

12Stone Church
Kevin Myers
Series: Home Run Life
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Home Run Life – Week 1
Genesis 37-50; Romans 12

Welcome to *Home Run Life – Week 1*. I am so excited to share in this series with you. Let's just dive in. Let's play ball. On the back of your bulletin, you will find teaching notes and four questions that can transform your life. The first question is...

1. *What makes for a home run life?* In other words, everybody wants a home run life. Everybody wants that kind of experience in the whole of their life. The question is what are the elements that make up for a great life? I'm glad you asked. Here's what I think is the first one, obvious to all of us. I'll jot it down.

I think the first element is *success*. See, when we're young and we dream about our lives, we dream about job, financial, business, sports, career success. That's why I love the Super Bowl XXXIII commercial by monster.com. It captures the essence of this. You'll enjoy it. It's one of my favorites. Check it out.

[Video]

Boy: When I grow up, I want to file all day.

Boy: I want to claw my way up to middle management.

Girl: ...be replaced on a whim.

Boy: I want to be a yes-man.

Girl: ...yes-woman.

Girl: "Yes, sir." "Coming, sir."

Boy: "Anything for a raise, sir."

Girl: When I grow up...

Boy: When I grow up...

Boy: I want to be underappreciated.

Girl: ...be paid less for doing the same job.

Boy: I want to be forced into early retirement.

[End of video]

That's just funny. That is backhanded sarcasm, isn't it? I mean, nobody really aspires when they're young, "Oh, I hope I grow up and accomplish small things. I hope I grow up and strike out." No! No, when you imagine the life you long for, you imagine success. But hear me. Success is too small to make up the whole of a life dream.

In fact, you may start with success, but that's not the end. Whether you've ever thought about it or not, when you dreamed of the life you had longed for, you imagined it would have *someone*. You imagined it would have... what? Someone. It's the "someones." Someone was involved in that dream, that hope for a dream life.

Whether it was coworkers or teammates, close friends... Maybe it was that soulmate. You longed someday to get married, hoped for kids, the beauty of family. See, there was always this *someone*, because success without someone is hollow.

Let me illustrate with a golf joke. Are there any golfers here across the campuses? Are there any golfers? Let yourself be known. All right. Then you'll appreciate this. There was this pastor who loved to golf. It was driving him nuts because every Sunday was sunny and gorgeous and every day off was rainy.

See, he had been brought up in that tradition where you can't golf on Sunday. That would be wrong. That would be sin. He could never golf on Sunday, and it was ticking him off. I mean, this was happening every week. Finally he just said, "God, I can't take it anymore! I want to do the wrong thing." He made the phone call, and he said, "I'm not going to be in this weekend." He told the assistant pastor to preach for him.

He left on that Sunday morning and drove two or three counties away so nobody would know him. He got on the golf course. Just like every other Sunday, it was sunny. It was gorgeous. It was beautiful. He got on the first tee and said, "I know this is going to be miserable, God. I know you're not going to help me, but I'm doing it anyway. I'm playing golf." He hit the first drive: 275-300 yards (it blew his mind) down center. I mean, he parred the first hole.

He was out of his mind. He had the best game of his life. He got to the last hole. He hit the ball, and it was a hole-in-one... every golfer's dream! He was out of his mind. He was dancing on the green. He was like, "God, I thought you would make this miserable for me." God said, "I did!"

"What do you mean?"

"Who are you going to tell?"

Success all alone is empty. Success without the "someones" is diminished joy. See, when you dreamed of your life, you not only imagined you would have success; you dreamed there would be the people you love and the people who love you.

That's not all you ever dreamed. If you've never thought about it, you also dreamed of *self-respect*. See, you imagined you would be able to look into the mirror and respect the person you see in the mirror without dropping your eyes in disgrace. You imagined a person who could rise up with self-leadership who would not be owned by pleasures and passions and addictions, a person with integrity. See, wherever you go, there you are. If you can't respect the person you are, it's a pretty miserable life.

Maybe you never thought about it before, but you not only imagined a life of success and someone and self-respect. It's not over. You imagined *significance*. What did you imagine? You dreamed your life dream would lead to significance, that your life would make a difference. You imagined it would count for what matters, not just that you would have empty success, not just to make a dollar but to make a difference.

