

12Stone Church
Kevin Myers
Series: Home Run Life
March 2, 2014

Home Run Life – Week 5
2 Corinthians 5:12-20

[Video]

Male: In life, we all step up to the plate hoping to hit a home run in our marriage, business, or family. What if the key was following a simple pattern: four words, four life-changing principles? There's only one way to get power at the plate: connect with God. Once you trust God, you're able to win battles within yourself. Secure in your identity, winning relationships with others is next. Rounding third means winning results in whatever you do. Excellence matters. God created this game plan, a pattern different from the world, so we can have the full life he intended.

[End of video]

Welcome to the fifth and final week of the *Home Run Life* series. We've written the book *Home Run*. We're all studying it in our small groups. We have a few weeks left to go in that. I've been teaching you for four weekends now to run the bases of life by God's design in a backwards base-running kind of world.

Now today I'm going to teach you when and why I am convinced, compelled, and committed to running the bases backwards. I know it sounds entirely contradictory, but it's going to make sense by the end. In fact, I promised you I would teach you something we did not put in the book. We didn't have time for it in the book, but we're going to get it together today. Even if you're a guest you're going to catch up on this, so stay with me all the way through.

It all begins with the apostle Paul. In 2 Corinthians, chapter 5, Paul has a situation, because he is the founder of this church. He went to Corinth and led several people to Christ. He stayed there for about a year and a half, disciplined and raised them up, established some leadership, and went on to plant more churches.

However, some other leaders rose up while he was gone and made themselves somewhat superior to Paul. They discredited Paul. Now Paul has to defend himself. Paul has to say, "Hey, hey, I'm not a fake. I am the real deal." I can give you a little picture of that. This past week, Jeff Gordon brought on YouTube another great moment about fake and real. Here's the setup. Check it out.

[Video]

Jeff Gordon: Hi, I'm Jeff Gordon. You may remember a little video I did with Pepsi Max called "Test Drive." Some folks on the Internet questioned whether I really pulled that off. One of those people was Travis from Jalopnik.

Travis Okulski: I started to suspect about on the second viewing.

[End of video]

Travis starts suspecting this is fake instead of real, makes a big deal of it, and so Jeff and Pepsi decided to help Travis out. Yeah. They went to Travis' coworkers and said, "Let's set the boy up." And they did. Travis the critic is about to become Travis the convinced. They set up this elaborate hoax where Jeff Gordon picks him up in a taxi during a normal working day. Well, it plays out like this. We can't show the whole thing, but here's a snippet.

[Video]

Jeff: Are you Travis?

Travis: I'm Travis.

Jeff: Would you buckle that seat belt for me?

Travis: Oh yeah, sure.

Jeff: State law, you know. Are you from New York?

Travis: Actually I'm from New Jersey.

Jeff: I did some time with a guy from Jersey one time.

Travis: No. Sir, please.

Jeff: I can't go back, man.

Travis: Sir, sir, stop! Stop, stop! Please stop.

Jeff: Sorry, I can't. I can't do it, man.

Travis: Please, no! Oh no!

Jeff: I can't go back, man. I'm sorry.

Travis: No! Sir! Stop! Stop!

Jeff: We're going to lose them. It's all right. I can't go back.

Travis: Help! Please, please stop! I'm not... I didn't do anything! You have to stop, man.

Jeff: I can't go back. Sorry, man.

Travis: Stop! Please just stop and let me out. Sir, just unlock the door and let me out.

Jeff: Come on out, buddy. I'm Jeff Gordon.

Travis: Oh my gosh. Oh my gosh.

Jeff: Was that for real?

Travis: That was for real.

[End of video]

Come on, you know that's good. That is hilarious. Now here's the thing. You can go ahead and go on to debate whether or not *that* was even fake or real, but Paul is bringing an end to the debate for him. He said, "I'm no fake. I'm no mere fan of Jesus Christ. I am a follower, a fanatic follower of Jesus Christ. I am the convinced. I am the compelled. I am the committed." That's what we're reading about in 2 Corinthians, chapter 5.

Everybody across the campuses, grab your Bibles and turn with me to 2 Corinthians, chapter 5. We're going to read some of the characteristics of a home run kind of life. There's a worship center Bible underneath your chair. Maybe it's in front of your chair at the campus. Maybe you picked one up on the way in. If you don't have a Bible of your own, make this our gift to you. Put your name on it and take it home. Get inside God's Word and learn his wisdom for life.

