

But Peter said, “I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!” And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. – Acts 3:6-7

Week 3

GET UP

START

Welcome to group session 3 of Kingdom Men Rising.

Last session, we considered how God’s Word brings purpose and direction to our lives. We saw how God can take a stale or declining spiritual life and make it live again like Ezekiel saw in the valley of dry bones.

Describe one meaningful truth from last session with the group.

This week we’re going to be talking about how to get up and overcome what is holding us back.

In what ways are men able to help other men to get up after they have been knocked down?

I’m sure you have seen it if you have watched any sports at all. The game is going on like normal then a player goes down. The team gathers around the player as the medics rush to his side. Some teammates drop to a knee. Others stand quietly nearby, trying to listen to how bad the injury might be.

If the medic doesn’t signal for the cart, another familiar scene often takes place as well. That’s when the medic or another player will come alongside of the injured player and help him off the field. He will extend a hand to help him get up and off to the sidelines.

Sometimes life’s difficulties knock us out, beat us down, or get us off the field completely. But there are other times, when a helpful friend can go a long way in getting us back on our feet and in the game again. Standing up after you’ve been knocked down is rarely a solo experience. It takes others to come alongside you to lift you, encourage you, and strengthen you until you can once again stand on your own.

Ask someone to pray before watching the video teaching.

WATCH

Use this space to take notes during the video teaching.

MAN UP

Use the following questions to discuss the video teaching.

Read Acts 3:1-2 together.

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. And a man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple.

Acts 3:1-2

This verse gives a stark contrast in the location the lame man sat down each day to beg and his own life situation. Luke, the author of Acts, specifically lets us as readers know that the gate was called "Beautiful."

What kind of hardship do you imagine this man dealt with day after day?

Why does suffering, physical or otherwise, often impact our spiritual lives?

Much of the lameness we experience in our own lives comes about through comparison. Comparing yourself to others can have a crippling effect on what you do. If you ever see two quarterbacks competing for the same role, they will often underperform. This is because they know they are being scrutinized and compared. Yet when a franchise shows confidence in one quarterback and assures him of his role, he will regularly play with a higher level of competence.

Describe some of the ways men limit their own potential by comparing themselves to others.

How does comparison often lead to emotional pain and hardship?

Lameness comes in all shapes and sizes. We can be lame emotionally. We can be lame spiritually, where we're so far from God's perspective that we lean to our own understanding. We can be lame morally, not making the right choices, abusing women, and also abusing ourselves. We can be lame relationally because we're hanging out with the wrong people, doing the wrong things. We can be lame in our careers, feeling like we are failures. And we fake it, we pretend that we can stand up and man up. We use all the words, but still we can't stand on our own two feet. And that makes us like this man in Acts 3, a "spiritual beggar."

What does it look like to be a "spiritual beggar"?

We all enter the kingdom of heaven poor in spirit (see Matt. 5:3). At some point we have to get up from the ground get healed and get help. Then we can help other spiritual beggars rise up to be the men God created them to be. Once the lame man was healed, he got up and started praising God (Acts 4:8). The power of God became active in his life, and he returned the praise to God.

What specific, practical steps can you take this week to overcome any personal spiritual lameness in your life?

Now consider who needs your help. What specific, practical steps can you take this week to help someone else overcome any personal spiritual lameness in his life?

PRAYER

Father, You have charged us with the calling of rising as kingdom men. It is not okay to stay down, defeated, and bound by any emotional or spiritual strongholds. We ask that You shine a light onto those areas in our lives where we need to heal, grow, and become stronger. Give us the humility we need to ask others for help. Give us the wisdom we need to help others who can benefit from our help. In Jesus' name, amen.

HIT THE STREETS

STAND TALL AND TELL OTHERS

Just like our bodies can experience muscle atrophy due to poor nutrition or a lack of use, our spiritual life can deteriorate when we give up or throw in the towel due to difficulties we face. But God gives us four key principles, based on the story of the lame man, which we can apply in order to overcome spiritual and emotional lameness. We find these in Acts 3:

And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!" And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. Acts 3:5-8

1

GIVE GOD YOUR ATTENTION

The first step you must take to restoring spiritual strength when it has been lost is to turn your attention to God. Like the lame man begging at the temple, expect to receive something. What God gives you may be different from what you expect to get, but that doesn't rid you of your personal responsibility to look to Him with hope.

2

RECEIVE HIS HELP

God's help can come to you in any number of ways. It may come through a friend, a book, a sermon, a small group, a coach, or a pastor or mentor. However God chooses to send you the guidance and wisdom you need on the path to your spiritual restoration, it is up to you to receive it. No one is going to do it all for you. Participate in the process of your own healing.