Now that's a great life. That's a great dream. That's success in the someone, self-respect, and significance. That's a home run life. Everybody longs for that. Those are the elements in it, but very few people actually get that life. In fact, most of us get one or two of those things and crash on the rest. That was the experience for Luis Ramos who, over a decade ago, was sitting in a place just like you here and I was delivering the first kind of testing seasons of *Home Run Life*. Here's a slice of his story.

[Video]

Luis Ramos: My name is Luis Ramos, and I'm 44 years old. I've been married to my high-school sweetheart for almost 25 years. You know, I find myself in one place in business and family and relationships that, thank God, today is really great and very fulfilling. It wasn't always that way, however.

I had made my life about having more, getting more, making more, and achieving more. Everything else was falling apart around me. My marriage was falling apart. I barely knew my children. I told myself it was for everybody else, so I said, "I'm doing this for my family. I'm going to make sure I set us up for a great life." That's nonsense. It's not true. I really loved the feeling I got from success. It was addictive. I just needed a clean break and to start all over.

I told my wife I had made a mistake, and we were really not meant to be together. On a Sunday in early October, my wife was going to church with the kids. I decided to join them really to keep up appearances. It just so happened it was the first day of a multi-week series on the *Home Run Life*. I sat there, and I was intrigued by the production, but what really caught me was Kevin starting to tell the *Home Run Life* story, the parable.

[End of video]

Like Luis, most of us get one or two elements in our life dream, and then we crash in the rest. Maybe that's because nobody has ever taught us how God grows us up. In fact, that brings us to the second question of four questions that can transform your life.

2. *What can we learn from Joseph's journey?* For our limited time, let me highlight from Genesis 37-50 in the Old Testament the story of Joseph. I'll pick highlights. I'll pick out kind of breakthrough moments in his life to put this together. Joseph was 17 years old when he had a dream. It was a dream about his future. It was literally a vision from God.

Now Joseph was the son of Jacob, the grandson of Isaac, the great-grandson of Abraham. He was in the line of God's great promises. His father, Jacob, was highly influential, very affluent. Joseph was a favored son. He had many older brothers. In fact, by the end of the story, you discover his older brothers and he together made up eventually what's called the 12 tribes of the nation of Israel. The name of his father Jacob was changed to Israel. That's where Israel gets the name.

Back at this time, he is 17 years old. He is a favored son, and he has what Scripture calls a "coat of many colors," which means he is important. Dad gave it to him. He is kind of bragging. See, this is ticking his brothers off. They're full of jealousy, and Joseph is walking around in his coat, strutting like he is somebody.

Then he not only acts like he is important to his earthly father, but also he is like, "I don't know what to say, guys. I'm obviously important to Dad, and I'm obviously more important to God because I had a vision. Did anybody get a vision? No? Nobody else? I had one. Guess what? In the vision, I'm standing, and you're bowing. Isn't that an awesome vision, guys?"

Nobody was excited. By the way, nobody gets excited when your vision is you're standing and they're bowing. Joseph had every reason to believe this was going to come about, this would happen. Why? Because God was in it. In fact, we often quote promises of God. We'll jump into the New Testament like John 10:10 where Jesus said, "I have come that you might have life and have it to the full."

Then we expect the very next thing when we come to relationship with God through Jesus is life is now going to be easy and awesome. Joseph was probably expecting the next thing to be success. The next thing was a pit. He got thrown into a pit. His brothers got tired of this, so they literally threw him down into a pit. They took his coat of many colors. They cut it up so it looked like an animal tore it up. They put ram's blood on it, took it back to Dad, and said, "Dad, it looks like Joseph went bye-bye."

Of course those were pre-DNA days. You could figure that out today, but not back in the day. Now they take him from the pit, and they sell him into slavery. Off he goes to Egypt. His father assumes he is dead, and nobody comes to rescue him. Joseph has to be asking himself, "God,

what on earth are you doing?" Have you ever asked that of God? Have you ever just said, "God, I'm trying to follow you. What on earth are you allowing in my life?"

I was 30 years old, 9 years into our marriage. It was one of the most undoing years in my life when I had to sit down with my wife and ask her to go back to work. Now understand we'd been married for nine years. For the first five years, there was some good ministry stuff. For the last four years, we were planting 12Stone. We said, "Once we have a couple of kids, you get to be a full-time mom." We had a couple of kids, but I had to ask her to go back to work because I was failing in my work.

