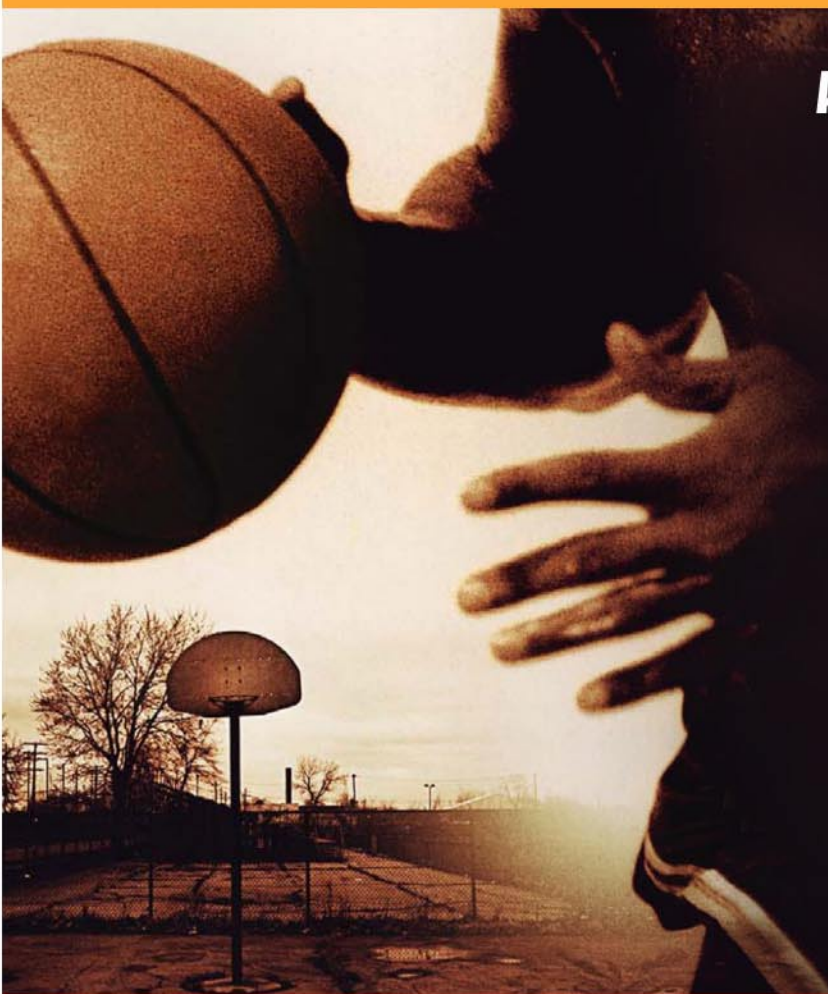


GLORY ROAD

What Does it Take to Change the World?

**An Event-Level Bible Study
by A.C. Green and
Dr. Marc T. Newman**



LEADER'S GUIDE

Introduction

Pass a piece of oblong pigskin down a grassy field. Hit a small ball with a stick and then run around a diamond-shaped track. Take a round ball, run down a hardwood court, and place the ball through a hoop. When looked at in this way, the sports of football, baseball, and basketball — actually, just about any sport — can seem a little trivial.

It should be of great interest, then, that the Apostle Paul directly referenced two sports - - running and boxing — in the Scriptures as representing vital lessons regarding life and salvation. Sports were, for Paul, a metaphor for something much bigger.

Human beings are naturally drawn to sports because of the drama of conflict. Sports require commitment, discipline, and perseverance — virtues we all admire, even if we don't currently possess them. Winning in sports demands dedicated participation and a willingness to work together with your coach and your teammates to attain victory. Most importantly, sports require belief in the idea that you can overcome any obstacle that gets in your way.

