



WEEK FOUR: LIVING A BETTER STORY – Study Guide

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Everyone starts at a different place in life. We all had different home lives growing up, different backgrounds, different opportunities and more. It's easy to spend too much time reminiscing about a great past or lamenting a bad one. How can we learn to leave behind our past (no matter how good or bad) to press into our future, calling for Jesus?

Where Am I Today?

- 1) What are some of your long-term goals? How can those goals be used as a means of telling THE story and your story?

Into the Bible

- 2) The Apostle Paul had only one goal in life—to tell people about Jesus who had not heard about Him. He had a unique calling, but all Christians are called to live lives that point people to Jesus. Look at the following passages where he talked about his goals. What were they? What were the obstacles? How did he overcome those obstacles?

- a. **Acts 20:17-24**

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b. **Romans 15:18-21**

c. **Philippians 3:7-14**

- 3) Paul knew that anyone who wanted to finish their story for Jesus' fame would encounter similar trials. He explained this to Timothy, who he knew was committed to using his life to spread the gospel. Read **2 Timothy 2:1-26** and write down qualities of an effective witness that Paul wanted Timothy and the leaders he led to develop.

How Does This Apply?

- 4) Think about the goals you shared in the first question. If you're a Jesus follower, some of those goals are probably God-given desires. If you're human, some of those goals are selfish desires. How can you filter those and decide which ones are worth pursuing?
- 5) As you think through your own story, what obstacles might you need to leave behind, like Paul? How can you adjust your perspective so that you finish your story well?

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Continue Learning on Your Own

- 6) It's easy to compare your calling and your life goals with others and think of yours as being more, or less, significant than those of others. However, the Bible doesn't say that any particular person is better because they have a different calling. One prime example is the difference between Paul and Timothy's callings. Paul's calling was to go to places where literally no one had ever heard of Jesus. He was a pioneer and entrepreneur. Timothy, on the other hand, was called to go where Paul had planted churches and lead the ones he had already established (Paul based him in Ephesus for a while). It was still hard work and still vitally important, but he wasn't as much of a pioneer. Paul never made Timothy's role in the church sound less important than his own. Have you ever considered your calling to be more or less important than someone else's? How can a proper view of your calling change that? What role do you believe God has called you to in the church?

Read: **Romans 15:18-21, 1 Corinthians 4:17, 1 Corinthians 12:14-20, 1 Corinthians 16:10, Colossians 3:5 and 1 Peter 2:9.**