We'll start reading in verse 12. Paul is writing to the church and saying, "We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those..." Remember, he has critics. "...who take pride in what is seen rather than what is in the heart. If we are out of our mind, as some say [his critics], then it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you."

In other words, Paul has some critics, and they're saying, "Oh, this Paul guy, he's a fool. He's a fake." Paul is saying, "Hey listen. I'm going to give you reason to take pride in me. If we are

fools, if we're out of our minds, it is for the sake of God and his kingdom. We're fanatic for this truth. If we're in our right minds, it's for your sake." He goes on to describe what's really going on.

Verse 14: "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him [Christ] who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us." God making his appeal to a spiritually lost world through us. "We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God."

Paul is identifying at least three things worth noting here, and I think these are characteristics of a home run life. He's the real deal. Here's the first one.

1. *Convinced of eternal life.* In verses 14-15, Paul describes it for us. In fact, you can back it up a little bit, because he's talking about "one died," meaning to say there was a time when one sinned. He talks about it in Romans. Adam and Eve sinned, and when they sinned, kind of like a spiritual DNA, it was passed on to us, and all of us have sinned.

Because we've sinned, we're all going to die. We die in our relationships with God and we're separated from him. We die physically. That's *why* we die physically: because of sin in this world. We never would have died physically. And we die eternally. We are eternally separated from God. That's why it's called *hell*. Eternally separated from him. This is real deal, serious stuff.

So Paul says, "I'm convinced of eternal life and that one, Jesus, died for all." He made it possible for us to be restored to God and to live a home run kind of life. In verse 19 he describes what God has done. "...that God was reconciling the world, not counting our sins against us." That's amazing grace. What happens? What does God actually do? Back up to verse 17. What does he tell us? He says we are, in Christ, made a new creation. The old has gone.

How is this possible? Back up to verse 15. He says, "Therefore, we no longer live for ourselves." Does that sound familiar? *No longer*. Where have we talked about that? Oh, yeah. "No longer conform to the pattern of the world." Remember that? Let's go back to it. If you're new with us, it's a joy to have you with us. We have been giving some pictures, if you will, or one particular picture, of life in Christ and what it means to do life by God's design.

We've been using the diamond as an illustration, a metaphor, because there are only four things everybody has to win in life. This isn't particular to Christians or non-Christians. Everybody has to win the same four things in life. There's a pattern, and the order of the pattern matters. Home

plate is all about *connect*. In fact, by now you have all this, right? You already have this in your head. You could do the whole thing.

Connect to God by God's purpose and God's power. I'm not going to teach the whole thing. We've been through this. If you're a guest, you can pick up the other teaching online and catch up. First base is *character*. This is the personal base. It's where you win within. Second base is *community*. Community is the people base. This is where you win with others. Third base is *competence*. This is the performance base. This is where you win results.

Then we bring everything home back to our God-given purpose. Everything begins and ends with God. If you would do life by God's design, if you would love God, love yourself, love others, love what you do, and do all for the glory of God, God can give you a home run kind of life. But, of course, we live in a world that runs the bases backwards. Yeah, there's tremendous pressure in this world, because we live in a performance-driven society.

Because of that, this world is willing to sacrifice their eternity, their integrity, even their family, just to get some measure of material, career, and financial success. God says, "You don't have to. I'm involved in the whole diamond. I created life in this way for you. So no longer conform to the pattern, the backwards base-running pattern, of this world." For that to happen, you apply the truth of 2 Corinthians 5:15. No longer live for yourself. Those who come to Christ should no longer live for themselves.

Now I can tell you this. Just a moment of candid honesty. I grew up in a family that was very churchy, just not very changed. I know we can all show up at church and go home and actually live for ourselves. Neither my parents, nor their marriage, did an impressive job of dying to themselves, and we lost, majorly.

Don't get confused. This is not a self-help series. This is a die-to-self series. That's the only offer God ever made. Die to yourself. Get on God's agenda. Get on God's purpose by God's power and do life by God's design. Paul is saying, "I'm convinced of this, that what's really on the line is life and death. I'm convinced that eternal life and eternal death are on the line." It's sobering stuff.

Several years ago, three of us were on a motorcycle trip up the Blue Ridge Parkway. Gorgeous, beautiful territory to ride. Many of you know that's moving through the mountain passes and up on the mountain edge and through what seems like endless forests, about 500-some miles of no stop signs. The three of us were riding along on a beautiful day, and we came behind two other motorcyclists. We ended up joining them and riding quite a few miles together, traveling about 50 miles an hour.

