



Comeback Week Two

Opening Prayer: God, thank you for being with us no matter what the circumstance. Help us to see how you create invitations for comeback events in our lives. Allow us to see and accept those invitations.

Talk It Over: God is actively working on our behalf and helping us have a comeback. We find plenty of examples of comebacks in the Bible through the stories of people like Daniel, Moses, Joseph, Peter, Saul, and Jesus. As we looked at some of those examples this week, we often saw a pattern where someone who experienced apparent loss ended up learning that God was intervening and orchestrating a comeback all along. But when we looked at the story of Stephen, we didn't see a clear intervention and his story ended in death. These stories highlight the tension that sometimes the comeback we expect, or desire, is not what happens in real life. We are limited in what we can see and there is often more to the story. Stephen played a part in that larger story even though he appeared to have suffered the ultimate loss.

- Do you have an example of a comeback story that you have personally walked through or witnessed in someone you love?
- Did it play out the way you thought or wished it would have?
- Looking back, what are some of the elements you would have changed? What unexpected elements you are grateful for now?

Paul gives us examples of how to be used by God or how you experience a comeback — even when you have experienced a loss. Paul instructs us during a time of loss to fight, finish well, and keep faith.

Read 2 Timothy 4:7

Fighting can sound like a negative action, and while it often may be, there is an internal fight that Paul tells us to lean into. Paul invites us to embrace the fight when something important is on the line and we have an active part to play. This may involve our parenting, marriages, relationships, finances, health, or any other struggle we might face. Walking through our difficulties by fighting for what we care about deeply until the end, while keeping faith, can be a powerful witness to those watching. Plus, staying in the fight until the end can also open ourselves up to see things through God's eyes.

- Fighting looks different for each of us. When you feel yourself deeply concerned and committed to changing or protecting something, what does that look like for you?
- Sometimes we can stay in the fight for unhealthy reason or even fight in unhealthy ways. What are some examples of unhealthy fighting?
- Surrender can be a form of fighting. Sometimes we need to let something go, and wait to see what happens while we pray and trust God to be active in the situation. How does practicing surrender look for you in the midst of difficulty?

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Read Hebrews 12:1

Finishing well in the midst of painful parts of the journey is a skill. When things get hard it's easy to decide to shut down and not care about finishing well. Finishing well requires dedication, focus, and determination to keep our eyes on what matters most. Finishing well is a way we can honor God with our lives.

- What are some practices or habits you have created in the rhythm of your life that help you finish well? How well do you do you implement those practice or habits in the midst of stressful times?
- Living in community is one of the ways we can find support to finish well. Do you tend to let people in when you face something difficult or do you tend to handle it alone?

Read Psalm 34:18

When we experience loss we often lose sight of God and can feel abandoned. Our minds often likes to create stories that tell us God can't possibly be present in the midst of our pain. But God tell us the opposite is true. God is often closer in difficult times — we often just need to slow down and look for him. That simple exercise of calming down and seeking God helps us to keep our faith in the midst of trials.

- Do you have a story where you felt God's presence in the midst of a difficult time? If you feel open, share a brief version of that with the group.
- How do you seek God? What are some ways you create space to connect with him?

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father, let us know in the deepest parts of our hearts that you are for us and not against us. Be with us this week and show us ways to fight, finish well, and keep the faith in the midst of our daily lives. Help us to find you in the current situation we are facing.

Challenge: Read the book of Acts this week on your own.