3

STAND ON YOUR OWN

Once God gives you what you need in order to be lifted from the slump of spiritual lameness, be willing to stand on your own. Take responsibility for your next step. Do not allow yourself to become so dependent upon others that you fail to realize and utilize your own strength. Muscles develop as you use them. The same is true for the spiritual and emotional life. You may only go so far on your own at the start, but with time, you will increase your distance.

4

PRAISE GOD AND TELL OTHERS

As God continues to strengthen you and rebuild the parts of your life that were broken, do not keep it to yourself. Show others what He has done in your life. Demonstrate to others what is possible. In this way, you encourage others in their own healing as well. As you praise God and tell of His power, you create a ripple effect of personal growth in others too.

Which of the principles do you need to embrace right now?

What might that look like for you? Be specific.

BIBLE STUDY 1

PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS

Have you ever gotten a card for your birthday and you opened the envelope but you didn't even read the card, you just shook the card? You did this because you wanted to know if the person who sent you the card had given you any greenbacks in your card. Or, maybe, did they write a check? If you were to be honest, you would admit that you don't even care that much about the card. You care about what's in the card!

You and I both know how disappointing it is on your birthday to only get a card with nothing in it. Well, you can imagine how disappointed the lame man was in Acts 3 when Peter told him that he didn't have any silver or gold to give him. Especially since they had stopped in response to his begging. When you stop, that usually means you're going to do something.

Sometimes delays are good for us. God has a habit of delaying His provision and intervention in our lives for a greater purpose. One of the purposes is to be sure He has our full attention first.

Read Psalm 62:1 and Psalm 69:3 then answer the following questions.

*My soul waits in silence for God only;
From Him is my salvation.
Psalm 62:1*

*I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched; My eyes fail while I wait for my God.
Psalm 69:3*

Why would God delay His help and cause us to wait on Him?

How does being asked to wait on God heighten our spiritual sensitivities to what He is about to do?

Describe a time when God didn't give you what you desired at the time, but He came through at a later date. What did the waiting teach you about God? About yourself?

The lame man from Acts 3 was taken to the gate of the temple every day (v. 2). Even though this was an area with heavy foot traffic, he was likely ignored. As Peter and John walked by the lame man, Peter said, "Look at us!" (v. 4) Now, if Peter had to tell him to "look at us," that means he wasn't looking at them to begin with. That gives us great insight into this lame man. Peter needed this man's undivided attention. He needed him to focus. He needed him to hear him. If this man truly wanted a solution, he'd need to pay close attention to Peter right then. He needed to be part of the solution.

Healing and empowerment are not a one-way gift through the touch of a magic wand. True healing requires your desire, responsibility, and focus. That's why Jesus would often ask the question "Do you want to be made well?" He didn't just walk around tapping people on the head, bestowing health and healing on whomever was near. Keep in mind, crowds of people flocked around Jesus wherever He went. Lines formed. Inevitably people walked away unhealed. Rather, Jesus would ask if the person was willing to be made whole. Healing and wholeness come in a process of belief and through a desire to be made well.

How does our personal participation in the process of healing lead to deeper growth?

How does our participation help us understand those seasons where God asks or expects us to wait on His timing?

Physical therapists can do wonders with patients who want to be made well. But if a patient does not have the will to get better, the improvements are typically less drastic, if any at all. Oftentimes, a physical therapist will notate on a patient's chart that the patient is either "noncompliant" or "noncooperative." This lets the other nurses or therapists gain insight into why the progression toward wholeness is moving so slowly.

When God restores the parts of us that have been damaged by sin or wounded through personal neglect or harm, He wants our cooperation in the process. Without it, long-term progress cannot take place.

In what ways can a person cooperate with God in the process of healing from spiritual lameness or emotional wounds?

In what ways can a person resist God, or the help of others, in the process of personal growth? What is often the result?

Just like it is rare for a man to lift a large amount of weights alone in a gym, without a spotter or someone to encourage and help, growth in the spiritual life does not happen in a silo. We are all part of a collective process, cooperating with God and others in our healing and spiritual development. Our willingness to experience life more intimately with others and more humbly before God will have a large impact on how much lameness we are able to overcome, both individually and as a group. We cannot be content with past victories, we must continue to participate in our faith journey as Paul wrote in Philippians 2.

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Philippians 2:12-13

On a scale of 0-10, how much effort do you put into your own spiritual healing and growth?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What makes it difficult for you to invest more than you do?

On a scale of 0-10, how much effort does God put into your spiritual healing and growth (both to will and to work for His good pleasure)?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Are you willing to cooperate with God on a greater level so that He can develop and unleash you to do His kingdom work?

What practical steps can you take to participate more intentionally in your own personal path to spiritual maturity, strength, healing and growth?

Who is another more mature kingdom man who can help you get up from the ground when you're down and in need of spiritual strength and healing?