Then came, in the midst of the fun, a sobering tragedy. We were coming through a pass where it was woods on both sides, hill on the left. Coming off from that edge, a massive deer leapt with no warning and landed in the middle of the road in between the first and second cyclists. The second cyclist had no reaction time. She hit the deer, and the bike flipped end over end. The three of us were behind, helplessly watching.

We shut down the bikes and rushed to the aid of this young lady and could do absolutely nothing

for her. She had broken her neck. She struggled for life and within a few minutes died right there. Sobering. When Paul says, "I understand. I am convinced that life and death are on the line..." Church, we have a lot of fun together and we don't take ourselves that seriously, but we take God very seriously. Yeah?

We may have a lot of fun here, but we know what's on the line. You are living like you know what's on the line, right? You understand that what we're invested in is the reality that eternal life and eternal death are on the line. That's what we are, if you will, invested in. That's why it matters last week that when about every series we present the gospel of Jesus Christ and invite people to respond...

By the way, you experienced that at your various campuses and then particular services, 16 services at 4 different campuses, but I want you to know what happened in the collective is literally over 1,000 people last weekend said yes to Jesus Christ, prayed to receive him. That is celebration worthy. The reason for that is that we are convinced of eternal life. Are you? Or are you just pretending life is a fun little motorcycle ride through the mountains and that's what it should be? No, no. It's more than that. The sober truth. So Paul says, "I am compelled."

2. *Compelled by love of God.* I'm compelled by the love of God. In verse 14 of chapter 5, he literally says, "I am compelled." I need you to know this word is deep. This word is not the way we tend to use the word *compelled*. We tend to think *compelled* is like when I'm emotionally moved. "Oh, I'm compelled." It's because I want something or I want to.

I, Kevin Myers, am compelled to ride Harley-Davidson motorcycles. I'm compelled. I want to, love to. That's not what the word means. The word in its Greek root actually means control. It's the same root word that was used of Jesus when the guards took him from the garden of Gethsemane and took him to Caiaphas. They forced him. They compelled him to go. He had no choice. He was imprisoned. It's the same word: *compelled*.

When they took him to Pilate, they compelled him to Pilate. When the Roman soldiers took him to be whipped, beaten, they compelled him. They compelled him to the cross by the sword. He was compelled. Here's what Paul is saying. When he says here, "I am compelled," he's revealing, "There was a time in my life when I was compelled by sin, when I had no choice. It was my nature to sin, but God by his love came in and rescued me. He freed me from the control of sin in my life.

But that very love of God that freed me simultaneously imprisoned me. In the best sense of the word, the love of God has made it such that I am compelled to bring that love to other people. I have no choice. I have no option. I can't help myself. I am imprisoned by the love of God." Once you understand the size, depth, and breadth of the love of God, you are so compelled by it you can't help but take that out to other people.

He says it's not a casual want; it is a deep necessity. "I have no option. I am imprisoned by God's love. I am compelled." Here's the question: *Are you?* Are you so weighed with the reality of this conviction that life and death are on the line that you are compelled by God's love so that you

become an ambassador? Because you *are* an ambassador. You are an ambassador of Jesus Christ.

3. *Committed as ambassadors.* In verses 18-20 of this passage, he tells us God makes his appeal through us. Now listen. I'm not going to question God. Who am I to question God? But I have to tell you, if I were God, I wouldn't have picked us. I wouldn't say, "I'm going to change the world, and I'm going to use all of you."

I'd say, "Hey, you know what? I'll send my angels. I'll do it on my own. I'll save you, but I'll put you in the stands and you can watch me work." No, no, no. He put us all on the field. We're all players. The moment you come into the kingdom of God, you become an ambassador. You are not a consumer of God's love; you are a carrier of God's love.

Evangelism, helping spiritually lost people find Jesus, is what we do. Yeah? It's not just who we are; it's what we do. Because we are convinced of eternal life, because we are compelled by God's love, we are committed to being ambassadors. I want to give you a little picture of this. I'm going to use a story told by Jay Leno in his experience in a little conversation in one of my favorite shows, *Top Gear*. He tells a great story, but then there's a point. Check it out.

