IT'S NOT TOO LATE

How God Uses Less Than Perfect People

TONY EVANS
Welcome to this small-group discussion of *It’s Not Too Late*.

We love comeback stories in American culture—situations where victory is snatched from the jaws of defeat. These stories are found everywhere in our society, ranging from last-second victories in sporting events to movies featuring a bumbling hero who surges forward to save the day.

Start this discussion by talking about your favorite comeback story from sports, the entertainment media, or your own experiences.

What do you like best about the elements of Moses’ story that you’ve heard from the Bible?

How does Moses’ life qualify as a comeback story?

Share what you hope to gain from this study as a whole and from this session on Moses in particular.

**To prepare to view the DVD segment, read these verses aloud.**

“As the time of the promise was approaching which God had assured to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt, until there arose another king over Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph. It was he who took shrewd advantage of our race and mistreated our fathers so that they would expose their infants and they would not survive. It was at this time that Moses was born; and he was lovely in the sight of God, and he was nurtured three months in his father’s home. And after he had been set outside, Pharaoh’s daughter took him away and nurtured him as her own son. Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds.” *Acts 7:17-22*
WATCH

Complete the viewer guide below as you view DVD session 1.

______________, Moses made the right decisions even though he was in a pagan environment.

Your ___________ moment can also be your deepest disaster, and you can feel that it’s too late.

If you want to make up some time that has been lost by __________ yesterday, hang out where God’s hanging out—because you need an encounter with God.

When God is ready to change your ________________, you can expect to see something happen in your life that doesn’t make sense.

An encounter means you get to experience God face-to-face—because you can ____________ ____________ God and not experience Him.

You can go to church and still leave ________________. You can hear other folks talk about God and still leave ________________. You need a fresh encounter with God.

Moses tried to do a good thing with ________________ methodology. He ____________ God to achieve his own goal.

The word holy in the Bible means unique, ______ ________, or special.

The ________________ is always for development.

God can hit a bulls-eye with a crooked stick. He can take lemons and make lemonade—once you have a ________ ________________ with Him.
Discuss the DVD segment with your group, using the questions below.

What did you like most about the DVD segment? Why?

Talk briefly about celebrities in recent years who, like Moses, have lost everything they worked to gain. What are the common denominators among those stories?

Tony said, “I don’t care how bad it’s been; I don’t care how long it’s been; I don’t care how hurtful it’s been; I don’t care how painful it is. When you mix God in the equation, it’s not too late.” What emotions do you experience when you hear those words? Why?

When have you been blessed by an encounter with God?

What obstacles present in today’s culture commonly prevent people from enjoying a fresh encounter with God?

Which of those obstacles have disrupted your experiences with God in the past? Which are disrupting your experiences with God now?

What’s the primary lesson we can draw from the full scope of Moses’ story?

Application: Set aside a time (or several times) this week to intentionally seek a fresh encounter with God. As you approach this encounter, be sure to turn aside from the daily grind by focusing on prayer, spiritual disciplines, and the confession of sin.

Suggested Scripture memory for this week:
“This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.” James 1:19-20

Read week 1 and complete the activities before the next group experience.
Welcome back to this small-group discussion of *It’s Not Too Late*.

Last week’s application challenge involved setting aside time to have a fresh encounter with God. If you’re willing, talk about what you experienced.

Describe what you liked best from week 1 of the workbook. What questions do you still have?

Talk about a moment in your life when you turned aside from business as usual because of something special God was doing.

Work together as a group to make a list of common emotions and experiences you have found in your modern-day wilderness.

**To prepare to view the DVD segment, read these verses aloud.**

“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.” *Hebrews 11:24-31*
WATCH

Complete the viewer guide below as you view DVD session 2.

Rahab was a prostitute who was willing to take a ____________ for the people of God.

Rahab chose to do what technically was a sin for a ______________ reason, because she didn’t have another option.

The word *hesed* means ______________ love. The word *hesed* means a legal agreement that God makes with people to ____________ them.

Confession is not about salvation for heaven; ______________ is about salvation for heaven. Confession is about salvation on earth.

Confession—your public ___________________________ with God—changes how God relates to you in history.

Faith is demonstrated by your ____________, not by your discussion; it’s demonstrated by your ____________, not by your talk.

When you ____________, you have demonstrated faith; and when you demonstrate faith, you get to see God ____________ in history.

By faith, Rahab became something ____________________________, even with a negative background.

If God can recognize somebody with Rahab’s background and still make her ________________, He can still turn you around and make you ________________ for the kingdom of God and for the advancement of what God is doing in history.

If you want to see that no matter how bad your past has been, God can turn it around, then identify with the right ________________.
Discuss the DVD segment with your group, using the questions below.

What did you like most about the DVD segment? Why?

Tony said, “There’s only one time when it’s OK to lie, and that’s when not to lie is to do something worse.” What is your reaction to that statement?

In your own words, what makes hesed a distinct form of kindness or love?

