground fertile, vegetation lush	Ground cursed, vegetations diseased	Ground fertile, vegetation thrives
Abundant food and water	Hunger and thirst, toil for food and water	Abundant food and water
Restfulness, satisfaction in labor	Restlessness, toil in labor	Enhanced restfulness, joy in labor
Paradise	Paradise lost, sought; glimmers seen, foretastes	Paradise regained and magnified
Mankind in ideal place	Mankind banished; struggles and wanders in fallen place(s)	Man restored to ideal place, but much improved
Mankind able either to sin or not to sin	Mankind enslaved to sin, empowered not to sin	Mankind unable to sin, permanently empowered
One marriage (Adam and Eve)	Many marriages (designed to reflect Christ and church)	One marriage (Christ and church)
Beginning of human culture	Contamination and advancement of culture	Purification and eternal expansion of culture
Mankind learns, creates, in purity	Mankind learns, creates, in impurity (Cain, Babel)	Mankind learns, creates, in wisdom and purity
God's plan for mankind and Earth revealed	God's plan delayed and enriched	God's plan for mankind and Earth realized

culture is saying so we don't get swept away with some popular (yet untrue) concept or teaching. Cultures change but God's Word is secure. It will never change. Pay attention to the messages that our culture is pushing, and see how they compare to what the Bible teaches about heaven. Don't settle for anything other than the truth.

Real Victory

The word "heaven" is used more times in Revelation than in any other New Testament book. Throughout the book, John wrote about the struggle between good and evil. It is from heaven that we see God reigning and defeating evil and the Enemy:

¹"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven with the key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand. ² He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for 1,000 years. ³ He threw him into the abyss, closed it, and put a seal on it so that he would no longer deceive the nations until the 1,000 years were completed. After that, he must be released for a short time" (Revelation 20:1-3).

Later it states that:

⁹ "Then fire came down from heaven and consumed them. ¹⁰ The Devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and

sulfur where the beast and the false prophet are, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Revelation 20:9b-10).

1 Corinthians 15 puts it like this:

²⁴ Then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father, when He abolishes all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign until He puts all His enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be abolished is death. ²⁷ For God has put everything under His feet.

We have the promise that God will strike the final blow to the Enemy, and he will be defeated. ❏

1. Rob Phillips, "LifeWay Research finds American 'Millennials' are spiritually diverse," *LifeWay* [online] 2009, [cited 3 Mar. 2011]. Available on the Internet: www.lifeway.com.

VIDEO REVIEW



Watch the full-length interview with Randy Alcorn at www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan

SEE SESSION 5 VIDEO [LINK](#) ON THE WEB SITE.

GO DEEP

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR DEEPER EXPLORATION ABOUT SALVATION

- » Heaven by Randy Alcorn
- » Heaven: Your Real Home by Joni Eareckson Tada
- » One Minute after You Die by Erwin W. Lutzer

DAILY WORKOUTS

MONDAY

¹¹ *“He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also put eternity in their hearts”* (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

Don't forget about eternity. You, your friends, family, acquaintances, and coworkers all have the impression of eternity in their own hearts even if they haven't realized it yet. God has created us as eternal beings. Ask Him to help you live your life with this in mind. Guaranteed future victory makes present defeat bearable.

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For more team info and resources visit // www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan



TUESDAY

¹ “Your heart must not be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if not, I would have told you. I am going away to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and receive you to Myself, so that where I am you may be also” (John 14:1-3).

Jesus is preparing a place for you up there. What are you doing in the meantime for Him down here?

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WEDNESDAY

Paul, speaking about his own experience, wrote:

¹ “Boasting is necessary. It is not profitable, but I will move on to visions and revelations of the Lord. ² I know a man in Christ who was caught up into the third heaven 14 years ago. Whether he was in the body or out of the body, I don’t know, God knows. ³ I know that this man ... ⁴ was caught up into paradise. He heard inexpressible words, which a man is not allowed to speak” (2 Corinthians 12:1-4).

Have you ever thought about asking God to give you a glimpse of heaven? If He decided to do it, it probably wouldn’t happen just like it did with Paul. What do you think God could show you that would strengthen your faith and increase your hope?

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THURSDAY

¹³ *“The LORD looks down from heaven; He observes everyone”* (Psalm 33:13).

¹⁸ *“The LORD is near all who call out to Him, all who call out to Him with integrity”* (Psalm 145:18).

The God who looks down on everyone from heaven is the same God who lives in you. Trust in Him to guide your steps. Heaven may seem far away, but God is near!

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FRIDAY

The Psalmist wrote:

¹⁶ *“Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in Your book and planned before a single one of them began”* (Psalm 139:16).

Essentially, God knows everything about you. When you were going to be born, and when you are going to die. As a Christ-follower, you will spend forever with God in heaven. But until then, what do you think God wants you to do for Him?

Over the weekend, spend some time in prayer and think about creating your own God-centered bucket list. This list should not be comprised of the things you want to do, but the things—big or small—you think God wants you to do before you die.

NOTES

TEAM TRAINING

SESSION 06



**STILL
BATTLING**

PREGAME



Open with prayer.

Briefly discuss last week's *Personal Training*.

Kickoff

Topic: **Life**



As you think through your own life up to this point, what would you list as some of the highlights?