Glory Road is a film about college basketball — but at its heart it is a film about changing the world. The basketball court represents the field in which a larger conflict is playing out. *Glory Road* chronicles the journey of a coach and his players and their determination to overcome the sins of prejudice and partiality — not just in their home town, but throughout the culture. The team wanted people to think differently. Sports gave them that opportunity.

Just like the team, charged by their coach to change the way the world perceived them by their conduct on the court, Christians are similarly charged by Christ to change the world. And, just like the team in the film, we can win only through a commitment to five key principles: a willingness to recruit God's way, a responsiveness to discipline, perseverance in the face of trials, drawing strength from our supporters, and a firm belief that victory is possible as long as we will commit to take action to back up the belief. This study will challenge people to commit to these five key principles by using *Glory Road* as a springboard to the Scriptures.

Synopsis

In 1965, Don Haskins' claim to fame was that he coached a national championship basketball team — of high school girls. So Haskins is as surprised as anyone when Texas Western — a Division 1 college — invites him to apply for a job as men's basketball coach. The small El Paso, Texas college is at the bottom of the heap in their division. What Haskins does not know is that Texas Western is really looking for a nanny for their men's athletic dorm. What Texas Western does not know about Haskins is his absolute commitment to discipline, excellence, and doing what it takes to win.

In no time Haskins assesses the strengths and weaknesses of his team and determines that it is time to recruit additional talent. But none of the “star” athletes are interested in competing for the vibrant coach from the losing school. Without a track record of his own, and having to live with the track record of his college, Haskins decides to recruit outside the box.

Haskins and his staff travel across the country scouting for the athletes that have been overlooked by bigger programs, or even those who are not in college but simply play a great pick-up game at a local park. What all of the athletes he recruits have in common is that they are talented — and black.

In the 1960s, NCAA basketball colleges had unwritten laws about using African-American basketball players. They could be played in a pinch, but they were not starters. Black athletes were thought by some coaches to be inferior in ability and fortitude on the court. Haskins sees past all of the prejudice. Instead of color he sees speed and shot-making ability in these young athletes. He is determined to make a winning team by blending his current squad with his new recruits.

Haskin’s coaching is demanding, and he must overcome a lot of player resistance, at first. But once the athletes see that he is uncompromising in his desire to bring out the best in each of them, they begin to respond — and they win. What should be a cause for cheering turns ugly, as other towns and schools resent the presence of a winning mixed-race team on their courts. Racial epithets are scrawled, in blood, on hotel room walls, the players are showered with trash from the stands, and one is ambushed in a bathroom and beaten.

All of the hatred begins to take a toll on the Texas Western team. Though headed for a perfect season, the team begins to tear apart along racial lines as black players begin to resent even the white players on their own team. The division brings a devastating, but timely, loss — forcing the Texas Western team to confront its own demons and determine that they are going to pull together to change the way the world perceives them.

In the NCAA final showdown against a highly-favored University of Kentucky team, Coach Haskins decides that the only players he will play in the final will be African-Americans. Support comes quickly from their white teammates who finally understand that this is about more than who wins a national championship. The Kentucky coach is openly disdainful of Coach Haskins and his players. The time has come to show whether character, courage, and disciplined talent are more important than the color of a player’s skin.



Leader Preparation

Make it an Event

Glory Road is an exciting sports film, but its story line is propelled by transforming principles that must be instilled in the players before they can make important changes in the world. Since these principles build on one another, covering them in the space of a single evening is a great way to integrate the lessons. This Bible study method is a fully-integrated event approach that takes place over a single day. Doing a study this way may require some preparation, but churches (and even small group fellowships and families) can turn the study into an “event” by screening the film in the afternoon, followed by a shared meal for all participants. After dinner, the participants engage in this Bible study that uses the film to focus on transformational principles that can help us change the world for Christ.

Preparation

If you choose to make this a church-wide or even a small-group-wide event you will need to prepare:

Pray: Pray about this event and about what God will accomplish in the lives of the people who attend.

