



## Do Over: Start Fresh // Start Over

### 7 Week Overview and Weekly Game Plan:

We all need a fresh start, and sometimes, we just have to call a "do over." In this study, we will consider how we can experience a "do over" in our relationships, faith, work and attitude.

#### Do Over Sessions:

1. **Mulligans and Making Ups:** A foundation for grace, forgiveness and fresh starts.
2. **"I Do" Do Over (Part 1):** Whether your marriage is stale, stalled, or just starting, understanding, we can all use an "I Do" Do Over. In this two part session, men will consider 7 Diagnostic questions when evaluating the health of their role in the marriage.
3. **"I Do" Do Over (Part 2):** Men will continue to assess their marriage in light of Ephesians 4.
4. **Daddy Do Over:** As fathers we will fall short, but what we do today matters.
5. **Failing Forward:** Learning from our losses and leading out of weakness are essential to our personal growth.
6. **Overdo or Overdue?:** Look at your schedule, how do your priorities, passions and plans coincide? It may be time for a Do Over.
7. **Giving others a Do Over:** We have been given a message and a ministry to reconcile broken relationships... here is how to do it.

#### Pre-Season Training:

The Playbook: Read this intro to our study and get prepared for this season.

**Week 1: Mulligans and Making Ups:** A foundation for grace, forgiveness and fresh starts.

ABC Bible Study Method: Luke 15 (Next week we will cover Ephesians 4)

Scripture Memory Verse: "***We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!***" Luke 15:32

**Week 2: "I Do" Do Over (Part 1):** Whether your marriage is stale, stalled, or just starting, understanding, we can all use an "I Do" Do Over.

ABC Bible Study Method: Ephesians 4 (Next week we will cover Ephesians 5)

Scripture Memory Verse: "***Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.***" Ephesians 4:32

**Week 3: "I Do" Do Over (Part 2):** Men will continue to assess their marriage in light of Eph. 4.

ABC Bible Study Method: Ephesians 5 (Next week we will cover Ephesians 6)

Scripture Memory Verse: "***Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.***" Ephesians 5:2

**Week 4: Daddy Do Over:** As fathers we will fall short, but what we do today matters.

ABC Bible Study Method: Ephesians 6 (Next week- John 13:36-38, John 18, & John 21:15-19)

Scripture Memory Verse: "***Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.***" Ephesians 6:4

**Week 5: Failing Forward:** Learning from our losses and leading out of weakness are essential to our personal growth.

ABC Bible Study Method: Read the following- John 13:36-38, John 18, and John 21:15-19 (Next Week's is Philippians 3)



Scripture Memory Verse: "***Though a righteous person falls seven times, he will get up, but the wicked will stumble into ruin.***" Proverbs 24:15

**Week 6: Overdo or Overdue?**: Look at your schedule, how do your priorities, passions and plans coincide? It may be time for a Do Over.

ABC: Philippians 3 (Next Week's is 2 Corinthians 5)

Scripture Memory Verse: "***Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.***" Matthew 6:33

**Week 7: Giving others a Do Over:** We have been given a message and a ministry to reconcile broken relationships... here is how to do it.

ABC: 2 Corinthians 5 (take special note of v.16-21)

Scripture Memory Verse: "***Make allowance for each other's faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.***" Colossians 3:13



## Pre-Season Training

We are about to enter into a 7 week season in our IMPACT Players Coaching Cohorts where we will actively engage in thought, conversation and decision making that will help men experience restoration and redemption in the important areas of their lives. Before our first meeting, take the time to go through this “Pre-Season training,” so you will be ready to hit the ground running.

**The Playbook:** As kids, when we messed up, when things got hard, or when we were just at the end of our rope, we could raise our hands and say, “Can I get a ‘do over?’” A do over is a second chance, a clean slate, a new beginning at something in life. Anyone with more than a few miles on their life odometer has some regrets they wish they could make right. Sometimes, we realize that we have gotten off course and we need a reset to get back on track. Other times, the damage is done and all we can do is pick up the broken pieces and begin again. This is life and none of us cannot escape it. The beauty of grace is that it in God’s timeline, it is never too late to start over. We all can get our shot at redemption when we give ourselves to the plans and purposes of God. **“Do Over”** is a safe place to explore grace and get a vision for moving forward wherever you are.

In preparation for our first study, please carve out a window of time to engage in your first ABC Bible reading. On the next page, you will find a blank ABC Bible Study guide which will walk you through the steps. Each week, we will assign a chapter from a book of the Bible to read in advance before our Coaching Cohort. After reading the chapter, please take a few minutes to write down any questions you might want to Ask about the chapter. Then, write down your Best verse, the verse that stood out to you the most. Finally, write down, the Challenge that this verse leaves you with for the week.