We had lost our house money. Some of you have heard these stories. We had lost our cars and our savings and our little IRA stuff and everything we had. We were going bankrupt. I was doing odd jobs and everything I knew to do. It was like, "Honey, if you don't go back to work, we're done." I'm in this pit, and I'm like, "Hello, God! What are you doing when you let this happen?" I didn't know then, but I can tell you now what I think God was doing. He was helping me win dependence.

In fact, many of you may find yourself in pits you didn't create, and God has allowed them to come your way. You're like, "God, what are you doing? I expected it to be easy and awesome." Maybe he is doing the same thing. That's what I think he was doing with Joseph. Watch this. I think he was helping Joseph *win dependence*.

God was stripping Joseph of everything he would have used to make this dream possible so he could move Joseph from self-reliance to God-reliance. Oh, that's a major move! See, many of us never grow up spiritually because nobody ever told us how you grow up spiritually. We know how you grow up *humanly*. We don't know how you grow up *spiritually*. Let me just give you a quick understanding of it.

Here's how you grow up humanly. You move from dependence to independence. Let me talk for a moment. How many of you here across all the campuses have children under 5 years of age? Hands up. You have children under 5 years of age. There you go. You see the hands. They're adorable, right? You're just drawn to them. You're endeared. Through their elementary years, you cannot imagine them ever leaving.

Then God makes them teenagers. Now you cannot imagine them *staying*. See, that's a process. You start out. They're wholly dependent on you. Then they're progressively moving from dependence to... what? Independence. Spiritual growth is the opposite. This is how you grow up spiritually. You are born in sin, separated from God, distant from God. You think you're your own god. You're independent, and independent from God you begin to grow and be drawn to God.

You discover God loves you and, through Jesus, he made a way for you to be restored to him. You come to faith through Jesus, and your entire journey is to move you from independence to what, church? Dependence. Oh, this is a deep and wide reality. Jesus said in John 15, "I am the vine. You are the branch. If a man or woman remains in me, you will bear much fruit. But apart from me, you can do nothing." Learn to depend. It takes a lifetime.

The second breakthrough in Joseph's life was to *win within*. See, his second major breakthrough, the next one, was to win within. He had a major temptation. See, now he was bought by Potiphar. At the age of 17, he was taken to Egypt and bought by Potiphar who was highly influential in the military arena of Egypt. He had been there for now five to seven years. He was probably 22 to 25 years old. He had risen up as a slave (how exciting is that?), overseeing the household affairs of his master, Potiphar, and his wife.

Potiphar's wife made an indecent proposal, a sexual advance, engaged an affair. In that moment, he had to decide, "What kind of person am I going to be?" We all have to make that decision. "What's the moral code? Do I follow God or create my own?" See, Joseph couldn't help that he was a slave on the outside, but he didn't have to be a slave on the inside to his passions, his appetites, or his desires. He could be a man of integrity, and he made the right decision.

Oh, by the way, for making the right decision, do you know what happened? He got thrown in prison. Isn't that awesome? "Yay, God! I did the right thing, and I lost." See, Potiphar's wife said he actually did initiate and rape her, and Potiphar threw him into prison. Have you ever done the right thing and took a loss instead of a win? Oh, but God is not done.

The next major breakthrough is *win with others*. Get in the story with me for a moment. Just everybody here, campuses, go with me on this. Now Joseph is the servant. He is the slave. He is the guy on his hands and knees. He is cleaning the floor. While he is doing that in Egypt, very important people are walking by, and they don't even notice him. They just dismiss him.

Maybe that's when Joseph discovered, "You know, I used to be important. I used to walk around my Dad's place in my coat of many colors. I was somebody. Equally, there used to be people doing just what I'm doing...servants I never noticed." Maybe God had him in that place to teach him how to value others. Because, hear me. There are few things more redefining than when God puts you in the place of people you once dismissed. Maybe then Joseph realized, "I kind of helped put myself in this place. I dismissed my brothers and their issues, their needs."

Between the ages of 21 and 25, my first ministry experience was I was the associate pastor of a church that had tremendous growth. It was the fastest growing in our little denomination and in that territory. I began to feel self-important. During that time, I subtly began to think differently toward pastors who led smaller churches. I started to think, "Do you know what? If those guys would just put a little effort in, it would work." I subtly dismissed.

When we planted 12Stone, we had 104 people on the opening weekend. Four years later, we had 82 (I'm just that good...yeah, yeah) during which season God whispers in my ear, "Now, Kevin, let's talk again about pastors who lead smaller churches." See, that's how I learned that if you don't value others, you use others.