[Video]

Jay Leno: You'll like this story. I had my McLaren F1 out. I took it to a car show. I see these two LA gang members. Scary guys, tattoos, you know, the thing on the neck with the cross, the tear on the... You know, the whole bit. They're looking at my car, and I'm like, "Oh boy." One of them says, "Hey, Gordon Murray designed this, right?" I went, "Yeah."

Then the other guy asked about David Stevens. I realized, "I'm pre-judging people. I assumed because they look different from me they're criminals or gangsters." I felt so bad about this. I said to these guys, "Have you ever been in one of these?" "No, no." I said, "Do you want to go for a ride?" They said, "Yeah!" Then I realized, "All right, maybe this is a mistake."

As big as they were outside, they were enormous in the car. The guy's head... When that tattoo is right here, you know, with the misspelled "die" and everything... All right. So we're driving along. "This is good." The guy goes, "We're up here in the hills. There's no traffic." "Oh, all right." It's not good at this point.

There's a place called Kanan Road that goes above Malibu, and there are some tunnels that go through the mountains. So I said, "I'll tell you what. I'll nail it through the mountains. You guys have to hear the F1 McLaren." I fly through the tunnel at 125. As I come out of the tunnel, there's a police car right here. I'm pulled over.

Now I have two gang guys. They're going to run a check on these guys. They'll be drug dealers. My McLaren will be towed. They'll put a hook on it and drag it to impound. I'll be arrested for going over 100... The cop pulls over, and the highway patrolman goes, "What are you doing?"

Do you know how fast you're going?" The two guys go, "We're police officers. It's all right." They were undercover. It was like the greatest day of my life.

[End of video]

Come on now. Give it up. That's a funny story. Can you believe that? These two guys were ambassadors for law enforcement. All along they're undercover agents blending with everybody else like they're kind of normal. That's who you are. That's who we are. We are undercover agents, ambassadors for the kingdom of God, blending in the rest of society as if we're like everybody else. Cool. That's who we are. That's what we do.

God has us uniquely placed throughout the world on purpose. This is the way we wrote it in *Home Run*. If you've read far enough into the book to get to the last chapter, here's the sentence: "Wherever God has you on the map, God has you on mission." In other words, wherever he has you in your place of work, business, neighborhood, park recreation...he has put you somewhere on the map in this world...you are on mission.

The people around you in every area of life, at work, park, neighborhood, community, golf course... God has you on mission for you to invite people into the faith journey. We have to change our minds. You have to change the way you see yourself in this world. God has you on mission. You are undercover agents, ambassadors for the kingdom of God. You look like everybody else, but you're not. You are *in* this world, but you are not *of* this world, is what Jesus said.

I had a moment in time when the church started where I got confused. I started looking at other people and forgetting what God had asked me to do. You can do that, you know. You can start comparing yourself and thinking that you're nobody and you don't really have anything to do for the kingdom of God. 12Stone wasn't doing much in the early days, and I got depressed, and I finally started looking at other pastors.

I remember the day I wrote in my journal, "Well, God, I'm no Bill Hybels," referring to a pastor at what's called Willow Creek Church up in Chicago. Back in the day, when things were happening like crazy up there and nothing was happening down here, I'm watching Bill, I'm learning from Bill, and I'm like, "I'm no Bill."

It was as if God whispered... No, he didn't whisper that time. It was really to the point. He said, "Son, I didn't put Bill Hybels in Northeast Atlanta; I put you." You have to personalize this, folks. He didn't put a pastor in your spot where you work; he put you. You are the ambassador he sent. On purpose, on mission.

The world is all wrapped up, and the only thing they do at work is make a living. Yes, we're there to make a living, but we know we're there to change a life. We are ambassadors for him. God had to reset and remind me, change my mind. You are undercover agents. Tell your neighbor that right now. "You're an undercover agent." This might be brand-new news. This

might be transforming understanding. You have to change your mind. You have to know who you are.

I'd love to know where God has placed you. Now this is a large conversation. I'm going to keep it as small as possible. Where has God placed you? In this world of influence, in the arena of business, where has God placed you in the streams of influence? Let me take you to the whiteboard. I'm going to redraw this diamond right here, but I'm going to do it in a small format, and you'll see why.

So here's the diamond in mini. God has placed the church as the center for his kingdom influence. Like it or not, that's the truth. That's how he designed it. We are to connect with God and win character and win community and win competence and bring it home. God has built us so that we would do discipleship forward. This is how you learn to follow God.

