

GO FOR IT

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

Colossians 1:9-12 NIV

Go For It – Introduction

God is good, huh? It is my sincere belief that God has big plans for the generation that we have the privilege of working with in the Bible quizzing ministry. Our role as coaches, parents, and other adults who care about teens is to give them opportunities to put their faith into action. That's what this curriculum is all about.

The title "Go For It" actually happened accidentally. I was talking to another coach here in Wilmore, KY as we prepared for the new year of quizzing and, as I talked about my desire to help them put their faith into practice, I mentioned that I want them to just go for it and do something! Jenny, the coach I was speaking to, said, "That's what you should call it! Go For It!" So here it is!

For students who are reading this, know that you are surrounded by adults who believe in you and believe that you can make a difference in this world TODAY. You don't have to be 21 to make a difference (I'm still not even 21). You don't have to have ministry training to make a difference. You don't have to know Hebrew or Greek or win the Alpha and Omega; you just have to Go For It and do something! I think one of the biggest mistakes that most Christians make is that we work our whole lives to figure out what exactly God wants us to do. As we're thinking and wondering about this, how many opportunities do we miss? And let me tell you my belief; I think that it is in these day-to-day opportunities that we really find out who God made us to be. So, don't tell yourself you're not qualified or that you can't make a difference; those are the lies that I hope you can overcome throughout this year and maybe even through this curriculum.

The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) is a passage that Christians have often seen as the cornerstone of our duty as Christians. We focus on making disciples and baptizing and teaching as Jesus empowers us. Those are great things; don't get me wrong. But the very first thing that Jesus said in that passage is simply this: Go! A coach of mine in quizzing used to tell me this: if you don't jump, you can't answer; if you don't answer, you can't score; if you don't score, you can't win! Similarly, it seems to me that Jesus was telling his disciples something like this: "I have huge plans for you. I have huge goals. But none of them will happen until you stop planning and Go For It!"

I hope YOU will. God bless you all.

~ Adam Schell

Go For It – Instructions

I think this curriculum is laid out pretty simply. I have prepared a weekly challenge; something practical that draws from our text and is by no means revolutionary. The goal here is not to draw attention to ourselves, but to shift our focus from ourselves to the God who made us, the Savior who died for us, and the Spirit who empowers us. None of these challenges are impossible for any of us. If you feel uncomfortable with one, I'm obviously not going to be tracking you down to make sure you do exactly what every page says to do; I have neither the time nor desire to do that! However, let me challenge you that often disequilibrium allows space for God to show us what He is doing around us and what He wants to do through us. Feel free to take liberties with how you apply these challenges, but don't change them just because they push your comfort zone; that's kind of the point of some of these!

So, each week there will be a challenge based in a Scripture passage. There will also be an additional passage from elsewhere in the Bible to read – yes, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon are a part of a bigger book! My suggestion would be to take the first few minutes of your weekly practice to talk about the last week's challenge and introduce the next week's. It's a simple way to stay accountable as well as to emphasize that quizzing is about more than just trophies and competition.

I would also encourage you to somehow get these materials into the hands of your quizzers. If you can afford to print them, do it. If sending them electronically is more effective, do that! If you have a Facebook page, post them there. This curriculum is a ministry. I do not want to make any money doing this and I expect that you also will not turn a profit here. Thank you.

Finally, each section will include an opportunity to write a response. These can be kept by students or turned in as a way of seeing our students' growth or even of evaluating if this curriculum can be effective. I leave that decision up to you and your program.

Also, side note, I'm centering each week on Wednesdays because that is when our program meets. Obviously you're welcome to change the dates to what works for you.

Please join me in praying for our Bible Quizzing programs and, more importantly, our students, coaches, and leaders. Let's pray big and don't stop there, but GO and DO! God bless you all.

Week One – Who Do I Please?