Maybe God has you in some places just like this where you're down on your knees, and you don't want to be. You're in some places in work or in life and relationship, and you're begging for God to lift you up when God is trying to teach you how to win with others and value others. By the way, we know Joseph broke through. Do you know how we know? Because fast-forward. When

he was 39 years old, which is 22 years after they sold him into slavery... His brothers sold him into slavery at 17.

Quick story. At 39 years old, he was already second in command in all of Egypt. There was a famine going on, and during the famine, guess what? A group of guys who were starving came there. They were his brothers. Guess who they had to kneel before in order to get food? This is such a good story!

They had to kneel in front of Joseph. The dream! Here his brothers are kneeling. He is standing. How good did that moment have to be for him? All he had to do was just wave his hand, and they would be executed. Instead, he executed mercy and forgiveness. That's a changed, transformed man.

The next major breakthrough was to *win results*. Oh, this is huge! God helped him win results. Fast-forward. He was from 17 to 30... At 30 years of age, he had been in pits and prisons for 13 years. Pharaoh has a dream. The dream is from God. It's a vision. He can't interpret it himself, and neither can anybody else. Then they say, "Oh, there's this guy Joseph who can interpret dreams."

They bring Joseph up. He faces Pharaoh. I mean, this is the most powerful guy in all the earth in his time and day. Pharaoh says, "I've had a dream. Can you interpret it?" Joseph says, "No." If I were coaching him, I would say, "Joseph, the answer is yes. Yes, Joseph. If you get a shot at a new job, the answer is, 'Yes, I can do this.' What are you going to lose? I mean, if you lose, if you fail, you just go back to prison. Come on. That's where you are! If you lose your head, it's better. You die. You just don't have to go to prison. This is a shot for a promotion. Take it!"

Joseph was a changed man. I want you to see this. Do you know what he said? "No, I cannot, but if God wants to give it to me, he can." This is somebody who figured out even in business God is a part of the process, and he was dependent on God. That's good. God did give him the interpretation, and he explained it to Pharaoh. There would be seven years of feast and seven years of famine.

Then more than giving the problem, he delivered the solution. "Pharaoh, you should have someone manage the seven years of feast and put food away so during the seven years of famine, Egypt survives." Pharaoh looks around and says, "I don't see anybody smarter than you, Joseph. You get the job." He elevated him to second in command in all of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. In one day, he went from the prison to the palace. That's a very good promotion day, wouldn't you say? I mean, that's the kind of day everybody is looking for in business.

It's like, "Whew! How did you...? Tremendous." You would think, "Oh, my gracious. That's such success. That's the pinnacle of his life." It was not. Pinnacle is when he moved from success to significance. He figured out with the coming of his brothers that his family was starving, and he said, "What you meant for bad, God meant for good, for the saving of many lives."

He brought the whole family (his father Jacob, all the families) and saved them. This is the nation of Israel through whom eventually comes the Messiah, our Lord and Savior, Jesus. How

significant is that? It begs the next question, number three of the four questions that can transform your life.

3. *What is the pattern?* With all of that, how does God really grow us up? What is God's game plan for life and leadership? When Joshua, my eldest son, was 11 years old, I had an awakening. Honestly, a *confession*. I'll just give it to you. I realized, "Even though I'm a pastor, I don't know how to disciple my son."

I mean, I came to Christ at 9. I've been in church ever since. I've been to Bible school. I have a ministry degree at a university. I've been to seminary. I've been pastoring full-time. I don't even know how to disciple my son. Now it's not that I don't have the information. All the information in my head is all complex, but I don't know how to get it out and get it into something.

I don't know how to transfer it so my 11-year-old son can know how God is going to grow him up. I don't know how to do it in an easy, transferrable, significant, meaningful way that will connect when you're young and travel with you into your adult life. I was stumped. See, this whole *Home Run Life* thing was actually birthed from the heart of a father who wanted to help his son win.

That's where the whole baseball thing came from, something that was accessible to a kid but could travel into adult life and even challenge pro athletes in a multi-billion dollar industry. By the way, right now I'm delivering *Home Run Life* to adults at an adult level, but this Easter and the few weeks that follow, I'm going to deliver what I did in the life of my 11-year-old as a parent and all my kids since. It's where this all was birthed.

