

OPEN

“Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.”

Coach Bobby Knight

You might have heard of the infamous coach Bobby Knight. He has made a name for himself, though not in the best of ways interpersonally. Maybe you were unaware that coach Knight got his start at West Point.

One of the things West Point and Coaching have in common is the value of “preparation.” Generals are taught to prepare for war. They draw up war plans and contingencies and adapt the plans as necessary. Similarly, coaches prepare a game plan for their opponent and adjust as needed. Corporations and even churches create plans to help steer their future and accomplish their goals.

What is your plan for studying God’s Word? Yes, discuss if you have a plan for the following areas and opportunities to study God’s Word:

In worship

In a class

In a smaller group

As an individual disciple

Take time to discuss the plans, you have, for studying the Word in these areas. What do you do? What have you found helpful? What have you found to be not so helpful? Do you need to plan?

What does Coach Knight’s quote remind each of us as we prepare to study God’s Word for a lifetime?

The Four Areas of Discipleship?

GET Christ’s forgiveness in Word and Sacrament.

GROW in grace and knowing Him.

GLOW with His love in your callings and through your local church.

GO tell the Good News about Him in your callings (vocations) and through your local church.

Today, lesson 4 concludes our study of step 2 of our ongoing discipleship plan, the GROWING we so desperately need, as disciples of Jesus.

Redemption

Redemption, like the similar term *ransom*, had a particular home in the slave markets of the ancient world. *Ransom* refers to the price that is paid, while *redemption* focuses on the act of paying the price. The need of God’s people for His redemption is a theme throughout the Scriptures. This theme is worth much of our attention as we read through the scriptures and grow in our knowledge of God’s grace, love, and mercy.

Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 1:18-19

¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—

In what way would you understand your *redemption* according to this passage?

¹⁸ knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

What was the *ransom* God paid for buying you out of your slavery to sin?

Victory

Is there anyone who doesn't appreciate winning? Cheering as the base runner scores the go-ahead run, watching exultantly as a last-second catch by Amari Cooper leads the Dallas Cowboys to beat the Philadelphia Eagles—we all know the sweet taste of victory.

For war-torn and embattle peoples, this taste was and is still sweeter. Victory means that destruction comes to an end. Life and living are restored. The higher the stakes, the greater the victory!

1 John 5:4-5; Romans 8:37

⁴ For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

What role does studying the Scriptures play in helping to strengthen your faith and to better understand the victory you've been given? Are there stories of God's victory on behalf of His people in the Bible? Is there any benefit in studying these stories?

How might the words of 1 John 5 fortify you for the challenges you're facing or ones you will one day face?

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Here is an example of a verse, which begs for you to read more and to dig in to what God is saying.

Read **Romans 8:18-39** as a group. What is your faith saying to you after you read this passage?

Homework

This homework is a four part assignment. Choose one from the group to identify 5 passages which speak to victories God has given to His people. Second, send these passages to the whole group. Thirdly, each individual read through these passages prior to your next meeting. Lastly, at the beginning of your next small group give time for each member to share what victory they enjoyed the most and how it has strengthened their faith.

Prayer Time:

List some options or approaches for beginning your personal plan to read the Scriptures, daily. Everyone in the group pick one of the options. Now, pray for the journey to begin and for faith to be strengthened that as a group and as individuals, you will GROW in the grace and knowledge of God and in your faith in Jesus Christ. **(see example provided: *Reading the Psalms in accordance to the Petitions of the Lord’s Prayer*)**

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