Second Half



[Part 1] God Is the Center of My Life

Paul's writings in Galatians 1 give us a great example of how to highlight what's real in our lives. More than likely, Galatians was the first of Paul's letters, so it's important to see what was on his mind early in his ministry. Read Galatians 1:1-12. Note every time that Paul distinguishes between "man" and "God."

Galatians 1:1-2,6-12

¹ Paul, an apostle—not from men or by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead—² and all the brothers who are with me: ...

⁶ I am amazed that you are so quickly turning away from Him who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—⁷ not that there is another gospel, but there are some who are troubling you and want to change the good news about the Messiah. ⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel other than what we have preached to you, a curse be on him! ⁹ As we have said before, I now say again: If anyone preaches to you a gospel contrary to what you received, a curse be on him! ¹⁰ For am I now trying to win the favor of people, or God? Or am I striving to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a slave of Christ.

¹¹ Now I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel preached by me is not based on human thought. ¹² For I did not receive it from a human source and I was not taught it, but it came by a revelation from Jesus Christ.

- Paul received his calling from God, not man (v. 1).
- Paul warned them about believing a gospel not from God, but from man (vv. 6-9).
- Paul was living his life to please God, not man (v. 10).
- Paul's gospel message came from God, not man (v. 12).

This Scripture passage was Paul's first attempt to set the record straight. He was a changed man, but some disciples were leery of Paul's conversion. Some did not trust him. Still others thought his conversion was less important because he wasn't one of the original 12 disciples. The point here is to note the spirit with which Paul communicated. He was clear and concise. He wanted to make an obvious distinction between what he could do and what God did through him.

When you talk about your life with God, you too need to be clear and concise. Don't mince words. There is no room for nuance here. God has done an amazing thing in your life and that story can change people's lives!

Practice

Use the space below to write down a few definitive statements you would like to share with others about your new life in Christ. They might begin like this:

- I am a different person because . . .
- God has been teaching me so much about life ever since . . .
- My life is totally different since . . .
- I am a Christian because . . .



[Part 2] HIGHLIGHT My Life Before I Met Christ

Read Galatians 1:13-14. Note how Paul admits and openly talks about his life before he met Jesus Christ:

¹³ For you have heard about my former way of life in Judaism: I persecuted God's church to an extreme degree and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴ I advanced in Judaism beyond many contemporaries among my people, because I was extremely zealous for the traditions of my ancestors (Galatians 1:13-14).

- Paul's life was going against God's plan (v. 13).
- Paul was caught up in religion (v. 14).

Practice

Use the space below to write down a few statements that describe your life before you responded to the gospel. Describe your thoughts, feelings, emotions, hurts, sinful habits, etc. These statements might begin like this:

- If you had known me before I became a Christian, . . .

- Before I knew God, I was caught up in . . .
- My old way of living looked like . . .
- Before I had God in my life, I was consumed with . . .



[Part 3] HIGHLIGHT How I Met Christ

Read Galatians 1:15-16. Note how Paul acknowledges God's activity in his life. He is introduced to the Person of Jesus Christ, not a church, religion, or belief system:

¹⁵ But when God, who from my birth set me apart and called me by His grace, was pleased ¹⁶ to reveal His Son in me, so that I could preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone (Galatians 1:15-16).

- Paul acknowledged God's grace in his life (v. 15).
- Paul admitted he heard and believed God's call on his life (v. 15).
- Paul saw and received God's Son Jesus in his life (v. 16).

Practice

Use the space below to write down a few statements that describe your life when you understood and accepted the gospel. Highlight God's love, mercy, grace, or patience. Reveal what you experienced, how old you were, or the circumstances in your life. These statements might begin like this:

- The first time I really understood the love of God was when . . .
- I decided to make Jesus the Lord (Boss, Head Coach, etc.) of my life because . . .

- God finally got through to me when . . .
- I know God saved me because I . . .



[Part 4] HIGHLIGHT My Life Since Meeting Christ

Read Galatians 1:17-24. Note how Paul shares how his life has changed because of a personal encounter with Jesus Christ:

¹⁷ I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who had become apostles before me; instead I went to Arabia and came back to Damascus. ¹⁸ Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to get to know Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. ¹⁹ But I didn't see any of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. ²⁰ Now I am not lying in what I write to you. God is my witness. ²¹ Afterward, I went to the regions of Syria and Cilicia. ²² I remained personally unknown to the Judean churches in Christ; ²³ they simply kept hearing: "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith he once tried to destroy." ²⁴ And they glorified God because of me (Galatians 1:17-24).

- Paul relied on God to lead him in life (v. 17-21).
- Paul's reputation changed in the churches and community (v. 23).
- Paul's life influenced others for God's glory (v. 24).

Practice

Use the space below to write down a few statements that describe your life after you responded to the gospel. Highlight what God has taught you about Him, yourself, or life. Share how God has led you away from your old life because you turned toward Him. These statements might begin like this:

- Since I turned to God, I have . . .
- Now that God is leading, I just want my life to . . .

Continue to think about and refine your personal HIGHLIGHT REEL. Make it uniquely your own. Ask God to give you the opportunity to share it with others.