Parenting Home Run Kids is probably the series you prefer. We'll do that then, but back to the point. There was this pattern. That word *pattern* became hugely important. Take your Bibles here. We're in the book of Romans, chapter 12. This is the core Scripture God was soaking into my soul in this season. We don't have time to detail everything, but I can tell you this. When it says, "Therefore..." what he is talking about is after all the theology, after all the teaching, after all God has done to restore you to him through Jesus, now here's the point, practically speaking.

Chapter 12, verse 1: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship." Verse 2: "Do not conform..." Do not...what? Conform. Don't do this. You can't do this. "Do not conform to the..." There's the word. Say it with me, church. "...pattern..."

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world..." So there's a pattern to the world. He goes on. "...but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." You have to see things differently. "Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." Oh my! There is a pattern God uses. This pattern God uses grows us up, but there's a pattern of the world.

I started to think, "Well, baseball has a pattern. What if what is true in life dreams is true in God's design?" There are four bases everybody has to cover. It's true in baseball when you're young, and it's true when you're in the major league. It's not like there are seven bases in major league.

There are four bases. The only way you can score is when you cross... Humor me. What's the answer? You always have to cross...what? Home plate.

In fact, when you leave home plate, you have to cover...what? First, second, and third base. This is what we know about baseball. It's really simple. If you miss a base, you're called...what? Out. Baseball is full of fresh starts. Many strikeouts but fresh starts. What do they call it when you run to the wrong base? Little league. That's the only time it's funny. When a 4-year-old hits the ball and runs to third base, everybody is like laughing. "That's awesome!" It's not so funny when a major league player does it, because then he is called out.

By the way, that's true in life. There is a pattern, and it's as simple as baseball in how God grows you up. If you look at your teaching notes, here's your fill-in-the-blank. Home plate. Home plate is where you *connect*. That is to say you connect to your Creator. I mean, we're not just talking anybody. We're talking about the Creator of the universe, where you connect to God's purpose for putting you here and God's power to pull it off.

Oh my goodness, this is huge! See, everything begins and ends at home plate. Everything begins and ends with God. It doesn't start with you. It starts with God. Just like when you come to the plate, you have to know your purpose, what you're there to accomplish, and you need power at the plate, so it's true in life.

By the way, many of you listening are spiritually unresolved. You're not even sure you believe in God. You're not sure you're buying any of this. It's okay. This is still your issue. Listen. It's still your issue. You have to settle in life, "Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going?" You're living out that answer, whether you answered it or not...if not by design, by default.

The God who created you, who loves you deeply, who created a way for you to be restored to him through Jesus, is inviting you to connect. When you become god of your life and make it start and end with you, of course it doesn't work. You are not. When God comes into your life and you connect with him, the very first thing the power of God wants to do is take you to first base and change you.

It is called *character*. Home plate is connect, and first base is character. That's the personal base. It's how you win within. What often happens is when we come to faith in God through Jesus Christ and we become followers of Christ... Do you know what happens in our souls? Oh, we get so excited. We know we can pray and God answers our prayer. Oh, this is so cool.

Do you know what we start praying? "Oh God, change everything." Right? "Now I got God. Change everything around me. Oh God, change my job. Change my income. It needs to go up. I need more. Change my boss. I need less. Change my spouse. I had no idea how much baggage they had when I married them. Oh God, change my kids. They have so much of my spouse in them. Who knew? God, change my house and change my stuff."

Do you know what? We think the moment you get in a relationship with God, the whole point is to get God to change everything around you when the first thing God wants to do is change

everything...where? Within you. See, God wants to help you rise up with the character that keeps you from crashing and costing you his best in the rest of your life. Most of us get thrown out on the way to first.

Home plate is connect. First base is character. Second base is *community*. It is the people base where you win with others. Watch how simply powerful and profound this really is. What is the first and greatest command Jesus taught us? To love God (home plate). Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. The second commandment is like unto the first. To love your neighbor (second base) as yourself (first base). Get it? Love God. Love yourself. Love others.

Third base is the *competence* base. Competence. So you go from *connect* to *character* to *community* to *competence*. This is the performance base. This is where you win results. By the way, when a baseball player gets to third base, is it a score? No! No, if you get left stranded on third base, it comes to nothing. Success is not an end in itself, not until you surrender that success to your significance, to the significance of why God put you here...

In other words, you have to live larger than yourself, and you live for God's glory. This is how God grows us up, and the order of the bases actually matters. If that's how God grows us up, if that's the pattern that renews our minds so we can be transformed, then my question is...*How does the world run the bases?* We live in a world that runs the bases backwards. You know this is true.