Secondly, take time to memorize the brief scripture verse each week. The great King David says in the Psalms, **“I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”** (Psalm 119:11) Every scripture memorized is a deposit in the bank, a log in the fire, a bullet in the gun. It’s important and helpful for ever man to know truth and have it readily available to him.

Third, remember that what you put into this coaching cohort will determine what you will get out of it. Apathy and procrastination are not the marks of a dynamic leader, and they should not define your involvement in this cohort. As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. For the next 7 weeks, let’s raise the bar, increase the intensity and watch the results flow in. You can’t cheat the grind, so let’s set our face like flint and get after it together!

***Before our first study, please complete the following:***

ABC Bible Study Method: Luke 15

Scripture Memory Verse: **“We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!”** Luke 15:32



## IMPACT MEN

### ABC Bible Study:

**A) ASK:** What questions do you have about this chapter? What sparked your curiosity or left you confused?

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**B) BEST Verse:** Which verse in this passage really caught your attention or made you think in a deeper way?

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**C) CHALLENGE or CONVERSATION:** (What is GOD saying to you in this passage?)

How is God challenging me to grow in response to this Bible Verse?

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## Session 1: Mulligans and Make Ups: A foundation for grace, forgiveness and fresh starts.

ABC Bible Study Method: Luke 15 (Next week we will cover Ephesians 4)

Scripture Memory Verse: ***"We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!"*** Luke 15:32

**Opening-** “Can I take a mulligan?” If you have ever played golf, you have probably asked or been asked that question countless times. A mulligan is an opportunity to take a “do over” or start again, without any penalty or cost. We love the idea of getting a mulligan in golf... and in life. One of the hallmark doctrines of Christianity is the radical concept of grace. Is grace like getting a mulligan? Yes... and no. Let’s explore this concept further together.

***“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God...”***

Ephesians 2:8

***“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*** Romans 6:23

**Q.** What do these two verses share in common? If you could circle one word that best helps you understand grace, what would it be?

**Transactional vs. Transformational:** All religions except for Christianity maintain a transactional approach to eternal life (or salvation, enlightenment, etc.). What you do to please, appease or earn approval from God determines your outcome. If you follow the rules, if your good outweighs your bad, if you perform certain religious ceremonies, then you will be accepted by God and earn eternal life.

**Q.** According the Romans 6:23 above, what have we earned? If God gave us what we deserved, what would we get?

**INSIGHT:** Christianity is unique in that it does not run on a works-based OS (Operating System). Instead, it only runs on a grace OS. When we learn this simple but profound truth, it revolutionizes the way that we see ourselves, our world and our Creator.

Grace is God’s unmerited favor offered freely to mankind through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.

Someone along the way created this acronym to help us understand GRACE

**God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense**

**Key Truth:** Forgiveness and redemption comes at a cost. It is a gift for the receiver (you and me), but it is a sacrifice for the giver (God).

**Q.** How does this understanding of grace impact the way you think about forgiveness and redemption?

**Q.** Is it fair to call grace a “mulligan?” How is it similar? Different?

Read ***“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”*** Isaiah 43:19



**Q.** Have you felt like you are in a wilderness or a desert of sorts in some area of your life? Maybe you feel dried and cracked spiritually and emotionally. Maybe there is a relationship that seems beyond repair. Perhaps you feel like you are at a dead end or you are lost in your purpose and career path. Describe.

**Q.** What would it *feel* like if you knew that God was about to do a new thing in your life? Like a spring bursting forth in a desert or a way revealed in the wilderness? Explain.

**Growth Challenge:** Author Mark Batterson says, “A change of PACE + a change of PLACE = a change of PERSPECTIVE.” Take time this month to step out of the rush of life and go to a place where you can unplug and engage with God. Ask God to show you the areas of your life where He is beginning to do a “new thing.”

Reflect on this paraphrase of Philippians 3:12-14 written by Eugene Peterson. As you do, take note that the Apostle Paul, who wrote this from a Roman prison, had once dedicated his life to violently stomping out Christianity. He had a lifetime of regrets that could have paralyzed and stymied him continually, yet he teaches us how to move forward in grace with confidence-

*“I’m not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don’t get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I’ve got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I’m off and running, and I’m not turning back.”*

**Closing:** You may not be able to forget the past, but you don’t have to focus on it. Choose now to accept the grace that God is freely offering to you through the death and resurrection of Jesus. You cannot become a gracious person until you receive God’s greatest gift yourself.

Next Week's SMV: ***“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32***

Next Week's ABC: Ephesians 4 (Read it through the filter of marriage)



**Session 2: "I Do" Do Over (Part 1):** Whether your marriage is stale, stalled, or just starting, understanding, we can all use an "I Do" Do Over. Over the next two weeks, we will consider 7 Diagnostic Questions for a Marriage Do Over and discuss how we can take a growth mindset to our marriages.