2-minute warning



TEAM CAPTAIN // PLAY VIDEO:

"Joe's Closing Challenge"



Main takeaways:

- ✕ Find a good Bible-believing church where you can belong.
- ✕ Read your Bible every day.
- ✕ Talk to God every day. These are just conversations with your heavenly Father and are a part of any healthy relationship.
- ✕ Talk to someone about God every day. Sometimes this will just be telling a part of your story and the role that God has played in it. It may be sharing with someone a Bible verse that you read that day.
- ✕ Surround yourself with a good team, a group of godly men who will spur you on to good deeds ... and get in your grill when you need it!

Men, we've included a worksheet on page 108 in your Personal Training. Use it as a guide in preparing to tell your story.

PRAYER REQUESTS

If you missed this session,
you can download the DVD teaching from www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan

SESSION 06

THE POWER OF STORY





Through this journey with *Game Plan for Life*, you have learned a lot about Coach Joe and his story. You have seen a glimpse of what God can do with the average Joe (as Coach puts it)—successes and failures both. You’ve also had the chance to get a glimpse of Joe’s passion for the things of God. It’s good to hear the stories of other men who have journeyed with God.

But really, Joe’s story could serve as a model for you to follow—not necessarily a specific template, but an experience that you need to take part in. Think about it for just a moment. Look at the basic elements of Joe’s story. In these two volumes of *Game Plan for Life: Group Edition*, he introduced us to God, His Word, and the gospel. It begins there. But after the story begins, Coach explained how the Enemy comes against us with his plan, and sometimes we make mistakes. We play hurt because sin wounds us. But if we trust God, we can get back in the game and finish strong.

The rest of Joe’s story is just simple application. Essentially, he is saying, “this is how my life has changed because of what God is continually doing in me.” Because of his life’s journey with God (and his attempt to follow God’s plan), Joe has some valuable things to say

about the relevant topics in life—money, marriage, health, heaven, vocation, etc.

Do you see the progression? It doesn’t start with our story and what we’re dealing with in life. It starts with God and His story. And when God’s story intersects our story, it affects us. This is what we need to highlight when we tell others about what God is doing in our lives. We need to highlight who God is and what He has done. Joe’s story is real because it is his and it is a reflection of God’s purposes and God’s story.

Love – The Power of God’s Story

One of the things we should highlight about God is His faithfulness. The Scriptures are full of descriptions of God’s faithfulness, but just hearing others talk or write about it isn’t enough. We need to be at a place in our own lives where we recognize God’s faithfulness.

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The psalmist wrote:

¹ “God, we have heard with our ears—our ancestors have told us—the work You accomplished in their days, in days long ago: ² to plant them, You drove out the nations with Your hand; to settle them, You crushed the peoples. ³ For they did not take the land by their sword—their arm did not bring them victory—but by Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your face, for You were pleased with them” (Psalm 44:1-3).

Jesus on the Big Screen

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

Watch any of the movies in this series with your family. Discuss how the different characters engage their faith during their individual journeys.

But the psalmist didn’t want to just tell the stories about God; he wanted to experience God on a personal level. He recounts his experience like this:

¹ “I will sing about the LORD’s faithful love forever; I will proclaim Your faithfulness to all generations with my mouth. ² For I will declare, ‘Faithful love is built up forever; You establish Your faithfulness in the heavens’” (Psalm 89:1-2).

This truly is the power of God’s story—when we tell it from the first-person. When we, by faith, trust God

at His word, we turn a third-person, objective, mental exercise into an experience we can share. We need to tell God’s story as we have experienced it. It doesn’t make the truth about God any more true, but it gives those who will hear this story more of a reason to listen. Let’s move beyond regurgitating facts. Let’s speak about the eternal things we have experienced in our hearts and demonstrate with our lives.

Faith – The Power of Your Story

God has “put eternity in their hearts” (Ecclesiastes 3:11). There is something within us that wants to experience God and the eternal things of God. The problem, though, is that men forget how to unlock that experience for their own personal journey. The key to finding eternity is faith. Most people have a measure of faith, whether large or small. And if we will engage God with our personal faith, there’s no telling where God will lead us, what He will do for us, and what He can accomplish through us.

Consider some of the stories of God-followers from ages past found in Hebrews 11. Each had their own, different journey to experience, but all of them engaged their faith to unlock the door:

- By faith Noah built an ark to deliver his family (v. 7).

- By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac as a sacrifice to God (v. 17).
 - By faith Moses instituted the Passover to protect his people from the angel of death (v. 28).
 - By faith the nation crossed the Red Sea as though they were on dry land (v. 29).
- These are just a few. There are countless other stories about people and their relationship with God, and how God has impacted their lives in amazing ways:

³² *“And what more can I say? Time is too short for me to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, ³³ who by faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the raging of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, gained strength after being weak, became mighty in battle, and put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵ Women received their dead—they were raised to life again. Some men were tortured, not accepting release, so that they might gain a better resurrection, ³⁶ and others experienced mockings and scourgings, as well as bonds and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawed in two, they died by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, destitute, afflicted, and mistreated. ³⁸ The world was not worthy of them.*

They wandered in deserts and on mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground” (Hebrews 11:32-38).

These stories are phenomenal—borderline unbelievable! Yet they happened. They were recounted then, and they are still being told to this day. These people’s experiences are worth telling because they teach us about the eternal things that are in our hearts and that are lived out in our lives.