Publicize: Make sure everyone in the church, or your small group, knows about the event. Tell them that *Glory Road* is an exciting film about how an obscure, no-account Texas college basketball program overcomes racial prejudice through the grit and determination of their new coach, Dan Haskins. And how, despite everyone’s predictions, Haskins leads them to victory, winning the NCAA Division 1 basketball championship in 1966 — changing the face of the sport forever. Build excitement by talking about the movie, the meal, and the message: “What does it take to Change the World?” Invite family and friends. Use the event as an outreach. If you need people to bring things, arrange for these in advance.

Tickets: Make sure to purchase tickets in advance for everyone attending. You do not want anyone who wants to attend to be left out.

Have a Meal: There is something about having a meal together that draws people close and allows them to open up. The early Church had a tradition of sitting down to meals together — a tradition that many churches have lost.

To make your visit to *Glory Road* a special event, see the film and then head back to the church, or someone’s home, for a group meal. The meal should be prepared in advance (by people willing to sacrifice as they will have to see the film some other time) so that it will be ready when you return from the theater. The meal could be as simple as sandwiches and soft drinks, but to truly set the mood, we recommend taking a cue from *Glory Road* and serving Mexican food: tacos, enchiladas, and burritos — and don’t forget to offer some hot dogs as well (this is a point of humor in the film). Throw in a salad, some tortilla chips, and sports drinks and you’re all set.



Materials: Print out a copy of the leader's guide and enough student worksheets for everyone. Make sure you have plenty of extra Bibles and pens for those who need them.

The Day of the Event

- Get everyone to the theater early.
- Enjoy the film together.
- Return to the church or a small-group leader's home for your meal.
- After everyone is finished, gather in a comfortable place to begin the study.



Leader's Guide

A Note on the Format of this Guide

When you see “Leader:” in regular type, what follows are directions.

When you see *italic* type, what follows is information to share with the group. It can be read directly from this guide or it can be paraphrased.

Questions printed in **bold** represent the questions that appear in the students’ study guides. Read these aloud and then allow students to comment and take notes on the discussion. Some suggested answers to the questions appear in your leader’s guide in parentheses.

The study is divided into five brief sections. Talking about the movie during the Bible study will make time fly for most people. Pace yourself. There is a break scheduled at the halfway point in the study.

Leader: Once everyone is seated for the study, make sure that everyone has a Bible, a worksheet, and a pen or pencil. Open in prayer that God will use the film and this study to coach us in a winning strategy to change the world for Christ.

Open the study by asking people to share briefly what they liked best about the movie. Give people an opportunity to talk. People may comment on the excitement of the basketball footage, how the overt racism of the 1960s seems foreign to them today, how the racist attitudes made them uncomfortable, or how the coach reminded them of other mentors they have experienced. Take 4-5 brief comments. Then, if it has not been offered, add that what you liked was how the coach and the team created and executed a strategy to change the world.

Leader: The world faced by the team at Texas Western is not a lot different from the world we live in. The troubling issue in Glory Road is racial prejudice — but the problem of showing partiality to certain people because they share some characteristic has been going on forever. The Apostle James warns against showing partiality to people just because they wear nice clothes and appear to be wealthy — calling it a sin (James 2:1-10).

In order to overcome the evil prejudice faced by his team, Coach Haskins devised a game plan to change the way the world thought about his players. Before it could be fully executed, however, he had to recruit a little differently, each player had to make a decision to play, to be disciplined, to persevere, to be supportive, and to believe and execute. This is remarkably similar to the “game plan” that God has laid out for Christians as we compete to change the world with the Gospel. Tonight, let’s look at this game plan, beginning with the challenge to get on the team.

One: Recruiting Strategies

Before anyone can play the game, there first has to be a team. When Coach Haskins goes out to recruit, he starts by trying to win over some of the hot-shot high school players — but they don't know him or the school so they refuse to come. One player says he won't come because he wants to win — and Texas Western is a loser school in his eyes. Then Coach Haskins tries a different recruiting strategy.