August 24-30

Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ. ~ Galatians 1:10

As we start this year's journey, we're going to spend a couple weeks building a foundation in our personal walks with God. First, let's spend a week seeing where our priorities really are.

Our world is extremely concerned with image. Pleasing people is a huge goal in many of our lives, whether we acknowledge that or not. However, it is clear from Scripture that we are to strive to please God first, not people. Is that how you live?

Challenge: This week, keep a small notebook with you in your pocket or purse or whatever you always have with you. Be on the lookout for moments where you are more worried about what people think than about what God thinks – when you choose your clothes, where you sit in the cafeteria or in class, what you do with your free time, etc. Whenever you catch yourself in one of these moments, write it down. At the end of the week, reflect on how you can seek God's approval more often and ask Him what changes He wants you to make.

(Day one) This week, I am going to _____

(Day seven) This week, I _____

(Day seven) Reflections on the week: _____

Additional Reading: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

I read the additional reading

Week Two – Who Gets My Time? August 31 – September 6

I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. ~ Galatians 1:11-12

Paul spent some time with Jesus, and even more with his disciples, face-to-face. He had the living Word right next to him and got to learn from Him and His disciples. We still have the Word of God, which is living and active, we just often let it sit on our shelves or slow down our phones without ever opening it up.

One thing that Bible quizzers are often assumed to be good at is spending time in God's Word. However, there is a marked difference between spending time memorizing material and spending time meditating on Truth. I know that spending 30 minutes studying for quiz practice seems like it should count as your time in the Word for the day – and it's not that this isn't valuable time – but there is added value in spending time in the Word of God apart from studying for quizzing.

Challenge: Relationships take time. God is no exception. Set an amount of time that you will commit to spending in God's Word each day apart from studying for Bible quizzing. Then actually do it!

(Day one) This week, I am going to _____

(Day seven) This week, I _____

(Day seven) Reflections on the week: _____

Additional Reading: Hebrews 4:12-16; John 1:1-18

I read the additional reading

Week Three – Who Can Help? September 7-13

When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. ~ Galatians 2:11-12

Sometimes when we are with people like us, it makes it harder to spend time with people who are not like us. I find that it is often easier to be a Christian witness when I'm not with my family or close friends because, for whatever reason, there seems to be less pressure. Cephas (Peter) also felt this, but Paul makes it clear that we are to fight to overcome such pressures. After all, Jesus' example makes it clear that we are to be His witnesses no matter where we are or whom we're with.

Challenge: This week, find ways to include your friends in Christian activities. Maybe you can start a Bible study at lunch or integrate as a group with some people who aren't like you or maybe you have way better ideas than I do! Whatever you do, find ways to include your friends so that you can start to feel encouraged by and not hindered by your Christian brothers and sisters.

(Day one) This week, I am going to _____

(Day seven) This week, I _____

(Day seven) Reflections on the week: _____

Additional Reading: John 15:9-17

I read the additional reading

Week Four – Who Is My Neighbor? September 14-20

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ~ Galatians 3:28

We live in a very divided world. Black or White, Republican or Democrat, Christian or Atheist, old or young, male or female, homosexual or heterosexual, these are just some of the filters through which we see people. This is not a new problem. People have always struggled to see others in less shallow ways than these, but that does not mean it's impossible.

When Jesus was asked, "Who is my neighbor?" the story he told reveals how He saw people. Jesus looked beyond people's nationality, religion, skin color, and upbringing and saw them as they really are – children made in God's image.

Challenge: There are people around you who are not like you. That does not make them bad. Be intentional this week in just starting normal conversations with people who are not like you. You don't need to change their world; people who aren't like you are not projects. They are people made in God's image, just like you are. If you talk to them and get to know them, you may just find that out for yourself. Go For It!