So, what is the rest of the story? How will your life become another account in the larger story of God and His people? What kind of God-inspired highlights could be told about you? Never stop growing your faith in God and never miss an opportunity to share your life-changing story with others. ❏

GO DEEP

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR A DEEPER WALK WITH GOD

- >> Survival Kit for New Christians by Ralph Neighbor
- >> Share Jesus Without Fear by William Fay
- >> Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God by Henry Blackaby and Claude King

MY STORY

Everyone has a story. If you are now a follower of Christ, you have a unique story to tell based on your journey with Him. Try to summarize your story so that you can tell it in about 3 minutes. Doing so will give you more opportunities to share what God has done in your life. Sharing our stories is just one way that we can help others find Christ and get in on God's game plan for their lives. Refer back to the work you did in Session 6 Team Training as you begin to fill in your story below. You might also read Paul's testimony in Acts 22 and 26 which follows a similar outline.

My life before meeting Christ:

How I met Christ:

My life since meeting Christ:

DAILY WORKOUTS

MONDAY

¹⁴ “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’ ¹⁶ But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our message?’ ¹⁷ Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:14-17, NIV).

As you continue to develop your story, think about who needs to hear it. Who in your past needs to hear what God has done in your life? Write down their names. Pray and ask God to give you the opportunity to share your story at the right time.

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For more team info and resources visit // www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan



TUESDAY

Here's what Jesus said as He instructed His disciples on how to witness:

¹¹ “Whenever they bring you before synagogues and rulers and authorities, don’t worry about how you should defend yourselves or what you should say. ¹² For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what must be said” (Luke 12:11-12).

Make up your mind to trust the Holy Spirit when you share your story. He will give you the words to say. There is no reason to be anxious or worried. Just ask God to give you a willing and obedient heart.

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WEDNESDAY

⁸ “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Just like the first Christians, ask God to give you a chance to share your story with someone today or this week. Wherever you find yourself, look for these divine opportunities.

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THURSDAY

27 “For the hearts of these people have grown callous, their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; otherwise they might see with their eyes and hear with their ears, understand with their heart, and be converted, and I would heal them” (Acts 28:27).

Do you know anyone whose heart is callous to hearing about God? Spend some time praying for those you know who have a hard heart. Ask God to help soften it so they can really hear your story.

NOTES

FRIDAY

20 “Now to Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us” (Ephesians 3:20).

Let God be your Head Coach, directing your words as you share your story. If you let Him, He will accomplish more with you than you could on your own. May you experience the power of God as you aggressively cooperate with Him every single day. Don't forget to thank Him for His faithfulness.

NOTES



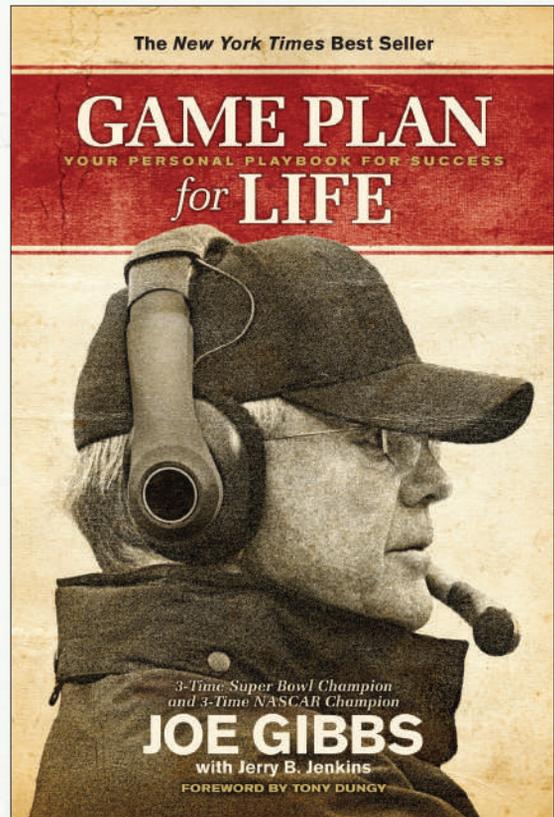
Check out Coach's video devotions at // www.GamePlanForLife.com

Game Plan for Life

by Joe Gibbs with Jerry B. Jenkins

Based on a national survey of 700 men as well as Joe Gibbs's conversations with thousands of men, the Gibbs team has identified the eleven most important issues facing men today. *Game Plan for Life* is a guide to what the Bible says about those eleven topics. Edited by best-selling author Jerry Jenkins and in the style of a winning coach, Joe secured contributions from Randy Alcorn, Ravi Zacharias, John Lennox, Tony Evans, Chuck Colson, Josh McDowell, Don Meredith, Walt Larimore, Ron Blue, Ken Boa, and Os Guinness.

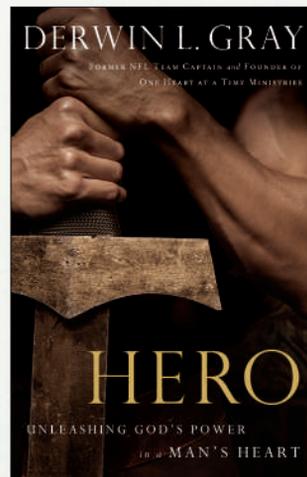
Game Plan for Life inspires readers to live a balanced, God-centered, purpose-filled life, using examples of Coach Gibbs's own storied championship careers as a backdrop to each section. A perfect blend of sports and basic theology, *Game Plan for Life* is designed to bring God's Word home to sports fans (and others) of all generations.



