

C
●

R

III

FIVE-SESSION
STUDY GUIDE
FOR MEN



REDEEMED

TURNING BROKENNESS INTO
SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL

RT PHILLIPS AND TIM PHILLIPS

C
●
R
II
F
O
R
M
E
N

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III

III כ ● ח
א ●
● כ
ו ● א III



C
●
R
||

FIVE-SESSION
STUDY GUIDE
FOR MEN



REDEEMED

TURNING BROKENNESS INTO
SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL

 ZONDERVAN™

ZONDERVAN

CORE for Men: Redeemed

Copyright © 2021 by CORE Ministries Inc.

Requests for information should be addressed to:

Zondervan, 3900 Sparks Drive SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546

Scripture quotations marked ESV are taken from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®). Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NASB are taken from the New American Standard Bible®. Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org).

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.Zondervan.com. The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.®

Scripture quotations marked NKJV is [are] taken from the New King James Version®. © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation. © 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Any internet addresses (websites, blogs, etc.) and telephone numbers in this book are offered as a resource. They are not intended in any way to be or imply an endorsement by Zondervan, nor does Zondervan vouch for the content of these sites and numbers for the life of this book.

Published in association with The Fedd Agency, 401 Ranch Road 620 South, Suite 250, Austin, TX 78734.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

ISBN 978-0-310-13161-8 (softcover)

ISBN 978-0-310-13162-5 (ebook)

First Printing January 2021 / Printed in the United States of America

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK:

Kris Kile, whose wisdom and labor is reflected throughout this entire guide. Without Kris's contributions, this series would not be what it is.

Jeff, for his ability to help us make this guide less informational and more conversational.

Jesse and his team at OX Creative, for the beautifully creative ways that they shaped the look and feel of this project.

Dean, for his courage, friendship, and sacrificial financial partnership.

CORE Ministries, Inc.
PO Box 93007
Austin TX 78709

COREUNITES.COM

Contents

DISCUSSION GUIDE • PERSONAL STUDY • SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