(Day one) This week, I am going to _____

(Day seven) This week, I _____

(Day seven) Reflections on the week: _____

Additional Reading: Luke 10:25-37

I read the additional reading

Week Five – Who Is The Spirit? September 21-27

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ~ Galatians 5:22-23

Throughout the year, from time to time we will stop and address a couple of the fruits of the Spirit. This week is a preparation for the other weeks that we will talk about specific fruits of the Spirit. Before we address the fruit, though, I think we ought to address the source – the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, the third member of the Holy Trinity is often overlooked. It's easy to think about the God who created us or the Savior who died for us, but the Spirit who empowers us can be a more difficult concept. However, I believe it is worth it to spend time thinking about and talking to the Holy Spirit – He may be confusing, but that doesn't make Him less real or important.

Challenge: This week, decide on an amount of time every day to spend talking to, listening for, or reading about the Holy Spirit without any distractions. Maybe you want to focus on learning about the Spirit, growing with the Spirit, or listening for the Spirit's call; you decide!

(Day one) This week, I am going to _____

(Day seven) This week, I _____

(Day seven) Reflections on the week: _____

Additional Reading: Romans 8:1-17

I read the additional reading

Week Six – What Is Love?

September 28 – October 4

*But the fruit of the Spirit is **love**, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ~ Galatians 5:22-23*

The first of the fruits of the Spirit is love. Love is what sets us apart from the world (John 13:35); it is what sets our God apart from other “gods” (John 3:16); it is probably the greatest thing we have to offer or can be offered (1 Cor. 13:13).

Our lives should be defined by love. So, what is love? Augustine offered a favorite definition I’ve heard of love, “the alignment of one’s will with the desire for unity.” In order to truly love, therefore, there must be both a desire and actions that reflect the desire.

Challenge: This week is a dual challenge. The first challenge is to speak to your neighbors this week in love. Get out of your phone, look up from your shoes, get out of your comfort zone and talk to people around you. Get to know the people you do life with. Ask them how they’re doing and really listen. The second challenge is to listen to some of today’s popular music and compare its definition of love with the one I listed above. Take some time and think about your definition of love.

(Day one) This week, I am going to _____

(Day seven) This week, I _____

(Day seven) Reflections on the week: _____

Additional Reading: 1 John 4:7-21

I read the additional reading

Week Seven – Can I Help? October 5-11

So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir. Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. ~ Galatians 4:7-8

Slavery is a real thing today. I'm aware that this passage is not so much about literal slaves, but I am talking about literal slaves. There are an estimated 21 million slaves in the world today according to BBC.

Zach Hunter was in 7th grade when he learned in the course of studying about African American slavery that slavery still exists in the modern world. He decided to act and founded the student campaign "Loose Change to Loosen Chains" (LC2LC). That organization has spread across the country and raised thousands and thousands of dollars that have gone toward freeing modern day slaves.

Challenge: This week, collect money at school or in your community throughout the week to donate to an organization that is acting to change the world. If you have a passion for something other than slavery that you'd like to contribute to, do it! And consider making this more than a weeklong commitment. One such organization working to stop slavery is the International Justice Mission.

(Day one) This week, I am going to _____

(Day seven) This week, I _____

(Day seven) Reflections on the week: _____

Additional Reading: Matthew 25:31-46

I read the additional reading

Week Eight – What’s Holding Me Back? October 12-18

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. ~ Galatians 5:1

There are a lot of things in today’s world that can be enslaving:

- Almost 50% of teens have abused some kind of drug by their senior year of high school.
- By senior year, 71% of teens have used alcohol.
- 8.5% of youth gamers are addicted to video games.
- 20 million females and 10 million males in the US suffer from a significant eating disorder.
- 1 in 5 teens will experience depression at some point.
- 90% of boys and 60% of girls are exposed to online pornography before the age of 18.

Challenge: We are meant to be free. Most of us have something in our lives that is keeping us from fully experiencing freedom in Christ. Are you in any of the statistics above? Are there other addictions or stumbling blocks in your life? Talk to someone. This week, find someone you can trust – a friend, coach, parent, pastor – and tell them about what you’re going through. Don’t fight your battle alone.