ABC Bible Study Method: Ephesians 4 (Next week we will cover Ephesians 5)

Scripture Memory Verse: "***Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.***" Ephesians 4:32

**Opening:** There are a lot of marriage experts and quotes out there... but here are a few that might make you smile.

"Getting married is like trading the adoration of many for the sarcasm of one."

"The most important word for a successful marriage: "I'll do the dishes."

"We both said, 'I Do' and we haven't agreed on a single thing since."

"Behind every good man there is a woman rolling her eyes."

"Behind every successful man there is a woman who couldn't be more surprised."

**Introduction:** Marriage is tough. It is a union of two beautiful people created in the image of God and worthy of admiration and respect, yet also marred by the sinful nature which infects every human and threatens to poison every relationship, including marriage. There are many scriptures and teachings on marriage we could look at, but let's consider-

### **7 Diagnostic Questions for a Marriage Do Over**

1. Am I pursuing a Christ-like lifestyle in my marriage?

***"walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."*** Ephesians 4:1-3

Insight: Do not focus on what your spouse is doing, but instead look in the mirror and assess yourself honestly.

It is easy to "talk the talk," but are you truly "walking the walk"?

Q. How are you doing at walking in humility, gentleness and patience with your wife?

Q. Are you bearing with her flaws and the things about her that frustrate you with love?

Q. Does your wife see in you an eagerness to pursue Spirit-led unity and peace in your marriage?

Growth Challenge: Identify one aspect in this passage in which you are falling short (humility, gentleness, patience, love, peace, etc). On a 3x5 card, write that word in large print. On the back side of that card, write a sentence similar to this- "I recognize that I often fall short when it comes to practicing PATIENCE (put your own in blank). By God's grace, I am committed to growing in my PATIENCE as a man and husband."

2. Am I acting like a grown up?

***"Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ."***

Ephesians 4:15

Insight: When we get frustrated or hurt, we often revert to childish thinking, attitudes and behavior. As men, we are called to model maturity, in every area of our lives, but especially in our speech.

Q. Honestly, are there ways in which you are not responding maturely to your spouse?

Q. Speaking the truth in love requires the maturity to navigate the polarities of attack (speaking the truth in unloving ways) and avoidance (ignoring truth to avoid rocking the boat). Which of these two polarities are you most prone to be drawn to in your marriage?



Growth Challenge: Reflect on 2-3 scenarios that often cause conflict in your marriage (for example, an argument over money, or a dispute over how to discipline the kids). Write down what a mature, Christ-like response should look like. Take it to the next level, by telling your wife that this is your goal the next time you get in that situation.

### 3. Am I acting like an unbeliever?

***"you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity."*** Ephesians 4:17-19

Insight: A “Christian marriage” in title can often be very secular in practice. Getting married in a church building, or even attending a church together does not necessarily equate to a marriage marked by Christian virtue. It is common for many men in “Christian marriages” to revert to secular behaviors and attitudes.

Q. The primary issues at stake are darkened minds and hardened hearts. Are there ways in which your thoughts have become darkened and your heart has become hardened in your relationship with Christ or one another?

Q. If you have become calloused spiritually and relationally, it is likely that you have on some level given yourself up to sensuality, greed and impurity. How is that impacting your life and marriage?

**Christian Atheist:** Sadly, many Christians behave no differently than unbelievers. A long time ago, a Dad reached his wit's end in trying to find healing for his son. Everything turned when he encountered Jesus and asked him ***"if"*** Jesus could help him. Jesus replied, ***"If you can! All things are possible for one who believes. Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"*** (Mark 9:23-24). Perhaps if you reflected honestly on your marriage, you have stopped believing that God can do the impossible. Stop now, and echo the words of this honest dad who cried out, “I believe, help my unbelief!”

Next Week's SMV: ***"Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."*** Ephesians 5:2

Next Week's ABC: Ephesians 5 (Read it through the filter of marriage)



**Session 3: "I Do" Do Over (Part 2):** Whether your marriage is stale, stalled, or just starting, understanding, we can all use an "I Do" Do Over. Over the next two weeks, we will consider 7 Diagnostic Questions for a Marriage Do Over and discuss how we can take a growth mindset to our marriages.

ABC Bible Study Method: Ephesians 5 (Next week we will cover Ephesians 6)

Scripture Memory Verse: "***Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.***" Ephesians 5:2

### **7 Diagnostic Questions for a Marriage Do Over (continued)**

4. Am I living as my "new self" through Christ each day?

***"Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."*** Ephesians 4:22-24

Insight: Living in Christ is a daily exercise of faith and obedience. Each day, we choose to "put off" our old self and "put on" our new self in Christ. This daily renewing is the secret to a marriage that stays fresh and vibrant.