OVERVIEW..... 1

GROUP DYNAMICS..... 4



SESSION 1 – CALLED 13
MARIANO RIVERA



SESSION 2 – REDEMPTION..... 28
KYLE OXFORD



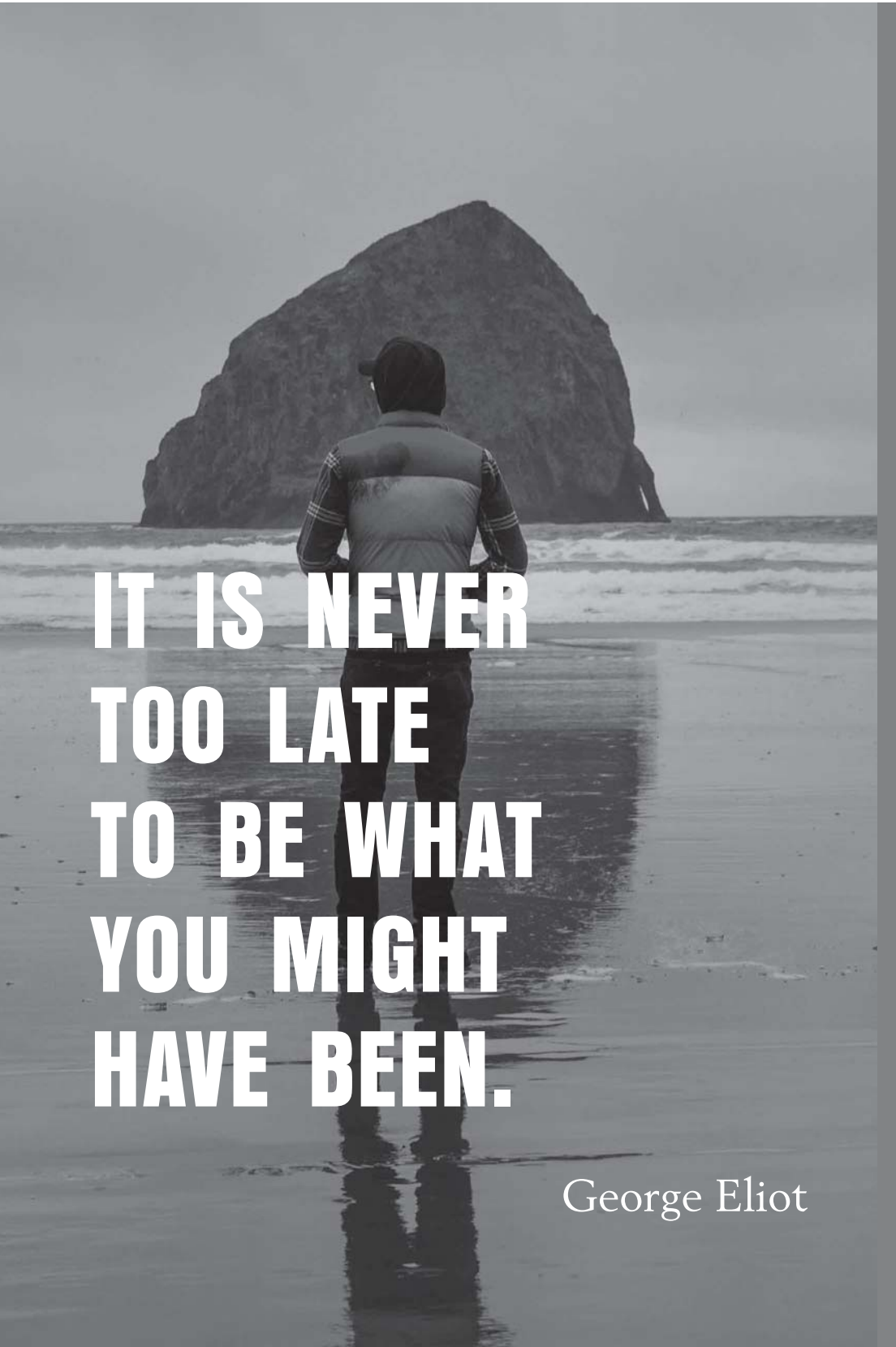
SESSION 3: – SONS..... 42
TOMMY GREEN



SESSION 4 – RESTORATION..... 56
SHARON & ROBERT IRVING



SESSION 5 – PURPOSE..... 72
TOM PATERSON

A black and white photograph of a person standing on a beach, looking out at a large, prominent rock formation in the ocean. The person is seen from behind, wearing a dark jacket and a cap. The ocean waves are breaking in the distance, and the sky is overcast. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**IT IS NEVER
TOO LATE
TO BE WHAT
YOU MIGHT
HAVE BEEN.**

George Eliot

OVERVIEW



WE ARE EXCITED YOU CHOSE TO BE A PART OF THIS JOURNEY.

We have been working with men in stadiums, arenas, churches, businesses, and homes for decades and can sum up what we have seen as their biggest battles in two words: *Isolation* and *Disqualification*.

- **Isolation: “If you knew how messed up some of my life is, you wouldn’t want to have anything to do with me.”**
- **Disqualification: “If you knew how messed up some of my life is, you wouldn’t want me to have anything to do with you.”**

The passion behind CORE is to create spaces where men have permission to be real. Spaces where men discover they are not alone with the kind of doubts and fears they face. Spaces where they have like-minded brothers who are there with them.

In spite of what our culture might tell us, life was not designed to figure things out on our own. When Jesus came to earth to start a revolution, he did so by gathering a small band of ordinary men.



OVERVIEW

These men had their own unique backgrounds, diverse occupations, and individual personalities. It was alongside one another that Jesus would orchestrate learning environments that would change them into the most powerful transformative community in the history of the world.

Together, these men went from being self-centered individuals to united powerhouses that forever changed the course of history. Jesus didn't just teach them wonderful truths. He modeled, coached, and empowered them on what it took to make those truths become a living reality in the challenging world in which they lived. Please hear this when we say, "Jesus is still forming and empowering communities today."

Our hope is that this 5-session small group experience is the beginning of a journey that transforms your group into this type of community.

Here are the basic elements we have prepared for you:

5 SHORT FILMS

We believe in the power of story. The 5 films connected with Series 1 are stories of real people facing real life challenges.

5-PART DISCUSSION GUIDE

We believe in the power of community. This guide will help facilitate small group interaction in a way that creates connection around things that matter.

5-PART PERSONAL STUDY AND SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

We believe in the power of personal study and reflection. This gives the opportunity, between group meetings, to move the ideas from the film and discussion into deeper understanding and growth.



GROUP DYNAMICS

COMBINED WITH THE FILMS, THE 5-SESSION GROUP DISCUSSION IS DESIGNED TO MAXIMIZE INTERACTION, CONNECTION AND MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS.