(Day one) This week, I am going to _____

(Day seven) This week, I _____

(Day seven) Reflections on the week: _____

Additional Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

I read the additional reading

Week Nine – What Do I Have To Say? October 19-25

*See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand! ~
Galatians 6:11*

This week is kind of a weird one, but hey, weird can be fun! Have you ever gotten a letter in the mail from someone saying thank you for something you did or just wanting to catch up on life or to tell you you're great? Whatever it is, and for whatever reason, a written letter carries more weight than an email or text message.

Paul knew that letters were the best way to get across really important ideas besides face-to-face conversations. His letters could be to encourage, to rebuke, or just to check in, but they always held meaning.

Challenge: This week, choose someone or some people to write a letter or letters to. Maybe a friend of yours moved recently and could use a reminder that someone cares about them. Maybe someone did something really nice for you and you want to express your gratitude. Maybe there's just some person coming to mind with this challenge and you don't know why. Go, write what's on your heart and pray that God will bless that person or those people through a simple letter.

(Day one) This week, I am going to _____

(Day seven) This week, I _____

(Day seven) Reflections on the week: _____

Additional Reading: Hebrews 3:7-15

I read the additional reading

Week Ten – What Is Joy? October 26 – November 1

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, **joy**, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ~ Galatians 5:22-23*

Recently, I watched the movie “Inside Out” and was struck with the question, “Why isn’t Joy always happy?” It seemed counterintuitive that a character whose name and role are literally to embody joy could ever experience a non-smile. However, joy and happiness are not synonymous.

Happiness comes and goes with circumstances. We can be happy that our team won the game, but joy does not depend on a scoreboard. Joy is found most completely when we are able to center our lives in the hope that comes with God’s promises and love for His people.

Challenge: This week, seek joy in every circumstance. Take note of how you are feeling throughout the day – happy, sad, irritable, hyper, mad, etc. – and note how joy relates to these emotions. At the end of the day or during the day, keep a journal of what you’re learning about joy and how you are able to both find and sustain a joyful attitude.

(Day one) This week, I am going to _____

(Day seven) This week, I _____

(Day seven) Reflections on the week: _____

Additional Reading: James 1:2-18

I read the additional reading

Week Eleven – What Is Peace?

November 2-8

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, **peace**, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ~ Galatians 5:22-23*

Peace is something that does not fit in with American culture. Every day, it seems like we're hearing about another major tragedy or being told another reason that we should be worrying about our money, family, friends, or really anything else. We're told that peace is not attainable or is not valuable, maybe not explicitly, but certainly through the actions and attitudes of those around us.

Jesus, however, often took time to spend with God and find peace when He was in stressful situations. He always found time to spend with His Father when He needed to. Shouldn't we do likewise?

Challenge: Schedule an hour in your week to set aside for God. Spend that time somewhere that you can relax (without sleeping) and spend time with God. For me, it's outside in nature. For some, it's their room or their church building or somewhere entirely different. If you don't know where would be best, just go somewhere and spend an hour in prayer, Scripture, or however else you can find peace with God.

(Day one) This week, I am going to _____

(Day seven) This week, I _____

(Day seven) Reflections on the week: _____

Additional Reading: Mark 1:35-39; Luke 5:12-16

I read the additional reading

Week Twelve – What Am I Thankful For? November 9-15

*I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.
~ Ephesians 1:16*

Thanksgiving is coming up, but I don't want to focus on it while the whole world is or I'm afraid we might not take it as seriously. Plus, the start of Ephesians has a perfect opportunity for us to relate to thanksgiving. Paul is notorious for mentioning how he thanks God for the churches he is writing about. I believe he really did give thanks to God for those people and churches.