Q. What practices are you engaging in that help you to renew your faith in Christ and love for your wife each day?

Q. How do prayer, Bible study, repentance and forgiveness invite righteousness and holiness into our marriage?

**Sock Drawer:** After a vigorous work out, you would never roll up your dirty socks & put them back in the sock drawer. It stinks & will mildew if not dealt with. Same goes with unresolved sin. To ignore it only compounds its stench. Give your sin to God daily & stay fresh spiritually. "***If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, & the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful & just to forgive us our sins & to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***" 1 John 1:8-9

5. Am I committed to resolving anger and conflict appropriately?

***"Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger and give no opportunity to the devil."***  
Ephesians 4:26-27

Insight: Conflict and anger are unavoidable in a healthy marriage. Divergent opinions will result in divisive outcomes. The questions are, what will you do with your anger and what will your anger do with your marriage?

Q. How do you express anger in a healthy way that does not lead to sin or give the devil a foothold in your marriage?

Q. What happens when you let the sun go down on your anger? How do you commit as a couple to resolving conflicts before they hijack your relationship?

**INSIDER TIP:** "*Be curious, not furious.*" Before getting angry, try listening and asking questions. You may discover that there is something you can learn that may give you better perspective.

6. Am I watching my mouth?

***"Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear."*** Ephesians 4:29



Insight: Let's revisit the power of our mouths in marriage. James 3 says that "the tongue" (our speech) is like a rudder that controls the whole ship. Similarly, it may be that your words are steering your marriage into stormy seas.

Q. In what ways may your speech (the way you talk to or about your wife) be corrupting your relationship with her?

Q. In what ways can you be more intentional to speak to your spouse in appropriate and gracious ways that will build her up?

**OLD SCHOOL:** Remember the old days, when a guy would express his affection through the carefully selected tunes on a "MixTape"? When was the last time you created a custom playlist for you and your spouse to listen to? Put one together and then go for a ride and as you listen, explain to her why you selected the songs you chose.

7. Am I making grace standard operating procedure in my marriage?

**"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."** Ephesians 4:32

Insight: Our salvation, adoption into God's family and inheritance of God's eternal riches are purely the result of God's grace through the forgiveness that Christ offers us through the Cross. We are called to offer this same abundant and amazing grace to our spouses in beautiful ways.

Q. Am I demonstrating grace to my wife as Christ has demonstrated grace to me?

Q. Would my wife describe me as kind, tenderhearted and forgiving towards her? Explain.

**Conclusion:** As you reflect on these diagnostic, you likely felt the prick of conviction on your heart as the Spirit revealed areas of sinfulness and selfishness that need to be dealt with. Do not become indignant and defensive or discouraged and defeated as you wrestle with your flesh.

The power of the Gospel is that every day is a chance at a "do over" with God. He will always forgive us and cleanse us because He is faithful and just. You can take this to the bank.

When we sin in our marriages, it is important that we also learn to practice mutual confession and forgiveness. When we sin against our spouse, we should not only ask God for forgiveness, but we should also ask her for forgiveness too.

**"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed."** James 5:16

The path to healing a hurting marriage is through a Gospel commitment to pursuing Christ and practicing repentance together.

Next Week's SMV: **"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."** Ephesians 6:4

Next Week's ABC: Ephesians 6



## Session 4: Daddy Do Over: As fathers we will fall short, but what we do today matters.

ABC Bible Study Method: Ephesians 6 (Next week we will be reading a unique story in the life of one of Jesus' most well-known followers. Read- John 13:36-38, John 18, and John 21:15-19)

Scripture Memory Verse: "**Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**" Ephesians 6:4

**Introduction:** The Bible is full of examples of great Dads and terrible Dads. The Good News is that if you had a difficult upbringing with your Dad, you are not destined to repeat his mistakes. Conversely, just because your Dad may have been a wonderful father doesn't mean that you are not responsible for making the right choices as well. Even if we have messed up as Dad, there is always opportunity to start over. If you are not (yet) a father, there are still key lessons you can gain from this session.

**Opening:** Dads are often known for repeating sayings or pieces of wisdom, passing them down to their sons. What is an example of a "Dad-ism" you got from a dad, coach or mentor?

Q. Why is it important for young people to learn wisdom (or wise sayings) from their elders?

Insight: The book of Proverbs is essentially a father passing down wisdom to his son. Consider the impact of sharing your wisdom: "**My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. Bind them on your heart always, tie them around your neck. When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you, and when you awake, they will talk with you. For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life.**" Proverbs 6:20-23

Q. How have you benefitted from wisdom in your life? What is the benefit of passing wisdom onto your children?

**Growth Challenge:** Purposeful parenting begins with the end in mind. If your child is under the age of 21, reflect on this question: When my son or daughter becomes an adult, what do I want them to Be, Know and Do? Take some time to reflect on what really matters to you as a Dad.