We've intentionally made this guide as straightforward as possible. Please know that each of these simple steps are specifically designed to help create maximum impact for you and your group. With that in mind, we encourage you to trust the process by following each step along with its suggested time frame.

CORE GROUP TIME CONSISTS OF:

1. Opening Prayer. Surrendering time and hearts to God's leading.

2. Check In. Discussing past week's issues, progress, and challenges.

3. Watch Film. Viewing together a 10- to 14-minute real-life story.

4. Discussion. Sharing personal impressions and thoughts about the film.

5. Next Steps. Discussing a measurable step that can be taken this coming week.

6. Personal Study Preview. Brief look at this week's personal study.

7. Closing Prayer. Asking for God's guidance and strength for the week ahead.

Each meeting together will serve as an opportunity to connect with each other, get real, build trust, and consider the important issues in the lives of everyone in your group.

OVERVIEW

IDEAL GROUP SIZE & TIME FRAME

An ideal small group size is 5–7. If the group is too small and somebody does not come or drops out, you can lose the collective perspective and encouragement a group can bring. If it is too large, you lose the opportunity for everyone to fully participate and build trust. If your group is larger, you can break into smaller groups for the discussion time. If you are meeting as a large group, we strongly encourage you keep the smaller groups together throughout your 5 sessions.

An ideal time frame for your group is 90 minutes. Of course, if your group decides, you can meet for longer or shorter periods. We recommend not meeting for less than 60 minutes. The suggested meeting agenda we have provided is based on the 90-minute time frame. If you meet longer or shorter, adjust accordingly.

Note that our language throughout is “each week.” We find a lot of groups meet every other week. This can work great as well. For relational continuity we do not recommend meeting once a month.

GROUP FACILITATOR

We have consistently seen the #1 common denominator for most effective small groups is having one individual who is motivated to “owning” the group’s formation, logistics, and reminders for the full 5 weeks. This will go a long way in seeing the group stay consistent and finish strong. Many times, that same guy guides the group through the discussion, but that is not always the case. The main responsibilities for an effective group facilitator are:

- Recruits men to join him in a 5-session small-group experience together.
- Makes sure everyone gets a study guide.
- Makes sure the meeting place and film watching portion are good to go.
- Communicates meeting time reminders and encouragement between gatherings.

MEETING LOGISTICS

The group dynamic is designed around watching a short film together each time you meet. This will require having the means to play the films and access to a proper screen and sound system. In choosing the meeting place, the fewer distractions you have, the greater the chance for open discussion. Some churches host larger gatherings of men who sit around individual tables. They all watch the film together and participate in all the discussion time at their tables. If you do this, we encourage you to keep the same guys at each table each week in order to build trust.

FIRST SESSION ORIENTATION


Please be sure that your group goes over the Sharing and Group Guidelines in the first session and has a chance to ask any clarification questions. Have the group agree to commit to these Guidelines. They are simple yet designed to enhance your experience together.

OVERVIEW

Here is how everything fits together for this series.

- Each meeting you will go through the Group Discussion Guide, watch a film, and discuss personal relevance and application.
- In between each session, you will go through the Personal Study and Scripture Reflection to process the major theme of that film and think more deeply on supporting Scriptures.
- At the next meeting you will have an opportunity to discuss what you discovered, worked through, and what stood out to you during your Personal Study and Scripture Reflection time.

We encourage your group to consider at least one “off the script” meeting (i.e., BBQ, movie, sporting event, games, cards, etc.). We lay these out more fully at coreunites.com/whatsnext.



In the first session
together, please
**read out loud these
guidelines** for everyone
to have an opportunity
to discuss and agree to.

OVERVIEW

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

We believe that if you can stay within the riverbanks of these four guidelines, you will maximize a positive small experience for everyone.

1. Personalize, Not Sermonize. What does the specific issue being discussed mean for my life, my concerns, my dreams versus the need to give additional insights to others? The courage to speak from personal transparency contributes significantly to everyone in your group. Speak more from the “I”, “my”, “me” and NOT the “you” and “we” position. This can be difficult for those of us who are teachers or those who wish to be seen as insightful.

2. Be Brief. Be thoughtful not to dominate discussion time. Think in terms of 1-2 minutes each time you share. If you know you are someone who loves to share, discipline yourself to actively listen. If you have something that needs more time to unpack, make a request to discuss it later. Being brief can be difficult for those of us who externally process versus those who internalize thoughts before speaking.