When have you seen someone make a public confession of their allegiance to God and His kingdom? What was the result of that confession?

Is it possible to receive salvation for eternity but still live according to the values of the world here on earth? Why or why not?

What question would you most like to have answered about faith? Why?

What’s the primary lesson we can draw from the full scope of Rahab’s story in Scripture?

Application: Commit to exercise your faith muscles throughout this week. Be on the lookout for and be in prayer about opportunities to act in a way that publicly demonstrates your faith in God and your desire to serve Him. Most importantly, be sure to take advantage of those opportunities when they come.

Suggested Scripture memory for this week:
“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” Hebrews 11:1

Read week 2 and complete the activities before the next group experience.
Welcome back to this small-group discussion of *It's Not Too Late*.

Last week’s application challenge involved exercising your faith muscles. If you’re willing, talk about what you experienced.

Describe what you liked best from week 2 of the workbook. What questions do you still have?

What does it mean to fear God?

Work together as a group to write a one-sentence definition of *faith*.

To prepare to view the DVD segment, read these verses aloud.

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come. By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones. *Hebrews 11:20-22*
WATCH

Complete the viewer guide below as you view DVD session 3.

We don’t like __________________________, but it is a critical part of God’s transformation process.

Brokenness means to be ______________________ of your self-sufficiency.
Brokenness means to no longer live ______________________ from God.

Jacob didn’t want his direction controlled by God; he wanted to ______________ his way through life.

Even though you may have great promises, God sees your ____________, and He’s not satisfied. And He wants to ____________ you to make you ready for what He’s prepared for you.

When God is ready to __________ you, it’s going to hurt.

God will put you in a bad situation, not because He’s trying to ______ you but because He’s trying to change you.

In the Bible, a name is not just nomenclature; a name signifies your ________________, and a name signifies your ________________.

As long as you’re ______, you’ll be ______ without God.

When God sends pain for a ________________, it means it’s not too late.

God will put you in an uncomfortable situation when He’s ready to change your ____________—which means it’s not too late.

We’re Christians today because we ____________ the name of our Savior and it is our new identity.
Discuss the DVD segment with your group, using the questions below.

What struck you as most interesting from the DVD segment? Why?

How are tricksters and schemers viewed in today’s culture?

Describe a time when you were blessed by another person. What emotions did you experience at the time? What changed in your life as a result?

Describe a time when you’ve felt broken. What emotions did you experience at the time? What changed in your life as a result?

Tony said, “Don’t leave this life without God giving you everything you’re supposed to have.” How do we go about making sure we receive what God wants to give?

Speaking practically, how are Christians supposed to live as bearers of Jesus’ name? What’s that supposed to look like?

What’s the primary lesson we can draw from the full scope of Jacob’s story?

**Application:** As a group, think of a way to actively declare and/or display your identity as Christians. Commit to participating in that declaration or display throughout your everyday lives this week.

**Suggested Scripture memory for this week:**
I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. *John 15:5*

Read week 3 and complete the activities before the next group experience.
Welcome back to this small-group discussion of *It's Not Too Late*.

Last week’s application challenge involved actively displaying your identity as a Christian. If you’re willing, talk about what you experienced.

Describe what you liked best from week 3 of the workbook. What questions do you still have?

What does your name mean? Does it accurately reflect your character?

As a group, make a list of blessings that all Christians experience.

**To prepare to view the DVD segment, read these verses aloud.**

“Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, obliging them to celebrate the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same month, annually, because on those days the Jews rid themselves of their enemies, and it was a month which was turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and rejoicing and sending portions of food to one another and gifts to the poor.” *Esther 9:20-22*
WATCH

Complete the viewer guide below as you view DVD session 4.

The Book of Esther is the one book in all of Scripture that doesn’t have God’s _________ in it.

Esther is a diva because her name means ____________.

Many people get so high and mighty that they lose sight of the _____________ of God and the _____________ of God.

When you lose sight of connecting your _______________ with God’s purposes, you lose sight of ever being used by God.

The biblical definition of a blessing is enjoying, experiencing, and __________________________ God’s goodness.

God blesses you to use you for something bigger: to attract you to His _____________________.

You have been put here for something bigger. And if you lose the bigger, you lose your _________________.

If God has delivered you and has set you free, He _____________ you to deliver somebody else.

Do you view where you are as a ________________ to be used? Do you view what God has done for you as an opportunity to _____________ His kingdom?

When Esther made the decision to link into God, God used ______________________ to turn the situation around.
Discuss the DVD segment with your group, using the questions below.

What struck you as most interesting from the DVD segment? Why?

In the “Start” section your group made a list of blessings that all Christians experience. What is God’s purpose behind these blessings? What are we supposed to do with them?

Respond to Tony’s statement: “The biblical definition of a blessing is enjoying, experiencing, and extending God’s goodness.” How have other people extended God’s goodness to you in recent years?

When have you been able to extend God’s goodness to others? How did it make you feel?