Now he has dispersed the church into multiple streams of influence out into the world, where you are an undercover agent, an ambassador for the kingdom of God. There are multiple streams. I could create seven of them. One is business. You might be in some particular business environment. That's where God has you working and that's where you have influence. The world of people around you.

It might be education. That's another stream of influence where God has his ambassadors, undercover agents, placed. It could be government. That's from social services to police to politicians. The list goes on. God has us in arenas of health and medical: doctors, nurses, anybody in the field...development, handling, and management of the body. It's a massive field. Some of you are in that stream of influence.

Entertainment and the arts. Of course, that's from film to music to art. God has some of us in media, from news media to branding to marketing to advertising. God has some of us in the stream of influence of sports, athletics, from pro to semipro to college. In fact, for some of us it's not even our career. We're just deeply invested in sports and coaching and helping.

Look at this. The edge of evangelism is not what happens in the four walls of the church but when the church, which is people, actually leaves and goes out into the world in streams of influence. You are ambassadors in some stream of influence. What stream of influence are you in? Now I told you I was going to teach you something that is not in the book, and here it is. Pay attention. You have to grab this conceptually.

If discipleship is done forward (and it is) and that's how you follow Christ, I think evangelism these days, in the pagan, post-Christian culture in which we live in this country, is actually done backwards. Just keep listening. When I said I can tell you when and why I am convinced, compelled, and committed to running the bases backwards, it is when it comes to evangelism, because we live in a backwards base-running society, and that's how they tend to hear.

For us to gain an audience, they will only hear us the way they hear. Let me illustrate. When I was growing up, the generation before me tended to do evangelism in a fairly confrontational

way, which would be like home plate... As soon as you meet somebody you say, "You need to know God," and then they run to first base and say, "And here's what's wrong with you."

That's how evangelism used to be done when I was growing up. I just meet you. "Your name is Bob? Hi, Bob. Hey, you need to know God, and let me tell you what's wrong with you." That seemed to be how it was kind of done back in the day. I think in a post-Christian, biblically ignorant world, we actually gain influence backwards. That's how they hear. Let me illustrate.

I think it begins on the left-hand side of home plate, where instead of *telling* them they need to know the love of God, we *practice* the love of God. That is, we give. That's why as a church we give ourselves away. We talk about it all the time. I don't just mean give money. I said *give*. *Give* is the whole of life. Give yourself away. Give more than you take. That's the essence. "For God so loved the world that he *gave* his one and only Son." It's the nature of God to give.

Jesus told us in Matthew 5, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." In other words, we're supposed to make the world brighter because we give like nobody else. In other words, the essence of *give* is in all relationships. You give more than you take in marriage and your marriage will work. You take more than you give and your marriage will break down. Period. End of discussion.

That's true in every family. It's true in every business. It's true in every work. When you come to church and you take more than you give, you are immature. You haven't even figured out what it means to grow up spiritually. Kids grow up and take more than they give, and to make them adults, you have to teach them how to give more than they take. That is how the world works. It is the heart and nature of God. If we are that kind of people... The world appreciates people who give.

Then you're running to third base: competence. In other words, get better at what you do. Frankly, your influence, your ability to be heard, is based on their respect for you and the work you do. Truly, where you work you gain respect on third base, so get better at what you do. Taking it to second base, add value to others. Somebody who gives themselves away, gets better at what they do, and adds value to others tends to be valued.

Now watch this. The world tends to listen backwards, because that's how they run the bases. So you're paying attention to that, and when you give yourself away and you tend to get better at what you do and gain the respect more and more of the world around you and add value to others, they tend to value you, and guess what? They invite you into places like their first base, their personal life, and when they do, they find out you actually care about them.

Guess what? When you get to be involved in that conversation, at some point you get to pull out your badge and say, "Well, actually, I'm an ambassador for Christ. Let me just tell you how I actually live. God has changed my life. He is the one who taught me how to do life by his design, because even though we struggle through the same four basic issues in life, the reality is we run the bases differently."

You get to invite them. "Hey, you ought to come check out a series we're doing, *Parenting Home*

Run Kids. Hey, you ought to come check out *At the Movies*." You become ambassadors for Christ. You might become really good at the home run life, and you can draw it out on a napkin and say, "Hey, you might want to think about this. It's another way to do life."