BE (Character) What kind of a person do I want my son or daughter to become?	KNOW (Wisdom and Knowledge) What do I want them to be able to decide, remember, or understand?	DO (Skills, Accomplishments, Abilities) What do I want them to be able to do, accomplish, or be skilled at?
Empathetic, Responsible, Honest...	Understand the Gospel, how to make good decisions, how to speak confidently with adults....	Develop spiritual practices (prayer, Bible study, etc), graduate from High School....

Read Ephesians 6:1-4

Insight: Much of what provides relational intimacy, rebellion or disengagement between fathers and their children revolves around the giving and receiving of discipline. How much discipline? What kind of discipline? How it is communicated?



Q. If you grew up with a father (or father figure) in your life, what was his discipline like?

Q. Did your father's discipline provoke your anger or earn your respect? Explain.

Q. How is (or will) your approach to discipline be similar or different?

Consider the following characteristics of parenting found in these two translations of Ephesians 6:4

**"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."** Ephesians 6:4

**"Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."** Ephesians 6:4

Ephesians 6:4

Assess your Parenting right now on the following characteristics from a 1 (low) to a 10 (high).

**Discipline:** I am disciplining my children effectively to become self-disciplined adults.

**Instruction:** I am teaching my children to live wisely & grow into healthy adults & disciples.

**Nurture:** With tenderness and compassion, I am cultivating my children's emotional, social and spiritual growth.

**Admonition (Coaching):** I am inspiring my children to become their very best and giving them the tools they need to accomplish their goals.

Q. If you feel like you are deficient in one or more areas of these, what steps will you take to pursue your own growth?

**Growth Challenge:** Read the following Scriptures with your spouse and discuss and decide what it would look like bring your kids up in the nurture and discipline of the Lord. (Hebrews 12:6-7, Deuteronomy 6:1-25, Proverbs 3:11, 6:20-21, 22:6, 22:15 & 29:17)

**Conclusion:** Remember the story of the Prodigal Son. The rebellious son took his Father for granted, made a fool of his family name and squandered his inheritance on wild living. Yet, when the son, in the muck and mud of his brokenness came to his senses and returned home, the father came running to him with open arms. It is important to create a home that holds our children accountable for their actions and responsible for their decisions. However, our children should also know that even at their very worst, our love for them is unconditional and our arms are always open.

Next Week's SMV: "**Though a righteous person falls seven times, he will get up, but the wicked will stumble into ruin.**" Proverbs 24:15

Next Week's ABC: Read the following- John 13:36-38, John 18, and John 21:15-19 (Think about it through the filter of failure)



## Session 5: Failing Forward:

Learning from our losses and leading out of weakness are essential to our personal growth.

ABC Bible Study Method: Read- John 13:36-38,18, & 21:15-19 (Next Week- Philippians 3)

Scripture Memory Verse: "***Though a righteous person falls seven times, he will get up, but the wicked will stumble into ruin.***" Proverbs 24:15

**Opening:** Abraham Lincoln, Colonel Sanders, Michael Jordan, Oprah Winfrey and JK Rowling are well-known examples of individuals who overcame "failure" in order to accomplish tremendous success. While most people will never achieve worldwide notoriety for their accomplishments in this life, the principle of "failing forward" is still absolutely necessary to becoming the man, husband, father and leader you were created to be.

Q. Share a story of your own personal failure, which later contributed to your own growth and success.

Q. What are some of the lessons learned from moving forward after experiencing the setback of "failure?"

Insight: The Bible is full of failures. Men and women who made failed miserably, yet remarkably, were restored to great success. Allow a few of these examples to jog your memory-

- 1) Moses murdered an Egyptian man, making him a fugitive without a home. Later, he became the leader of God's people, guiding over one million people out of slavery.
- 2) David committed adultery and conspired to kill a woman's husband. He is remembered as the greatest King of the Old Testament and a man after God's own heart.
- 3) Elijah was so depressed, he begged God to take his life. Instead, God gave him rest and restored him, allowing him to pass on his mantle of leadership to Elisha.
- 4) The Apostle Paul was originally one of the most despised villains of the early church, orchestrating the death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Eventually, he became the greatest evangelist, missionary and theologian that the world has ever known, writing the majority of the New Testament letters.