Today, Christians are notorious for saying things like, "I'll pray for you" and not following through on their word. This week, I want us to focus on giving thanks for people in our lives – but actually doing it! Thanksgiving is a powerful tool that not only helps us appreciate who and what we are surrounded by, but also brings us closer to God.

Challenge: Draw up a list of 20 people and/or things that you are thankful for. Spend at least one minute thanking God for each person or thing on your list. Do this at least once this week, preferably multiple times throughout the week. Run out of things to say? Then spend time thankfully reflecting on that person or thing.

(Day one) This week, I am going to _____

(Day seven) This week, I _____

(Day seven) Reflections on the week: _____

Additional Reading: 1 Chronicles 16:23-36

I read the additional reading

Week Thirteen – What Walls Need Broken?

November 16-22

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility ~ Ephesians 2:14

People are complicated. We often have misunderstandings or fallings-outs in relationships by nature of how different we all are or even because of purposeful malice. However, all that hostility does in our lives is build up walls that make them into a complicated maze.

Is there anyone in your life that you feel hostility toward? Is there anyone you avoid talking to or try not to run into? Have you built walls between yourself and someone who has done you wrong?

Challenge: This week's focus is reconciliation. Most of us have broken relationships in our lives. This week, ask God if there is someone He desires you do be reconciled with. If He shows you someone, find some way to reach out to that person. Don't ask them to repent; don't expect them to want to be best friends. Simply try to show them love and break down whatever walls you've built. Talk to God about this before you do it. Maybe talk to an adult or peer and get some advice from them, as well. Damage can be done if this is done without care, but real healing can take place if you are sensitive to the Spirit.

(Day one) This week, I am going to _____

(Day seven) This week, I _____

(Day seven) Reflections on the week: _____

Additional Reading: Matthew 5:23-24, 38-48

I read the additional reading

Week Fourteen – What Is My Dream?

November 23-29

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. ~ Ephesians 3:20-21

What is your dream? What's something that you get really excited about every time you talk or think about it? I don't care if it's "silly" or "strange" or "unrealistic", what is it? You might really not know yet. You may not have found anything that you feel that way about. But maybe you have... I wholeheartedly believe that God gives us passions and dreams for a reason. Not only that, I believe that our "big" dreams are often small compared to what God really wants to do through us.

Challenge: Dreaming can have a negative connotation in our world. We're supposed to plan and be realistic and worry about money and family and all of that. But this week, spend a little time dreaming. Spend time thinking about what you really love and how that might play into your life. My real challenge is this: find someone who is living out your dream or a part of your dream and ask to meet with them. Talk to them about your dreams and what you can do with them. Maybe God will do big things through you if you pay attention to that dream...

(Day one) This week, I am going to _____

(Day seven) This week, I _____

(Day seven) Reflections on the week: _____

Additional Reading: Romans 15:14-22

I read the additional reading

Week Fifteen – What Is Forbearance?

November 30 – December 6

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, **forbearance**, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ~ Galatians 5:22-23*

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience...wait, forbearance? Forbearance isn't a hugely different word from patience, except for its adding a syllable and not fitting into any of the fruit of the Spirit songs we learned as kids! The main nuance I've found is that forbearance is more specifically being patient in regards to showing restraint or tolerance in the face of injustice or inconvenience.

All people face injustice in their lives. The world's reaction is often to complain about how the world is just stacked against them or to lash out against those whom they perceive to be working against them. If you live out your Christian faith, you will face a lot of injustice along the way; the trick is learning how to show forbearance in those times.

Challenge: This week, every time you feel the urge to complain about something, fight that instinct and find something to praise God for. When you want to make that rant on social media, post a favorite verse from this month's material. Find ways to turn a spirit of complaining into one of forbearance this week.

(Day one) This week, I am going to _____

(Day seven) This week, I _____

(Day seven) Reflections on the week: _____

Additional Reading: Hebrews 11:13-16, Hebrews 11:32 – 12:3

I read the additional reading