See, church, we not only have a tool for discipleship, which is forward, but we have in *Home Run* a tool for evangelism, which is backward. This is a powerful tool. Are you getting this? Is this making sense? Are you understanding this? Oh, this is huge. If I had one more week, I would teach you how this is a tool for leadership, but we don't.

So I'm done teaching. The teaching is all over. I'm done. That's all I wanted to teach. However, I'm not done talking. Now I want to tell you about a practical pilot project we want to try as a church. Whoever wants to jump in is welcome. Over the next three months, we're going to go after something. I'm going to take what I just taught and tell you something we're going to try together. We've never done this before. This is brand new.

We have an idea, and it's really how to do evangelism backwards and how to help us collectively. Where we have streams of influence and God has put us in a unique stream, where we are on the map to be on mission, how can we actually do this thing? Now we're going to do this in partnership with the John Maxwell Leadership Center, which we happen to be a part of. This is going to be called, Leadership Roundtables. Let me lay it out for you in a rather quick fashion.

What we recognize and what we need to assume is that you've already bought in and we collectively agree as a church we're here to give ourselves away. We not only do that at Christmas, we not only do that through Give Life cards, but that's what we do together as a church. That's just the nature and the heart of what God is growing in us.

Assuming you're doing that, we want to help you as you run to third and second, so to speak, for the purpose of evangelism. It's not how you live life. You already do life by God's design, but you understand that in evangelism you want to get better at what you do and add value to others. You want to help others get better at what they do and add value to others. That left side is a leadership development component.

See, if I went right back to the board... I've already talked about it last week. The world has told us this side of the home run diamond is secular, and it's not. Agreed? It is not. The world has stolen this and called this, "Oh, business is all secular. Church and kingdom of God and the work of God have nothing to do with it." That's an absolute lie.

We're going to take it right back. You know what? God's wisdom in leadership is superior to all. He created work. He created leadership. He created influence. He created gifts and talents and abilities, and they get developed by God. Now we have an advantage, church, because we have this relationship with somebody called John Maxwell who has sold and sells millions of books in the world of business and speaks every year to all seven streams of influence.

We said, "What could we all do to help 12Stone as ambassadors, undercover agents, get better at what we do, help each other in business, help your fellow business coworkers get better in what

they do and add value to them? What could we do?" We have an idea. Leadership Roundtables. Here's what we're going to do.

We're going to take two of John's leadership books, and we're going to write them and condense them into six-week roundtable format material. It's not teaching; it's roundtable discussion format material. What if you went into your arena of work...? You could be a teacher. You might be an attorney and you bring a group of other attorneys, four or five.

You just go recruit them and say, "Hey, you know what? Let's get better at what we do and add value to one another. There's some John Maxwell leadership material. They've kind of taken a book and brought it down into six weeks of leadership development. Why don't we sit together over the next six weeks, get better at what we do, and add value to one another? Let's just get better at what we do and add value to one another."

You can do it in any arena of business and work. This, by the way, is not a small group. There's no Scripture in this. It's not prayer time. It's like a mini-leadership development seminar that you do together in discussion, and you translate it and apply it into your work. You're not teaching this. The material teaches itself, and it really becomes discussion based.

You just take the best of leadership development kind of material... You're like, "What's the goal of this?" I'll tell you what the goal of this is. The goal of this is to get better at what you do and add value to others. The results in your business should increase so that other people in your business are saying, "What are those guys doing over there? Hey, how come they're getting better at what they do?"

You should get better results in your business as a result of this, better with your customers, better with coworkers. You say, "That's all?" That's all. Now what we all know is going to happen is that if you get better at what you do and add value to others, you get access into other people's lives, because they become friends and invite you in.

When they do and they say, "You know what? I'm working through this in my life. I'm working through this," you pull out your badge and say, "Hey, by the way, I'm an ambassador for Jesus Christ. I want to tell you something. We're all struggling with the same things. I have the same challenges you have, but I don't have the same solutions. I'm going to tell you what God is doing in my life. You ought to come check it out." That's all. If they invite you in, you get to be an ambassador for Jesus Christ.

Let me tell you what this is not. This is not small group. This happens during the day, either before work, over lunch, or after work. This is not couple's group kind of stuff. This is leadership development, taking leadership book material, bringing it down into a six-week environment, and helping each other get better at what you do and add value to one another.

Now I can't teach that whole thing or train you in a weekend teaching like this, but we have a way to do this. I *am* going to personally invest in training you and in talking with you about how to go pilot this. Everybody will probably not want to pilot this in the next three months, but some of you will. Here's how you participate.