Q. Considering the names on this list, what does this tell you about the way that God views failure?

***"God uses people who fail— because there aren't any other kind around."*** – John Maxwell

***"Many times people think if God has called you to something, he's promising you success. He might be calling you to fail to prepare you for something else through the failure."*** Tim Keller

Perhaps the most well-known story of "failing forward" however is that of the outspoken and tempestuous disciple Simon Peter. A fisherman by trade, Peter embodies the "every man" persona that millions of Bible readers have been able to identify with over the past 2,000 years. Unlike the ancient "histories" which made a practice of minimizing failures and over exaggerating successes, the Bible does not shy away from accentuating the failures of the one whom Jesus designated as "the rock on which I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). Let's consider a few of his gaffes and shining moments.

Simon Peter's Failures and Successes	
Failure (Mistakes, Shortcomings & Gaffes)	Success (Accomplishments & Achievements)
Fished all night and caught nothing. (Luke 5:5)	Obeyed Jesus and caught an overwhelming net full of fish. (Luke 5:6)
Lost faith and began to drown in the water. (Matthew 14:30)	Obeyed Jesus and walked on the water. (Matthew 14:29)
Attempts to dissuade Jesus from His mission; Jesus tells Peter to "Get behind me, Satan." (Matthew 16:22-23)	With God-given insight, Peter rightly identifies Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God. (Matthew 16:16-19)



# IMPACT

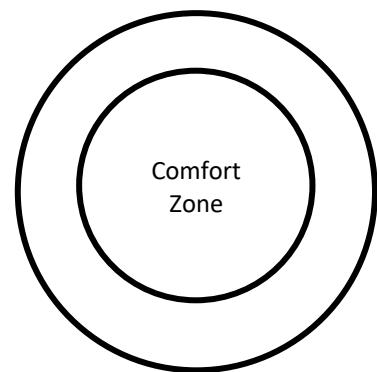
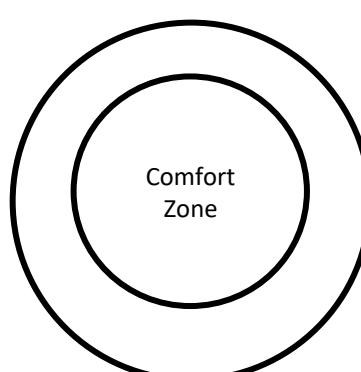
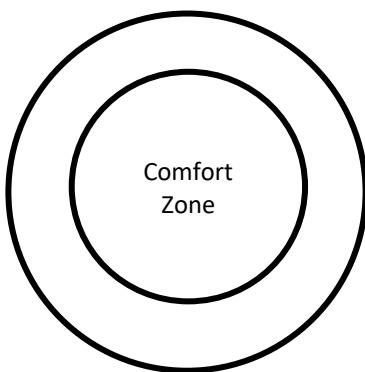
Rashly cuts off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the High Priest. (Matthew 26:51)	In the name of Jesus, heals a lame beggar outside of the temple. (Acts 3:6-7)
Denies ever knowing Jesus three times. (Matthew 26:69-75)	Filled with the Holy Spirit, preaches boldly to large crowd, leading thousands to faith in Jesus. (Acts 2)
Caves into fear and social pressure, distancing himself from "Gentile" believers. (Acts 15)	God shows Peter he was wrong about Gentile believers and Peter welcomes the heathen Cornelius into the church. (Act 10)

Q. What stands out to you about the stories of failure and success from the life of Peter?

Q. What would you describe as the contributing factors in Peter's failures and the contributing factors in Peter's successes?

Read: "***When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.***" Acts 4:13

**Challenge:** Christians often talk about "Comfort Zones." What would it look like for you to step out of your comfort zone in obedience to Jesus? What is the risk? What is the reward? Our goal as believers should be to have an ever-expanding comfort zone. In the circles below, identify 3 areas in which you are living in a certain "comfort zone" and write that in the inner-circle. In the larger circle, write one goal, dream or pursuit that would cause you to step out of your comfort zone. If you are really ambitious, write another goal, dream or pursuit outside of that circle that would push you way outside of your comfort zone!



**Final Thought:** Failure is often not our greatest threat, but rather success. Immediate success can often result in stunting growth and slowing down potential. Consider these quotes and reflect on their relevance to your own life.

***"Our greatest fear should not be of failure but of succeeding at things in life that don't really matter."***

Francis Chan

***"We need to remember that we are saved by grace when we fail. But we need to remember it much more when we succeed."*** Tim Keller

Next Week's SMV: "***Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.***" Matthew 6:33

Next Week's ABC: Philippians 3



**Session 6: Overdo or Overdue?**: Look at your schedule, how do your priorities, passions and plans coincide? It may be time for a Do Over.

ABC: Philippians 3 (Next Week's is 2 Corinthians 5)

Scripture Memory Verse: "***Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.***" Matthew 6:33

**Opening:** "How are you? Staying busy?" While "idle hands are the devil's workshop," (Proverbs 16:27), busyness can be equally unhealthy. Stress, anxiety, burnout, and addiction can often be linked to a problem of misplaced priorities. Take some time to consider the following...