3. Encourage, Not Fix. We honor courageous authenticity. We discourage group counsel or correction. We need to take responsibility for our own actions, results, and experiences. This can be difficult for those of us who are counselors or “fixers.”

4. Maintain Confidentiality. Keep everything shared confidential. Do not repeat it to ANYONE outside your CORE group, including spouses or close friends. This can be difficult for those of us who don’t highly value what it means to be a trusted confidante.

SMALL GROUP COURTESY “101s”

- If you are going to be late or absent, call someone in your group to inform them.
- No cellphone use during the meeting, unless permission is asked at the beginning of the meeting.
- Don’t leave the group permanently without speaking to your group about it.

There are 5 films
that go along with
*CORE for Men:
Redeemed.* These are
a central component
to the small-group
experience.

OVERVIEW

ADDITIONAL SMALL GROUP BEST PRACTICES

Here are some additional small group dynamic insights that will be beneficial for your CORE group to be aware of:

- The purpose of a CORE group is to encourage us to think and discuss from a personal heart perspective. When the film ends, go directly into the first discussion question, “What part of _____ story or sharing stuck out to you?”
- The CORE discussion time is a simple invitation to be real. No posturing required. “Being real” can mean different things to different people. So, be respectful of each other and embrace what “being real” means for them. That includes not making anyone feel like they have to share something personal. When everyone in a group feels like they can relax and be themselves, it’s surprising how God will help open up the group’s interaction over time.
- Interrupt any tendency you feel to judge another. We get enough of that already.
- Avoid being an “advice giver.” If someone in the group wants input or feedback, let them ask for it. If you have input you want to offer, ask permission to give it. Feel free to not grant permission to someone to give input if you are not ready to hear it from them.
- Do not shut down someone who may choose to use strong language or express raw emotion in describing their perspective and experience (i.e., swearing, raising voice, etc.).
- Be respectful of the time frames included in the meeting agenda for each week. As briefly discussed earlier in our Group Guidelines, a common problem is the tendency of one guy to dominate the group time. If someone is going over on time, after the meeting, respectfully remind them of the guidelines. If they persist, kindly remind them during the group time out of respect for the rest of the group.

- There will be some very good and open conversations in the “Check In” and “Discussion” time. Make sure you leave yourselves a little room for the “Next Steps,” “Personal Study Preview,” and “Closing Prayer” time.
- The current culture is high on talking but slow on doing. When you purposefully give time to ask, “What specific step am I going to take this week?” it can move your group into new levels of discovery and breakthrough. This also gives everyone something specific to pray for one another during the week.
- In your first time together, write down everyone’s name in this guide and during the week, take a moment to pray for each guy by name. It doesn’t have to be a long prayer. Watch what happens to your own heart toward the guys in your group when you do this. It’s pretty awesome to see how your heart changes toward the group.
- When you discuss how your previous week’s “Next Steps” and “Personal Study” went, this is a “no shame zone.” Growth and new habits take time. Empathy, encouragement, and patience go a long way toward building the kind of environment that will surface root issues and facilitate breakthrough.
- Pay attention to the men in your group. If it seems like there might be a guy who would have an easier time opening up “one on one,” look for an opportunity to grab a coffee or a bite to eat. These moments can be great for some guys.
- Finally, a great CORE group meeting, which takes time to evolve, has an ease and a flow to it. It is not a rigidly enforced agenda, but it is important to follow the established guidelines that allow enough time for each of the group elements.

LET’S GO!

SESSION



CALLED

MARIANO RIVERA

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE (90 MINUTES)

OPENING PRAYER

Surrender your time and heart to God's leading.

CHECK IN (15 MINUTES—1–2 MINUTES PER PERSON)

1. Share your name.
2. Main reasons for wanting to be in the group.
3. One thing you would like to get from participating in the group.

TOGETHER READ THE GUIDELINES ON PAGE 9. (15 MINUTES)

These are simple yet designed to enhance your group experience.

1. Does everyone in the group understand them?
2. Are there any clarification questions regarding any of the guidelines?
3. Can we commit to these as a group?



Note: Many of you are seeing this study guide for the first time. There is some foundational information in the Overview and Group Dynamics section that would be well worth reading before you meet again.

WATCH FILM (11 MINUTES)

Called—Mariano Rivera

GROUP DISCUSSION (35 MINUTES)

Be mindful of the need for everyone to have the opportunity to talk. Take 1–2 minutes each time you share.