How does Coach Haskins change his recruiting methods after the traditional methods fail? (The coach recruits the players that no other college wants — even guys who play pick-up games on playground courts.)

In school, when a team “captain” was choosing up sides for a team — what determined if someone got picked or not? (A friend of the captain, tall, looked athletic, wore the right “gear,” seemed aggressive, was the “right” ethnicity, etc.)

Have you ever wanted to be part of something — knowing you could do well — only to be rejected? Or have you ever rejected someone because of their race, the way they talked, the clothes they wore, or where they lived? Describe your experience. (Be sensitive, as some participants may share moments that hurt or embarrassed them in public, or things of which they now are ashamed.)

Leader: Have various people read Luke 14:15-24; 1 Corinthians 1:24-31; and John 3:16-18.

When Paul comments about “the wise” who do you think he is talking about? (Culturally powerful people who do not know God.) **Who would represent the “wise” in *Glory Road*?** (Coaches from other schools, players who thought they were too good to play for Texas Western, racist townspeople, etc.)

What kind of people does God “recruit?” (Some may be tempted to exclude the rich or the powerful and only include the weak and the rejected. Remind them that John says “whoever believes.”)

Leader: Have someone read John 1:12-13.

What does God use as His standard for who makes the team? (Receive Him and believe in His Name -- believe that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins and that He rose from the dead to prove that His sacrifice was sufficient to pay our penalty. Trust in Jesus to save you and receive Him as Lord to obey Him.)



Once called, Coach Haskins had to agree to come to Texas Western to coach. His wife and children had to come with him to lend their support. The African-American players he recruited had to agree to leave their homes to come and play basketball in El Paso — a college with few black students. The white students on the team had to agree to come to the court and play, despite their own prejudices. When the opportunity was presented, these people took it. God is always recruiting, but not everyone responds to God's call. So the first step in changing the world is to be a part of God's team. And once you are a part of God's team you have to get up every day ready to play. And that requires discipline and a good coach.

Two: Good Players Need Good Coaching

Many of the players that Coach Haskins recruits have their own way of doing things — and some of their habits are not good.

Name some of the behaviors that players on the Texas Western team had to overcome in order to become winners. (The player with a fancy dribble that the Coach kept stuffing every time the player tried to shoot. The player who did not want to share his position with other players. The player who was afraid to play hard. The player who neglected his school work — potentially rendering him ineligible to play.)

The athletes at Texas Western had a problem. Though they joined the team, they did not play like a team.

What kinds of things did Coach Haskins do to discipline his team so that they would work together? (He made them run, change their playing habits, study — even bringing in a player's mom to enforce the rules — “My son, Harry, can!”)

A team is made up of many players that have to work together as one unit to win — this is similar to the way a body works.

Have someone read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.

What does this passage say about why some people might not work well together? (Envy, pride, not thinking that one is good enough, etc.)

Name some roles Christians play in changing the world for Christ. (First, people will say things such as preaching and evangelism — but eventually steer the conversation toward less-likely roles like friendship, hospitality, helping others, etc.)

Each of the players at Texas Western needed a strong coach to mentor and discipline them in order to bring out their best game and turn them into a winning team. This player/coach, student/mentor



relationship is what the Bible calls “discipleship” — it is a kind of spiritual coaching. Whether it is sports, or school, or your spiritual life — everyone needs to go through a time of preparation.

Describe a coaching or mentoring relationship you have or had in school. What effect did the coaching have on your performance? What characteristics did you most appreciate in the person who was helping you?

One of the most famous coaching relationships in the Bible is between the Apostle Paul and a young preacher named Timothy.

Leader: Have someone read 2 Timothy 2:2-7.

What does Timothy — and the rest of us — learn about playing on God’s team from each of the examples that Paul uses?

(If you have a good mentor — do what he says, play by the rules, and work hard — and your dedication will be rewarded.)

Where should we go to find out what we should do, what the rules are, and how to work hard? (The Bible, and the example of others.)