Hero

by Derwin L. Gray

Hero, Unleashing God's Power in a Man's Heart, by Derwin Gray, motivates men to live heroic lives by getting to know the Great Hero so well that His greatness rubs off on them. Men will learn to live with an energized passion, embracing the life they were created to live and leaving a legacy that impacts generations for years to come. Men who long to live the life of a hero or help others live with maximum impact—and women who want to encourage them—will find this book an invaluable guide for the journey.



Group Directory

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Leader Overview

This Leader Overview is also included on the CD-ROM for your convenience in leading the Team Training (group session).



TEAM CAPTAIN ICON

When you see the gear in the member book, refer to your Play Sheet for something specific to say or do.



PLAY ICON

When you see this icon, you'll know to start the DVD during Team Training.



TIME

Each session is designed to last 60-90 minutes, depending on your group's schedule and particular dynamic. If you only meet for an hour, try to keep your discussion time limited to the lower amount suggested for each segment so you don't run out of time at the end. Try to honor your men's time!



PLAY SHEET

Play Sheets are designed to be cut out of the member book (or printed from the CD-ROM) and attached to a clipboard for use during Team Training. Doing this will allow you to coach with ease and focus on your team. There is information for the group on the Play Sheets that isn't in the member books, so be sure to review the Play Sheet a few days prior to your Team Training.



PREP FOR NEXT WEEK

A checklist is provided at the end of each Play Sheet to remind you of things to review or items to bring to next week's Team Training.



CONTACT

Contact your team during the week to encourage them!



RESOURCES & TOOLS

www.LifeWay.com/GamePlan/Leader has updated and additional materials to help you maximize the Game Plan for Life experience. There are also additional leader resources on the CD-ROM included with the Leader Kit. These include: bulletin insert, poster, promo/invite videos, promo text, media slides, and Web site banners.



Team Captain: Play Sheet 1

Session 01: Running with Focus

60-90 minutes

PREGAME 5-10 MINUTES

Start by thanking your men for their commitment to do this study. **Say something like**, "Men, I know that we all could be doing something else, but we're not. We've carved out time devoted to God, and I do not take that for granted. So I want to recognize your dedication."

Also, try to **be aware** of the background of the men in your group. You always want to create a safe environment for everyone to share their story, thoughts, and opinions. You may have men in your group taking their very first steps toward God.



Open with prayer. Ask God to bless your group's time together and to reveal His will for your lives.

Starting next week, you will use the Pregame to discuss and recap the session from the previous week. There are daily readings for Monday thru Friday. Most of your discussion during the Pregame time will probably focus on what the men have read there.

What are your goals for this six-week study? Write them down in the space provided.

KICKOFF 5-10 MINUTES



Play Video: "Session 01 - Running with Focus"



Lead your team to answer the Kickoff questions in the member book. **Keep it brief** because there's a lot of ground to cover this session. You may need to **ask a few men to share** aloud, and direct the rest of your small group to write down their answers to share later.

FIRST HALF 15-20 MINUTES



Resume Video: "Session 01 - Running with Focus"

Encourage men to take notes in the space provided in their member books.

HALFTIME 5-10 MINUTES



The questions in the Halftime section are designed to help your men digest the video material and crystallize some key thoughts for personal application. Even if you don't have time for men to share aloud, still **lead your men to write down their answers**. Also, **say something like**, "Be sure to check out the full-length interview where Tony talks more about how he found God's purpose for his own life. Hearing his story will help you define yours." If you need to take a break, do it now before the Second Half starts.



SECOND HALF 30 MINUTES

Huddle your group back up for some Bible study. Lead them through the various Scriptures, paragraphs, and questions while facilitating their discussion.



Use the answers from Question #2 to help the men answer Question #3. Help them see that they already have a good idea of what it takes to pursue God like David pursued Him. Now, **ask the men** if they have tried to live like this in the past.

2-MINUTE WARNING 5-10 MINUTES



Take this time to **recap the main takeaways** from this lesson.

Challenge your group to reflect on this lesson and go deeper in the Personal Training section by reading the article and doing the Daily Workouts throughout the week.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Conclude your time by taking prayer requests and praying together as a group.



PREP FOR NEXT WEEK

Be sure to do the following before next week's group:

- Review next week's Team Training and Play Sheet.
- Review next week's Kickoff and First Half videos.
- Contact each team member for encouragement!
- Have a plan for refreshments.
- Bring pens, pencils, and paper.



Team Captain: Play Sheet 2

Session 02: The Daily Grind

60-90 minutes



PREGAME 5-10 MINUTES



Open with prayer. Ask God to bless this time of Bible study and to make it worthwhile for your group. For that to happen, God needs to show up. Pray for this to happen.

Briefly discuss last week's Personal Training. Lead your group through the Pregame questions found below. If you have a larger group, ask the men to pair up and briefly answer the questions. Even though it has only been a week or so, the men in your group may be looking at God in a fresh way. Others may not have experienced anything different. Either way, be sure to encourage them to engage God daily through moments of prayer, Scripture reading, and meditation.

How did your Personal Training go for the first week? Discuss any challenges or victories.

Did God reveal anything new to you about His purpose for your life?