Pray about your willingness to participate in the process of healing, helping, and growing as men. Ask God to reveal where you have been unwilling to either lend a hand, or receive a hand, toward greater spiritual maturity. Seek ways you can become better connected with other men so that iron can truly sharpen iron as Scripture says it should (Prov. 27:17).

BIBLE STUDY 2

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW?

A POW is a prisoner of war—a person who has been captured by the enemy and is held hostage during conflict. The opposing forces control the prisoner's living conditions, activities, and movements. Many men live like POWs, but rather than being prisoners of war, they're prisoners of addictive behavior. They have been captured by the enemy, and there appears to be no way of escape. They feel trapped in situations and circumstances that the world labels as addiction. Drugs, sex, pornography, alcohol, relationships, negative self-talk, work, food, gambling, spending—these things become coping mechanisms for life's pain, disappointments, and boredom. When an action or activity begins to influence you more than you influence it, it can leave you feeling trapped.

I sometimes compare addictive behavior to quicksand. The harder you try to get out of a situation, the deeper you sink. Human methods can never set you free from a spiritual stranglehold on your life. Rather, these attempts will make you sink faster.

Another problem that arises when someone is sinking in quicksand involves focus. Remember when Peter stepped off the boat to walk to Jesus on the waves (Matt. 14:22-23)? Things were going great, then his vision for circumstances overtook his focus on Christ. Where you look matters. If a person stares only at the sand surrounding them, they will miss the stick being held out to them that they must grasp to be dragged out. We rely on human methods when only spiritual methods can deliver.

Consider Paul's words about our the conflict going on all around us.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

What must happen first in order for us to overcome a stronghold in our life?

Have you ever attempted to overcome a stronghold of the flesh by using the flesh? What was the result?

One reason strongholds are so powerful is that they're so entrenched. They become entrenched when we buy into the lie that our situation is hopeless. His goal is to get you to believe that by nature you are a drug addict or a manipulator or a negative person, that you are controlled by fear or shame, that nothing will ever change. Once you adopt this line of thinking, these unhelpful patterns become entrenched fortresses that are difficult to remove. As a result, your behavior deteriorates even more because we always act according to who we believe we are.

The only solution is to tear down these fortresses by "taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." This means to replace your harmful and untrue thoughts with the better promises of God. Embracing this advice from Scripture reprograms your mind and releases you from spiritual strongholds. You become free yourself so then you can help other men rise to do the same.

Why is it important to reprogram your mind in order to break free from a spiritual or emotional stronghold?

Name some common cultural influences that can be used by the enemy to keep your mind hearing, rehearsing and believing the lies of this world.

What thoughts do you need to take captive?

Overcoming personal strongholds is a two-part process of reprogramming your mind. First, identify Christ's thoughts on a matter, and secondly, align your own thinking under the rule of His truth. The truth, then, will set you free (John 8:32). Let's work through this process together.

Reflect on a particular struggle you have, then answer the following questions.

Write out your thoughts on this struggle. Be specific.

What promises of Christ speak to this struggle? Get your Bible or Bible app and find specific Scriptures that speak to your struggle.

Identify the ways your thinking is out of alignment with Christ's thoughts.

How must you adjust your thoughts to align under the rule of Christ's truth?

Keep in mind that just acknowledging the truth won't break any bonds. John 8:32 says that you "will know" the truth and then be set free. The word for "will know" in the original Greek of the New Testament is a verb that literally means both "to know" and "to be known." The word refers not to head knowledge, but deep and intimate familiarity with a subject. It is the same word used in Matthew 1:25 (NKJV) when the Scripture says that Joseph did not know (have sexual relations with) Mary while she was pregnant. The NASB says that he "kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son." The literal translation of in Matthew 1:25 is "and was not knowing her."

To know the truth, in the biblical form of this word, is to make it an intrinsic part of who you are. It is to know and be known by it, in the deepest, most authentic place in you. To know ourselves in this way, we need to be in a constant relationship with the Scriptures.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

Describe the difference between "knowing" something cognitively and "knowing" something intimately? Why is this important when it comes to knowing God's Word?

How has God's Word freed you from hardship and sin in the past?

As you seek to heal from any and every spiritual and emotional stronghold you may face, or as you seek to guide other men into healing as well, be sure to identify what Christ says on the matter, and then memorize it, meditate on it, and apply it. It is not enough to simply be aware of the truth. Just like it is not enough to simply be aware of your dinner. You must consume your dinner for it to have any positive impact on your body. Similarly, you must consume the Word of God in such a way that it becomes an intrinsic part of your nature on a regular basis.

Pray for God to inspire you to know His Word on a deeper level. Invite Him to show you ways you can discover truth in His Word beyond what you have done in the past. Ask Him to connect you with other men who have a similar hunger for His Word. In this way, you can grow together and strengthen each other as you rise together as kingdom men.