I would love to know where God has us in streams of influence throughout 12Stone Church. Here's how you let me know. You get to this online form. They're putting the online address right on the screen. It's also at the bottom of your teaching notes. In fact, you can get your smartphone out right now. Usually I tell you to put it away. Get it out right now, and you can jump onto this form and fill it out. Just let us know what stream of influence God has you in.

Here's what we're going to ask you in that form. When you fill out the form, you have a spot to put, "I'm interested now," and you can pick one of two times and jump in on the training. Now hear me. If you jump in on the training, you have no obligation. You can come to the training, discover, and say, "Ah, that's not for me," and walk away. No problem. Or you can say, "Yeah, that's for me. I want to jump in on the pilot."

I hope a bunch of you do. But you don't know until you get in the training, so jump in on it. Do the training. There's one of two options. Right on that online form you can jump in on that and be a part of it. Awesome. You can go home this afternoon or tonight or tomorrow, or whenever, and fill out the form whenever you're willing to do that, but do it soon or you'll forget. Jump in on this.

If you don't want to do it now but you want to watch and pay attention, you at least want to let me know what stream of influence you're in, go ahead and fill it out and just mark the one that says, "I'll be interested maybe later." That lets us know. This is going to be a cool thing. Admittedly, it's pilot. It's new. We've never tried this before.

We think God is going to develop it so that in time God opens a door. As undercover agents, ambassadors for Christ, we gave ourselves away, we got better at what we do, we added value to others, and eventually he'll open doors so they might come to know the love of God, for there is nothing like the love of God in your life and a home run life.

So you have a few minutes to do it. You can do it right now. As you jump on your iPhone or your smartphone, if you have one with you, I want you to listen in on a story, a final thought from Luis Ramos, the guy who told us his story in the first weekend, reminding us what's true about business, because God was not only changing his marriage and changing his life; he changed his business. The reality is what I have taught you in the last five weeks and through the book *Home Run...*

If you do this, you will still not experience a home run kind of life unless you get your finances right. I know the thing we worry about most is finances, and it seems if we don't address that, we didn't help us. So for the next three weeks, we're going to deal with the blessed life. If you run the bases forward but in your finances you run backward, you never get the blessed life. So listen in to the story of Luis as he reminds us how God changes the whole. You can fill out this online form during it. Check it out.

[Video]

Luis Ramos: Hi, my name is Luis Ramos, and I'm the CEO of The Network, Inc. The Network is a 400-employee company. We're based in the Tech Park area of Atlanta, and we are in the business of helping companies create ethical cultures in order to drive performance. This notion that God is the God of character and relationship but doesn't care about business I think is a flawed notion.

God is not anti-business; he's the author of business. He didn't want me to just succeed in character or in relationships; he wanted me to succeed in every aspect of my life. Just like I learned you have to run the bases in a particular order in order to have the life God wants for you, business has to be done in a particular order as well. First you plant, then the watering and the weeding, and then you harvest.

The reality is that I can plant all day long, but if God doesn't bring the rain, then my work is futile. So what I've learned in my walk, as I've tried to put in place the home run life principles, is to work hard and diligently and then turn it over to God and have him take what I've done and multiply it in a way I could never do.

We are all called to steward whatever we've been given, and what I realized was God didn't care about my money. He didn't need my money; he wanted my heart. So you have the home run life pattern of how to live your life completely, and then you have this third base pattern of how to make sure you work and trust in God in that process.

[End of video]

Let me just overstate it to make a point. If I could have invited you to the last five weeks but you said, "I'm gone the next three weeks and I'm not even going to hear anything about a blessed life," I would have told you, "Don't do that." Just forget the previous weeks. Get the book, but be here for the blessed life.

I know the unspoken pressure in our lives is economic. It's the weight that's constant. We go to work, and we want God to be involved so intimately that we need the favor of God over our finances. The majority of us run our finances backwards. We don't know how to win that with God. We're going to go address that over these next three weeks. These are the three weeks you want to be in on. The breakthrough is in front of us.

We're going to do something I've been working on for the last year. We're finally going to get a chance to do it in this three-week series. I'm very excited about it. I've been working on it for a long time. You'll see part of that contribution and its impact on your life. It's just a not-miss, even if you're out of town. If you're like, "Well, I'm going to be out of town." Get online and get the teaching. Get in on what God has for you.