KICKOFF 5-10 MINUTES



Play Video: "Session 02 - The Daily Grind"



Lead your team to answer the Kickoff question in the member book. Don't skip this part. It is directly related to the video segment and the Bible study.

FIRST HALF 15-20 MINUTES



Resume Video: "Session 02 - The Daily Grind"

Encourage men to take notes in the space provided in their member books.

HALFTIME 5-10 MINUTES



Lead your men and ask for feedback from the video portion of the First Half. **Use the question** in the member section and ask if there was anything else that impacted them during the video. Also, **say something like**, "Kick your feet up this weekend and watch the full-length interview where Os talks more about ways you can truly find your sweet spot at work. And if there's a way to make your 40 hours a week better, why not do it?" If you need to take a break, do it now before the Second Half starts.

SECOND HALF 30 MINUTES



Huddle your group back up for some Bible study. Lead them through the Scriptures and questions while facilitating their discussion. Try to keep everyone engaged. Make sure no one dominates the discussion so that everyone who wants to share gets a chance to do so.

When you are ready to start, say something like, “Men, just think about this for a moment. If we spend the majority of our day at work, you bet God is going to have something to say about it! Let’s continue this session together and see what God’s Word does say.”



Concerning Question #1: The curse of sin is found in Genesis 3:19. God says, “You will eat bread by the sweat of your brow, until you return to the ground, since you were taken from it. For you are dust, and you will return to dust.” The language is similar to the creation account in Genesis 2 (thus, these two passages can be mistaken or confused as just one passage). Also, the slogan, “sweat of your brow” has become idiomatic language and slang for “work” in general. So, this is a common misunderstanding but easily corrected with careful study of Scripture.



Possible answers for Question #6: willing, patient, understanding, comforting, trustworthy.

2-MINUTE WARNING 5-10 MINUTES



Take this time to **recap the main takeaways** from this lesson.

Challenge your group to reflect on this lesson and go deeper in the Personal Training section by reading the article and doing the Daily Workouts throughout the week.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Conclude your time by taking prayer requests and praying together as a group.



PREP FOR NEXT WEEK

Be sure to do the following before next week’s group:

- Review next week’s Team Training and Play Sheet.
- Review next week’s Kickoff and First Half videos.
- Contact each team member for encouragement!
- Have a plan for refreshments.
- Bring pens, pencils, and paper.



Team Captain: Play Sheet 3

Session 03: Tune Up!

60-90 minutes

PREGAME 5-10 MINUTES



Open with prayer. Ask God to bless this time of Bible study.

Briefly discuss last week's Personal Training. Once you have prayed, lead your group through the Pregame questions below. If you have a larger group, ask the men to pair up and briefly answer the questions. **Be sure to ask** about anything important that came up in the previous meeting, such as if someone asked for prayer about a specific issue, or if there was a need for accountability. As their Team Captain, the important thing is to communicate that you are listening and paying attention to the happenings in their lives.

How did your Personal Training go last week? Has your view of work changed for the better since Session 2?

Did you take care of any unfinished business at work—conversations or relationships that needed your attention?

KICKOFF 5-10 MINUTES



Play Video: "Session 03 - Tune Up!"



Lead your team in answering the Kickoff questions in the book. Depending on the size of your small group, you may need to limit the group discussion on the second question, but still lead your men to that question. They need to identify where they stand on this issue, and whether or not they are willing to follow God on this.

FIRST HALF 15-20 MINUTES



Resume Video: "Session 03 - Tune Up!"

Encourage the men to take notes in the space provided in their member books.

HALFTIME 5-10 MINUTES



Lead your men and ask for feedback from the video portion of the First Half. **Use the question** in the member section and be sure to ask if there was anything else that impacted them during the video. Also, **say something like**, "Make some time to watch to the full-length interview where Derwin and Walt talk more about fathers and what happens if you don't have one. It's powerful!" If you need to take a break, do it now before the Second Half starts.

SECOND HALF 30 MINUTES



Huddle your group back up for some Bible study. Lead them through the various Scriptures, thoughts, and questions. To keep everyone engaged, have different men read the different passages of Scripture.



In Question #3, there is room for disagreement about the level of concern God has about our personal diet. But we cannot deny that God is interested in the details of our lives. Leviticus 11 shows that God is interested in the affairs of humanity—He included dietary law as part of The Law. That means it's important.



For Question #5, highlight that Paul isn't saying that we shouldn't exercise physically. Physical fitness is valuable. But spiritual fitness (or godliness), is more valuable. Physical fitness can only profit us "for a little"—while we're on this earth. But godliness will profit us not just here in this present life, but in the life to come.

2-MINUTE WARNING 5-10 MINUTES



Take this time to **recap the main takeaways** from this lesson.

Challenge your group to reflect on this lesson and go deeper in the Personal Training section by reading the articles and doing the Daily Workouts throughout the week.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Conclude your time by taking prayer requests and praying together as a group.



PREP FOR NEXT WEEK

Be sure to do the following before next week's group:

- Review next week's Team Training and Play Sheet.
- Review next week's Kickoff and First Half videos.
- Contact each team member for encouragement!
- Have a plan for refreshments.
- Bring pens, pencils, and paper.
- Also, check out the **Post Game** section in the Leader Notes on your CD-ROM.