**Six symptoms of misplaced priorities:** (Source: Chip Ingram)

1. Busyness- Perpetually living with more responsibilities and tasks to accomplish than time available.
2. Emotional stress and pressure- Overwhelmed, anxious, stressed out or consistently tense from the pressures of life.
3. Low-grade nagging guilt- Feeling bad about not being able to meet expectations (self, spouse, family, co-workers, others). Feeling like you are not enough/not doing enough.
4. Financial debt- Continually digging yourself out of debt from unnecessary or unexpected spending. Conflicted about tithing & giving generously in light of other financial pressures.
5. Prayerlessness- Disconnected in relationship with the Lord. Experiencing a "leakage" in your devotional life.
6. Escapism behavior- Turning to unhealthy coping mechanisms, including overuse of alcohol, binging tv/movies, pornography/sexual addiction, prescription drugs, etc.

Q. As you look over these "symptoms," which one hits closest to home for you? What might this reveal about your priorities?

Q. How can these symptoms impact your key relationships (marriage, kids, family, friends, co-workers, etc)?

*"Overcommitment and exhaustion are the most insidious and pervasive marriage killers you will ever encounter as a couple."* James Dobson

Read: "***But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more, and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you, so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.***" 1 Thessalonians 4:10-12

Q. The words "excel" and "ambition" are often associated with busyness, hustle and wide-spread recognition. What does Paul associate these traits with?

Q. What does this passage reveal about our priorities?

Read: "***Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke (teaching) upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke (teaching) is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.***" Matthew 11:28-30 (parentheses added for clarity)

*"We do not rest because our work is done; we rest because God commanded it and created us to have a need for it."* Richard Swenson (from the book Margins)

Q. Does your life reflect a commitment to the priority of spiritual rest? Have you committed to making Sunday a day of worship and rest?



Read: "*Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.*" Malachi 3:10

Q. How does your church and ministry giving reflect your priorities? How does it reflect your faith in God?

Q. How would you define your priorities? Have you expressed your priorities to others?

Growth Challenge: Write your Eulogy- How do you want to be remembered? By your spouse, your children, your friends, co-workers or fellow believers at church?

Ex. Wife: "*I want my wife to remember me as a loving, faithful husband who made her laugh, sacrificed for the good of her and our kids, helped her grow in her relationship with the Lord, and spent a lifetime humbly serving and pursuing her. I want her to remember the times we prayed together and played together as a loving couple. I want her to remember that I was always her biggest supporter, who cheered and pushed her to be her best and accomplish her dreams and goals. I also want her to feel great pride in knowing that anything that I accomplished in life is only possible because of her incredible faith, support, love and sacrifice.*"

<b>Growth Assessment:</b> Consider your priorities in light of your envisioned future and your current reality. As a man, husband, father, leader and friend, to get from where you are to where you desire to go will require an honest assessment of priorities and a conviction to make changes.			
<b>Current Reality →</b>	<b>Clarified Priorities →</b>	<b>Critical Changes/Steps →</b>	<b>Envisioned Future (start here then move to current reality)</b>
Ex. My daughter and I have a good relationship, but could be closer and more emotionally in touch with each other.	Special moments together. Talk about life issues regularly. Able to talk honestly about her current relationship with her boyfriend.	Establish a regular time for spending time together (Father / Daughter Date) Go through a book on Christian relationships together.	I want to give my daughter away in marriage to a godly young man and have a close, loving relationship with her and her future family.

Final Thought: Take time to reflect on your priorities and write them out. Review them regularly and ask your spouse, as well as other men to ask you about how you are living out your priorities. A higher level of accountability will help you to stay focused and live more intentionally.

Next Week's SMV: "*If your brother sins against you, go and confront him privately. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.*" Matthew 18:15

Next Week's ABC: 2 Corinthians 5



**Session 7: Giving others a Do Over:** The very heart of our Christian message and ministry is to reconcile broken relationships... here are some ways to practically do this and live it out.

ABC: 2 Corinthians 5 (take special note of v.16-21)

Scripture Memory Verse: "***Make allowance for each other's faults and forgive anyone who offends you.***

***Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.***" Colossians 3:13

**Opening:** We live in a difficult age when relationships are often ended after the slightest offense, or even for simply holding different values and beliefs. What is now referred to as "cancel culture" flies in the face of God's amazing grace. God has invited us to personally experience a relationship with Him through the forgiveness of our sins. A refusal to forgive others reveals a lack of understanding or appreciation for how God has forgiven us. Today, we will talk about why we should give people a do over and how that can happen.