1. Which part of Mariano's story did you connect with?
2. Mariano said that his pitch's new movement was not something he deserved or was asking for but was a gift that gave him a platform to honor God. Have you ever thought that way about a strength or ability in your life? Explain.

CALLED

NEXT STEPS (10 MINUTES)

In light of today's discussion, what is one step you can take in your life or in your relationships this week? Something specific. Something measurable. Something the group can pray for during the week.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PERSONAL STUDY AND SCRIPTURE REFLECTION—READ OUT LOUD (2 MINUTES)

The Personal Study and Scripture Reflection section in this guide is included in each of the sessions. Taking time each week to do them can be one of the most important things you choose to do over these next 5 weeks. It is the difference between randomly throwing seed on the ground versus planting it deeply. Setting aside time for personal study and prayerful reflection is a new rhythm for many. Committing to this, along with showing up every week with your group, will strengthen your ability to drop old thoughts and habits and take on new ways to think and live.

PERSONAL STUDY EXCERPT—READ OUT LOUD (2 MINUTES)

God made Mariano in His own image, and God led him to a particular place, with a particular talent, to show God's character to a particular people. He began to see with more and more clarity, that God was weaving His grand story within the particulars of his own personal story. Mariano said, "It was something that the Lord gave me to give me a platform to talk about Him. Not because I was asking. Not because I deserved it. But He wanted to use that to glorify His name." God has a purpose for His people. It's such a wild thought, isn't it? The God of the universe has chosen to collaborate with ordinary, everyday, imperfect people. He doesn't do this because He's been forced to and it's definitely not because He needs to, but solely because He wants to.

CLOSING PRAYER

Ask for God's guidance and strength for the week ahead.

CORE GROUP NOTES



SESSION 1



PERSONAL STUDY

Given Mariano's status as the greatest relief pitcher in the history of baseball, it might at first be hard to relate to how his journey began. It started with him having virtually no awareness of a particular calling or specific purpose. Calling and purpose were probably the furthest things from his mind. Yet, regardless of what Mariano was or was not aware of, it is clear from his story that God had a calling and purpose for his life.

In the same way, God has a specific calling and purpose for you. Look at what He says to you in His Word:

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. **John 15:16 (NIV)**

God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. **1 Corinthians 1:28–29 (NIV)**

God has a purpose for His people. It's such a wild thought, isn't it? The God of the universe has chosen to collaborate with ordinary, everyday, imperfect people. He doesn't do this because He's been forced to and it's definitely not because He needs to, but solely because He wants to.

God made you in His image. **Genesis 1:26 (ESV)** clearly states our original purpose and calling:

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

This means that the all-encompassing aim of your life is to reflect God to others. That looks unique for each one of us. We all have different jobs,

different families, live in different homes, have different backgrounds, and so on. But there are some constants for everyone—such as reflecting God’s love, His goodness, His compassion, His forgiveness, just to name a few. All of us are called to reflect God to specific people in certain places and times.

God calls you and gives gifts to you in order to fulfill that calling. He has made you in His image. He chose you. He loves you. And you did absolutely nothing to earn it. That is the good news of God’s grace! No pressure to earn it, perform for it, or try to achieve it. God freely offers it. He paid the price in full. It is a free gift (Romans 5:15; 6:23).

Consider the status of Mariano’s life when God called him. It was well before Mariano had accomplished any level of success in his life. God did not choose him because he was successful—because at that time he wasn’t. God chose him because God loved him, and it was for God’s purposes. God is on the move and He’s chosen to use ordinary people to partner with Him and His purposes. Just as He invited Mariano to collaborate with Him, He is inviting us to do the same.

When you get a glimpse of the life of Mariano Rivera, you see the uniqueness of God’s calling. We’re talking about the best closer in major league history. When he stepped on the mound in the ninth inning, he dominated unlike anyone before or after him. But his story is much more than being a great pitcher. It’s a love story of God pursuing him, changing him, and collaborating with him.

GOD MADE MARIANO IN HIS OWN IMAGE, AND GOD LED HIM TO A PARTICULAR PLACE, WITH A PARTICULAR TALENT, TO SHOW GOD’S CHARACTER TO A PARTICULAR PEOPLE.

Even before Mariano committed his life to Christ, he became aware that God was trying to get his and his wife’s attention. God had been using each of Mariano’s circumstances to soften his heart and to open his eyes. One day, he heard a pastor give an invitation to become a follower of Jesus. It was then, on that day, that he confessed Jesus as his Lord and made Him his Savior.