Team Captain: Play Sheet 4

Session 04: Drafting Partners

60-90 minutes

PREGAME 5-10 MINUTES



Open with prayer. Ask God to teach us how to be better husbands or future-husbands.

Briefly discuss last week's Personal Training. Lead your group through the Pregame questions found below. Last week was on the topic of staying fit. Ask if there are any follow-up questions about the lesson.

How did your Personal Training go last week? Did anything stand out to you about how your health relates to your relationship with God?

Did you make any life-changing decisions last week that you'd like to share with the group?

KICKOFF 5-10 MINUTES



Group members may be curious about the title for this session: "Drafting Partners." Drafting is a technique used in racing where two drivers benefit greatly by working together in a race. Lining up two cars in close proximity with one behind the other reduces the aerodynamic drag of each car, thereby enabling the tandem to achieve a higher speed than an individual car. The relationship between drafting partners offers us a good illustration of the benefits of the marriage relationship as both partners work together in a way that makes each stronger.



Play Video: "Session 04 - Drafting Partners"



Lead your team to answer the Kickoff questions in the member book. These questions presume that our culture does, in fact, influence us on a daily basis.

Say something like, "In John 17, Jesus prayed that His followers could remain in the world, but not be of the world. It is always going to be difficult when the culture often tells us to do the opposite of Jesus."

FIRST HALF 15-20 MINUTES



Resume Video: "Session 04 - Drafting Partners"

Encourage the men to take notes in the space provided in their member books.

HALFTIME 5-10 MINUTES



Lead your men and ask for feedback from the video portion of the First Half. **Use the question** in the member section and be sure to ask if there was anything else that impacted them during the video. Also, point out that even though this content covers marriage, relationships, and sex, it doesn't exclude single men. In fact, this lesson is just as applicable to single men as it is to married men. Single men can start

living by these principles now in preparation for when/if they do get married. Also, **say something like**, "Check out the full-length interview where Derwin and Don talk more about relationships and sex. It gets good!" If you need to take a break, do it now before the Second Half starts.

SECOND HALF 30 MINUTES



Huddle your group back up for some Bible study. Lead them through the Scriptures and questions. Try to get everyone involved in the discussion.

To **introduce** this topic, **say something like**, "Men, we are going to read some Scriptures today about husbands and wives and the role they have in marriage. No doubt these Scriptures have been abused and misinterpreted, but it's not going to be this way. Not here, not today. No submission jokes, or "ball and chain" references, etc. Let's find God's plan for marriage and dig out the truth He wants us to hear today." **Remember**, it's your job to set the tone for this discussion and lead your group.



Question #4 communicates a certain amount of submissiveness on a husband's part. It takes a humble and patient husband to truly understand, know, and value his wife's feelings, thoughts, dreams, desires, aspirations, etc. After your group answers this question, challenge your group to pursue this idea.



Question #6 may be difficult to answer for some men. They may not have thought about it being their responsibility to lovingly lead their wives. **Encourage them to take responsibility** for their part.



Question #7 revolves around the notion of "body stewardship." Understanding that God owns us and that we are stewards of our bodies will give us a different perspective on how to live with our wives. This will help in every area of marriage, not just the physical.

2-MINUTE WARNING 5-10 MINUTES



Take this time to **recap the main takeaways** from this lesson.

Challenge your group to reflect on this lesson and go deeper in the Personal Training section by reading the articles and doing the Daily Workouts throughout the week.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Conclude your time by taking prayer requests and praying together as a group.



PREP FOR NEXT WEEK

Be sure to do the following before next week's group:

- Review next week's Team Training and Play Sheet.
- Review next week's Kickoff and First Half videos.
- Contact each team member for encouragement!
- Have a plan for refreshments.
- Bring pens, pencils, and paper.



Team Captain: Play Sheet 5

Session 05: The Trophy Case

60-90 minutes



PREGAME 5-10 MINUTES



Open with prayer. Ask God to bless your group's time together and to give you a sense of peace and understanding about heaven and the things to come.

Briefly discuss last week's Personal Training. Lead your group through the Pregame questions found below. If you have a larger group, ask the men to pair up and briefly answer the questions.

How did your Personal Training go last week? Discuss any challenges or victories.

Were you able to express patience or humility with your wife in any new ways?

KICKOFF 5-10 MINUTES



Play Video: "Session 05 - The Trophy Case"



Lead your team to answer the Kickoff question in the member book. Be prepared to **share your own personal experience** to get the discussion going.

FIRST HALF 15-20 MINUTES



Resume Video: "Session 05 - The Trophy Case"

Encourage the men to take notes in the space provided in their member books.

HALFTIME 5-10 MINUTES



Lead your men and ask for feedback from the video portion of the First Half. **Use the questions** in the member section and be sure to ask if there was anything else that impacted them during the video. Also, **say something like**, "Don't forget to watch this week's full-length interview where Joe and Randy talk more about competition in heaven. This will get you fired up about the unimaginable future God has for you!" If you need to take a break, do it now before the Second Half starts.

SECOND HALF 30 MINUTES



Huddle your group back up for some Bible study. Lead them through the various Scriptures, thoughts, and questions. Keep everyone engaged, and try not to let just one person dominate the conversation.