What kinds of risks does God ask Christians to take on His behalf?

What risks has God asked you to take in the past? What risks is He asking you to take now?

What’s the primary lesson we can draw from the full scope of Esther’s story?

**Application:** Be attentive to ways you can invest in God’s plan and purposes this week by taking a risk for Him. Make sure to pray about these opportunities throughout the week rather than operating from your own wisdom.

**Suggested Scripture memory for this week:**
“The king’s heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.” Proverbs 21:1

Read week 4 and complete the activities before the next group experience.
Welcome back to this small-group discussion of *It's Not Too Late*. Last week’s application challenge involved taking a risk for God. If you’re willing, talk about what you experienced.

Describe what you liked best from week 4 of the workbook. What questions do you still have?

How have you been blessed to be a blessing?

Work as a group to produce a definition of *providence*. How does the concept of providence connect with our everyday lives?

To prepare to view the DVD segment, read these verses aloud.

“When Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.” Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.” *Matthew 16:13-20*
Peter was the ______________ of the disciples.

Satan can only do to you what he’s been ______________ to do.

Why would God OK the Devil messing with us? To ______________ something in our lives that needs to be addressed.

Even ______________ you messed up, before you blew it, God was promising you that it’s not too late.

Apostasy is the __________ denial of Jesus Christ.

It’s not too late for God to meet you where you are, even in your ______________, and take you where He wants you to be.

It’s one thing to fall and know you fell; it’s another thing to ______________ ______ in the mud in which you’ve fallen.

When you have been taken through the accusations of Satan and beaten down, God has a way of ______________ you and using you for His glory.
Discuss the DVD segment with your group, using the questions below.

What struck you as most interesting from the DVD segment? Why?

What is your reaction to the idea that no trials can come your way without God's permission?

When have you been tempted to deny or hide your faith in God?
   What happened next?

What emotions do you experience when you fail? How do you process failure and move forward?

How would your attitudes and actions change if you returned to your old life before you met Jesus? Describe what would be different both internally and externally.

Do you ever feel pressured to act superspiritual or to project a higher level of spiritual maturity? If so, what causes that pressure?

What’s the primary lesson we can draw from the full scope of Peter’s story?

**Application:** Throughout this week identify different ways you failed God in the past. As you think of each one, ask this question: What have I learned because of that failure that can be used to help others who are currently failing in the same way?

**Suggested Scripture memory for this week:**
“Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.’ ” *John 6:68-69*

*Read week 5 and complete the activities before the next group experience.*
Welcome back to this small-group discussion of *It’s Not Too Late*.

Last week’s application challenge involved thinking of ways your past failures could be used for present ministry. If you’re willing, talk about what you experienced.

Describe what you liked best from week 5 of the workbook. What questions do you still have?

How do you see Peter’s actions and attitudes reflected in your life?

What needs to happen before we can experience God’s forgiveness? What are the steps in that process?

To prepare to view the DVD segment, read these verses aloud.

“By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised. Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE.” *Hebrews 11:8-12*
WATCH

Complete the viewer guide below as you view DVD session 6.

There are many times we want to throw a __________________ flag on God. We want to __________________ the call He’s made.

While Sarah was ____________ in terms of pregnancy and childbirth, a lot of folks are ____________ with life itself.

Sometimes the promises of God create ____________.

Whenever you mix man’s way with God’s way, you ____________
God’s way from happening.

Whenever you add human ________________ into God’s promises, you contradict where you’re trying to go.

Once you’re clear with the promise, it’s not too late for God to pull it off even though it’s outside the ________________ order of things.

Until you ________________ the size of your God, you won’t see what your God is able to pull off outside of the natural.

A ____________ faith in a big God is all you need; a ________ of faith in a little God won’t help you.

Faith is not a feeling. Faith is the ____________ you take.

If God is making you ________, He’s doing something out of the normal order.

God wants you to know that not only can He keep His promise, He can keep you around long enough to ____________ it.
Discuss the DVD segment with your group, using the questions below.

What struck you as most interesting from the DVD segment? Why?

Where barrenness of life is reflected in today's culture? What are the causes of that barrenness?

Respond to this statement: “Whenever you mix man’s way with God’s way, you delay God’s way from happening.” In what situations do we commonly insert our own solutions into problems we’ve asked God to solve?

Does God still supernaturally intervene in people's lives and in our world as a whole? Explain your answer.

What emotions do you experience when you’re forced to wait?

What’s the primary lesson we can draw from the full scope of Sarah’s story?

What have you appreciated most from this study? Why?

**Application:** During this week find a dying plant in your yard (or somewhere you can access) and do whatever you can to restore it to health. Use fertilizer, for example. Make sure it has water and sun. Transplant it if necessary. Whenever you tend the plant, also pray that God will work to restore any dreams or hopes that have become barren in your life.

**Suggested Scripture memory for this week:**

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13

Read week 6 and complete the activities to conclude this study.