**THE TWO MOST
IMPORTANT DAYS
IN YOUR LIFE
ARE THE DAY YOU
WERE BORN AND
THE DAY YOU
FOUND OUT WHY.**

Mark Twain

If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. **Romans 10:9–10 (NLT)**

Mariano said, “That was the moment that I said, ‘I surrender. I can’t do this thing anymore.’ That moment was something special . . . I said to God, whatever you want us to do, we are here.”

He began to see with more and more clarity, that God was weaving His grand story within the particulars of his own human story.

Mariano started noticing God’s work in very specific things, including baseball. For example, when Mariano threw the ball—just as he always had—it started moving toward the catcher in ways that he had never experienced before. Batters were rarely able to get a hit off his pitches, and Mariano knew that God had given him this particular ability for a purpose.

Mariano said, “It was something that the Lord gave me to give me a platform to talk about Him. Not because I was asking. Not because I deserved it. But He wanted to use that to glorify his name.”

This is indeed a gift—God giving something that was not earned or expected. A gift is not based upon accomplishments, dedication, hard work, talent, or effort. A gift is something that the Giver has decided to impart simply because He wants to and loves to.

How many gifts from God go unnoticed or unappreciated for what they are? It is so easy to experience blessings in our relationships and careers without seeing them for what they really are. They are all opportunities to experience the graciousness of God in our lives and to use them to honor Him.

We use the gifts that God has given us in one of two ways: to honor God, or to honor ourselves. Oftentimes we can start believing that we are the ones who are responsible for these gifts in our lives. But Mariano shares with us that it’s through the difficult times of life

PERSONAL STUDY

that we are reminded of how powerless we really are—and how powerful God is. It is when things don't turn out the way we want them, when we go through times of failure and unmet expectations, that we are given the gift of facing our own inabilities.

Here is a secret worth discovering: when we come face to face with inabilities and weaknesses and learn how to surrender those to the King of Grace, there exists freedom and joy. It is as simple as praying, "God, I can't do this, I can't face this, but I ask You to help me take the first steps to let You do through me what I'm struggling with on my own."

This is what Paul is encouraging the Corinthians with the counterintuitive secret God revealed to him.

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NIV)

Are you willing to see hardships that way? Ask yourself this CRUCIAL question:

When I go through the fire of life's challenges, am I willing to become less dependent on myself and more dependent on God?

We must believe that we can face our own weakness because God is always seeking to draw our hearts closer to Him—and few things in the world can draw us nearer to God than difficulties. He is always faithful to grant us the grace and courage necessary to stand firm during these times. When we come out of that fire, we will be stronger and more faithful than when we went into it.

One of the ways we are able to persevere with hope is by the gift of community. Mariano said that Willie Alfonso was a powerful influence during the hardest seasons of his life. Willie was a person who was always there for Mariano. He was one of God's provisions for Mariano to recognize that life is not meant to be figured out on one's own.

AS YOU THINK ABOUT THOSE IN YOUR CORE GROUP:

- Trust that God has provided them for you to encourage and strengthen your faith.
- Trust that God has provided you for them to encourage and strengthen their faith.

God has gathered each of you together to be a support for one another through the fires.

Think about the challenges you currently face in your life: work, family, children, spouse, and all the other facets of your life.

Let this 5-week CORE journey be an opportunity to be as real as possible with one another, to come alongside one another and to experience significant breakthroughs together.

PERSONAL STUDY NOTES



SESSION 1

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION



PERSONAL STUDY QUESTIONS

Some things become clearer when you take the time to actually write down your thoughts. Though it is not a familiar practice for many, consider taking a few minutes with each of these 4 questions:

1. What was one thing that struck me most from my Personal Study reading?
2. What is one area of my life where I could really use a breakthrough?

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION PRACTICE

We encourage you to consider the following Scripture passage over the course of this week in a prayerfully contemplative way. This simple process will help you engage not only your mind but also your heart. Consider focusing this week on the same Scripture below (Ephesians 2:4-10) each day, using these principles:

- Be alert for a phrase or word that catches your attention. This could be in the form of a question on what it means or a new insight.
- Once during the week, read the verse aloud slowly.
- Once during the week, as you read the verses, pause along the way to use it to spark specific prayers to God.
- Finally, after reading the verses, pause to be thankful that, “it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”

Philippians 2:13 (ESV)

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION FOR SESSION 1: EPHESIANS 2:4–10 (NIV)

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION NOTES