Once we have learned how to change the world for Christ, what does Paul say we should do with that knowledge? (Pass it on to other people who will pass it on in turn.)

So we not only need spiritual mentors, but we are supposed to eventually become spiritual mentors to others. In order to do that effectively, we have to be a good example.

Three: Great Players Persevere

As long as Texas Western was perceived as losers, no one paid much attention to them. But when they began to win with a mixed-race team they challenged the way many people thought about basketball and ethnicity.

What were some of the responses people had when the Texas Western team began to win — especially when they began to beat highly-ranked teams? (Some people, like the Texas Western Booster Club President, learned to be supportive, but others hurled insults, trashed rooms of players on the road, and ambushed and assaulted a player.)

Once things got really bad, what happened to the team? (They began to fall apart. They no longer trusted one another.)



How was their internal conflict demonstrated outwardly? (The oppressed players would no longer pass the ball to their teammates, and they lost a key game.)

Some people believe that once they become Christians that God will smooth out the rough spots in their lives. But like the Apostle Paul said, we are competing in this world, and that means that there is an opponent.

Leader: Have someone read 1 Peter 5:8.

Who is one of our opponents? (The devil.)

In what ways do you think the devil tries to devour Christians? (Causes divisions, tries to lure people from faith, tempts into sin, etc.)

But it isn't just the devil opposing us; often it is other people as well.

Leader: Have someone read 1 Peter 4:12-19.

Why shouldn't we be surprised that we face opposition? (If the world hated Christ, it will hate those who represent Him.)

What does it mean to be reviled? (To be called bad names, cursed at, or hated.)

Leader: Have people read James 1:2-3, 12 and Romans 5:1-5.

What do James and Paul say we should do in the face of difficult opposition? (Endure and persevere — in other words, keep on going in the faith.)

What is the end result of endurance and perseverance? (A crown of life and the hope of the glory of God — explain these concepts.)

Trials and tribulations — it sounds bad. And perseverance and endurance sound hard. Fortunately, God does not intend for us to go it alone. We are His Body — a team — and, like every other team, we need the support of our teammates if we intend to win.

————— **Take a 10-minute break.** —————

Four: Players Don't Stand Alone

Texas Western secures a spot in the 1966 NCAA Division 1 Championship tournament and Coach Haskins has to make a difficult decision. He realizes that what is at stake is more than a basketball trophy. The tournament is merely a platform from which to change the way the world perceives his



players. In defiance of the established way of doing things, he determines that he will start only the African-American players and will substitute only African-American players.

When Coach Haskins announces his decision to his team — what is their response? (Some of the African-American players show surprise, the white players initially show disappointment, but ultimately they choose to support one another in order to change the world.)

Some of the white players would never again get a chance to play in a championship tournament, so why do you think they agreed to sit out the game? (They sat out because they were supporting both their teammates and the goal of winning — not only the tournament, but the minds of the people watching. They put the needs of others ahead of their own.)

What lines of support did you see develop that helped Texas Western to prevail? (The coach to the players, the players to the coach, the players to each other, Mrs. Haskins to her husband, the El Paso community to the team, etc.)

If Christians are going to change the world for Christ, they require lines of support as well.

Leader: Have people read Romans 12:4-13, Philippians 2:1-11 and Hebrews 10:23-25.

According to the Bible, what are some ways we can show support for one another? (through teaching, service, giving, praying for each other, being hospitable, unity, treating others as more important than ourselves, looking out for the interests of others, self-sacrifice, etc.)

How does meeting together regularly contribute to the support of all members? (Provides accountability, gives opportunities to serve, learn and grow in the faith, etc.)

So far we have learned that to change the world for Christ involves getting on His team, being coached and then sharing what we have learned with others, persevering through difficulties, and providing support for team members. But the goal of any conflict, be it sports or spiritual warfare, is to win — and that requires action.