**Introduction:** Let's go back to our first session of this series. Remember, we talked about the story of the prodigal Son and the loving Father who welcomed him back with open arms. This story represents God the Father's love and forgiveness for each of us. We can always be forgiven and "come home" in our relationship with God. Now let's consider another Jesus story from a different perspective.

**Read:** Matthew 18:23-35

Insight: Jesus doesn't mince words about the necessity of forgiving others for those who have experienced forgiveness from God. Here is the big idea... "*Hurt people, hurt people. Forgiven people, forgive people.*"

Consider this quote in light of Jesus' story- "*Perhaps the way human beings most reflect the character of God is through forgiving those who have hurt them.*" (Judy Dabler)

Q. Would you agree that loving your enemy, praying for those who persecute you and forgiving those who hurt you are evidences of God's grace working itself out in your life?

Q. Being forgiven by God should impact the way we live in tangible ways. What is one way your life has been altered because of personally experiencing God's forgiveness?

**Growth Challenge:** Write the name (or initials) of someone who forgave you for a sin or an offense you committed against them. \_\_\_\_\_ . In one word, write what that experience was like for you. \_\_\_\_\_ . (If you are willing, share that one word with the rest of the group.)

Insight: We often struggle to forgive others because we have adopted wrong thinking about the nature and purpose of forgiveness. Take a moment to consider what Biblical forgiveness is and what it isn't.

<b><u>Forgiveness is...</u></b>	<b><u>Forgiveness is not...</u></b>
An ongoing journey. (Psalm 86:5)	A single act. (Matthew 18:21-22)
Acknowledging the hurt, while giving that hurt to God. (1 Peter 5:7)	Minimizing or excusing the sin/offense and its effect on you. (Matthew 18:15)
An opportunity for the offender to regain trust and restore the relationship. (1 Peter 5:5)	Blindly ignoring ongoing mistreatment and mistrust. (Acts 17:30)
Setting healthy boundaries to prevent further abuse or mistreatment. (John 2:24, Matthew 10:16-17)	Letting everything go "back to normal." (John 8:11)
Choosing to no longer hold the offense against the other person. (Proverbs 17:9, 1 Corinthians 13:5)	Forgetting about the offense as if it never happened. (Ephesians 4:31-32)



Participating in the Gospel of Christ, which is a mission and ministry of reconciliation. (1 Corinthians 5:18)

Cancelling people and identifying them as “toxic.” (1 Peter 4:8)

Q. As you reflect on these differences, what does this do to shape or correct your perceptions on forgiveness?

**Key Concept:** Conflict is Inevitable: The question is not how do we AVOID conflict, but how do we RESOLVE conflict? There are two Biblical ways to respond to an offense- 1) Overlook 2) Reconcile.

**1) Overlooking an Offense: “A man’s wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense”**

Proverbs 19:11

Q. How do you know when you can overlook an offense or seek to reconcile a relationship? Consider these key questions:

- Can I move on without the impact of our conflict hindering or poisoning the relationship?
- Has this offense (especially from a believer) seriously dishonored God?
- Will this offense continue to hurt you, others or the offender?
- Is this offense outside of the other persons normal character or behavior, or is this a part of an ongoing pattern of offense?

Note: If the answer is “No” to these questions, you can let it go and move on. If the answer is “Yes,” pursue the path of reconciliation.

**2) Reconciliation:** We have been given a message and ministry of reconciliation. If there is a broken relationship in your life, you should proactively work to bring healing and restoration.

**“If your brother has something against you ... go and be reconciled”** Matthew 5:23-24

**“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you”** Matthew 18:15

**“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently.”** Galatians 6:1

Q. Why is it that these verses are so rarely put into practice? What would happen if we did?

**Key Truth:** *The goal of Reconciliation is to win the relationship, not the argument. You can win the argument but lose the relationship.* (Repentance, confession & forgiveness will only thrive when you value right relationships over right positions.)

Describe: How have you experienced first-hand the power of reconciliation in an important relationship in your life? Please share a story about your encounter with reconciliation.

**Closing Reflection:** **“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”** (Romans 12:18). Have you done everything in your power to resolve any grievances that you may have against someone or someone may have against you? Is there someone in particular that you need to begin a process of reconciliation with?

**Growth Challenge:** *(Even if you do not get through all of the content, read this).*

Reconciliation is a mandate for believers, but it can often be too difficult to work through without additional help or resources. If you feel that your conflict is beyond your capacity to handle on your own, consider reading the book “Peacemaker” by Ken Sande, “Instruments in The Redeemers Hands” by Paul Tripp or finding a professional Christian conciliator (consider Glenn and Susie Johnson locally- [www.greentwig.org](http://www.greentwig.org)) to walk you through this process.

\* Special thanks to Stephan Peck for helping to write session 7.