We live in a performance-driven society where what you do and success is how you're measured. We are under such huge pressure in performing in life that we end up cheating the other bases. We end up cheating what it takes to really build a marriage and a family. We end up cheating our integrity in order to get ahead over here. We end up cheating time with God.

"Oh, we don't have time to honor God one every seven days. I don't have time for that. I have a busy life. Bible? Prayer? Are you kidding me? For what? That's for weak people. I don't do that. I don't need that." We end up cheating the very things that would give us the quality of life to make sense of success and surrender it to significance. What if in a backwards base-running world we are losing a home run life God had imagined for us? That's what Luis Ramos discovered. Here's the rest of his story.

[Video]

Luis Ramos: So I started talking about the tradeoffs we make, the fact that in a performance-driven culture, we are driven to run to third base. Very often what that results in is sacrificing relationships on second base and integrity on first base. It just hit me. It hit me like a ton of bricks. I thought to myself, "This is my life. I'm destroying my relationships with my wife and my children, and it's costing me, and it's costing my kids. This is going to have repercussions on the rest of our lives."

I thought, "You know, I've been looking for this reboot. I've been looking for this fresh start. The reality is God is offering me a fresh start to do something with the life he gave me with the family he gave me and with the wife he gave me from my youth. I'm a fool if I think starting over with somebody else is going to turn into anything better, because the person breaking this is me."

I rededicated my life to the Lord, and I talked to my wife. I let her know. She was very skeptical, to say the least. By God's mercy, she prayed hard about it. What she heard from the Lord was, "You don't have permission to get out." So she took me back. Pastor Kevin remarried us in the spring of 2001 with all of our children and our closest friends.

That running of the bases in a different pattern started a domino effect that didn't just transform my marriage and my children and our family, it transformed everything. It transformed my career. It transformed my business. You know, it transformed everything about me.

[End of video]

See, that's powerful. Oh yeah. When you let God renew your mind and how you run the bases of life, it will transform your life! Think about the whole of life in our society. We do our whole life backwards. We spend our twenties to thirties (maybe into our forties) chasing success. Because of that, we will often burn one, two, or three marriages and estrange our kids. In our forties and fifties when we have enough success to realize it's not as fulfilling... It's a bit empty.

People enter into a marriage they start caring about and investing in and curiously want to go back and restore with their estranged kids. In their fifties and sixties, you start hearing them say to their grandchildren, "By the way, character counts. Who you are on the inside matters." Why? Because it's borne out to be true. In their sixties and seventies, up to eighties, they start facing their mortality. They think, "Do you know what? Maybe there is a God. Maybe all along I got this wrong."

It's interesting. This past November, Ted Turner, our local Atlanta CNN mogul, turned 75. In an article were these thoughts. "Ted...the outspoken agnostic who had formerly described Christianity as 'a religion for losers' recently reaffirmed his openness to the religion. [...] He no longer considers himself an atheist and prays for sick friends." He closes, "Well, I sure don't want to go to hell." You see, we live in a world that runs the bases backwards and ends up forfeiting the best God has for us. We could have a renewed mind and change the way we run.

4. *How do you run the bases?* More importantly, how *will* you run the bases of life? Bow your heads with me. I want to take a moment to lead us in prayer.

Our gracious God, many of us would have to confess like Luis that we get caught up in the ways of our world. Maybe it's never occurred to us that we conform to the world's pattern. Maybe it never occurred to us that under pressure, we're costing ourselves the very things we long for.

Would you grant us awakening as you did Luis? Would you do in us and for us and through us what you did for Luis?

That will mean some of us right now... Even those of us who, maybe like a Ted Turner, are not even sure what we believe, but we're starting to enter prayer because we know we're not in control. Even us, Lord. We would ask you to renew our minds, transform our thinking to transform our lives. Maybe even some of us like Luis would have to say, "Lord, I rededicate my life to you. Lord, I've gone adrift. I've gotten sloppy. I've joined the world. I wasn't even aware of it. I'm not running the path that allows you to grow me up."

Lord, whatever would be our prayer unique to each individual, I ask you would give us courage to confess and own what is ours, humility to ask for your help, and surrender to you that allows you to teach us not only this day but in this series. As a result, God, you would so bless our lives and our families, our character and our careers, that we would experience life to the full. Grant this blessing I pray, in Christ's name. Everyone agreed, saying, "Amen."