For Question #3, you may need to explain that the notion that God's presence is with His people is rooted in the Old Testament. If His people would commit to being His people, God would promise to literally be with them. In the New Testament, Jesus' presence on earth was an expression of God's promise to be with us. God also sent the Holy Spirit to be with and live in us. In the Book of Revelation, the promise has finally come to fulfillment. Except God doesn't send anybody to us; instead, He brings us to Him, into His permanent dwelling. This is truly significant!



Question #5 may be very difficult for some. It is hard to put into words that which we haven't seen but are trying to imagine. Use the paragraphs following Question #5 to segue into **Question #6**.

2-MINUTE WARNING 5-10 MINUTES



Take this time to **recap the main takeaways** from this lesson.

Challenge your group to reflect on this lesson and go deeper in the Personal Training section by reading the article and doing the Daily Workouts throughout the week.

Before you close in prayer, ask men to come next week with ideas about how to move forward after the conclusion of this study. You've come a long way as a group and it's important not to let the conclusion of this study be the end of your group's growth.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Conclude your time by taking prayer requests and praying together as a group.



PREP FOR NEXT WEEK

Be sure to do the following before next week's group:

- Review next week's Team Training and Play Sheet.
- Review next week's First Half and 2-Minute Warning videos.
- Contact each team member for encouragement!
- Have a plan for refreshments.
- Bring pens, pencils, and paper.
- Read "What Now?" in the Leader Notes section of the CD-ROM and come up with several ideas for how your group can continue meeting after the conclusion of this study.



Team Captain: Play Sheet 6

Session 06: Still Battling

60-90 minutes



PREGAME 5-10 MINUTES



Open with prayer. Ask God to bless your group's time together and to help you take what you have learned so far and use it in the battles still to come.

Briefly discuss last week's Personal Training. Lead your group through the Pregame questions found below. If you have a larger group, ask the men to pair up and briefly answer the questions. Since this is the last meeting scheduled for *Game Plan for Life: Group Edition, Vol. 2*, the second question pertains to the entire group experience. **Ask** the men to share an encouraging word if they have broken through and experienced victory in any area of their lives—no matter how great or small. **Applaud them**, literally, and celebrate any and all victories over the Enemy.

How did your Personal Training go last week? As the things we talked about settled in your mind, did you start seeing reasons to get excited about heaven?

Are there any victories from last week (or the previous weeks) that you would like to share?

KICKOFF 5-10 MINUTES



Lead your team to answer the Kickoff question in the member book.

FIRST HALF 10-15 MINUTES



Play Video: "Session 06 - Still Battling"



Encourage the men to take notes in the space provided in their member books.

HALFTIME 5-10 MINUTES



Lead your men and ask for feedback from the video portion of the First Half. Use the question in the member section. **Say something like**, "Men, just as Coach has shared his story with us, it's our responsibility to share our story with others. Let's find out how we can start doing that every day." If you need to take a break, do it now before the Second Half starts.

SECOND HALF 30-40 MINUTES



Lead your men through this final exercise. It should only take about 30-40 minutes. Before you get started, thank them for being here and for finishing strong. Let them know you appreciate their commitment to finding and living by God's game plan for their lives. This final session gives one more opportunity for men to accept Christ and provides simple evangelism training for using their testimonies to lead others to Christ.



Part 1: This part of the Bible study focuses on the background for Paul's personal testimony.



Part 2: The focus is on Paul's life before Christ. Men are challenged to compare Paul's story to their own.



Part 3: Paul describes how he met Christ. Men are encouraged to do likewise.



Part 4: Paul's life reflected the change he had undergone. Men should be able to see this change as well.

2-MINUTE WARNING 5-10 MINUTES



Play Video: "Joe's Closing Challenge." This video segment is around two minutes long and is a closing prayer from Coach.



Take this time to **recap the main takeaways** from this lesson.

Challenge the men to continue to develop their own stories so they can share what God is doing in their lives. Also, **make yourself available** to speak with anyone who made a decision for Christ (or made a significant decision that affected their spiritual walk with God). You'll need to:

- Encourage them in that decision.
- Listen and reaffirm that decision.
- Schedule any follow-up with them to keep them taking steps toward God. This may include doing another Bible study together in the future, encouraging them to get baptized, or helping them find a church they can call home.
- Remind men to complete the "My Story" worksheet on page 108 in the Personal Training.

Ask your group if they have a desire to keep meeting. If so, **talk about it** right now. Bring up new study possibilities. Your group may need to take a break for a period of time before meeting again, but **go ahead and schedule the time when you'll come back together**. If there are several men who want to group up into smaller accountability groups, then **encourage them** to look at their calendars right now. **DON'T PUT OFF THE PLANNING!** The point is to walk away from this last meeting with a plan already in place for your men. Additional study materials are suggested in the Post Game section of the Leader Notes PDF on the CD-ROM.

PRAYER REQUESTS

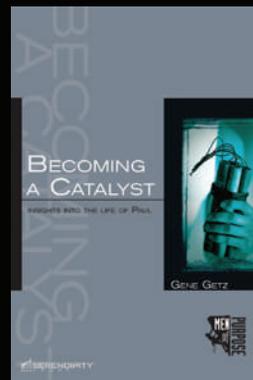
Conclude your time by taking prayer requests and praying together as a group.

.....
**WHAT COULD GOD
DO WITH**

you
IF YOU'D LET HIM?
.....

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