Five: All Players Triumph through Belief and Action

Coach Haskins tells his players that no one is going to hand them a victory — if they want to win, they are going to have to “go out there and take it.” Two steps are required to achieve victory — the belief that you can do it and the will to get it done.



What obstacles have you overcome in your life? (As participants discuss their accomplishments, help them to focus on how belief led to action — and how simply hoping, without action, accomplishes nothing.)

Leader: Have someone read James 2:14-26.

Can you give some examples of how action confirms belief? (People can say what they want, but it doesn't mean anything if they don't follow through with action. No one likes a hypocrite.)

Based on what we have studied so far, what kind of actions can you take that will lead others to Jesus and help to change the world for Christ? (Tell others about life in Christ, go out to people regarded by others as unpopular, find a spiritual mentor, be a spiritual mentor, work on developing endurance, support others in their faith, etc.)

Conclusion: Go Play to Win!

In order to win the tournament, Coach Haskins had to get his team to push against the prevailing opinions of the world concerning black and white athletes. Through perseverance, teamwork, and executing their strategy they won the tournament and changed many hearts and minds in America.

Leader: Have someone read 1 Corinthians 9:25-27.

God's team has a goal — winning the world for Christ. We are competing against forces in the world that will mock your belief in Jesus. We sometimes have to contend with teammates that want to divide us. But our goal is greater than any athletic competition. We are trying to defeat evil and gain heaven — for ourselves and anyone else who will listen and follow.

What one thing will you change about yourself this week to help win the world for Christ?

What one thing will you commit yourself to do for someone else in this room to help them in their faith?

Join together with one or two other people and discuss what you can do to reach out to others and help them to join God's team.

Leader: Close the session praying for those who have come to Christ to join the team and also for empowering those who know Him so that they can change the world for Christ.



A.C. Green, Founder, A.C. Green Youth Foundation:

A.C. Green currently owns the NBA Iron Man title, having played in 1,192 straight games. He played with the Miami Heat, the Dallas Mavericks, the Phoenix Suns, and the Los Angeles Lakers — winning the NBA National Championship with the Lakers in 2000.



While playing professional basketball, A.C. maintained a commitment to purity and his Christian testimony. In addition to playing, A.C. turned his attention to ministry, establishing the A.C. Green Youth Foundation in 1989 to focus on sexual abstinence education. Through his “I’ve Got The Power” abstinence curriculum, A.C.’s mission is to help young people build self-esteem and character, and learn moral and ethical principles which will help them make responsible decisions. In 2002 he was joined in marriage and ministry to Veronique Green.

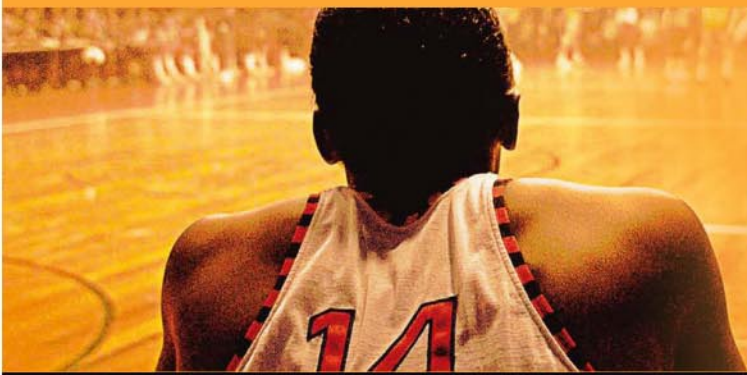
A.C.’s desire to mentor youth stems from his experiences as a high school basketball player at Benson High School in Portland, Oregon. He explains that when he was a young man, basketball was something most players did for fun, to win prestige, or to impress the girls. A.C. might have gone the same route as countless other high school athletes before him, but he was taken under the wing of his coach, Dick Gray. Gray saw more than a tall, talented high school ball player. He saw A.C.’s future — even before A.C. could see it. Gray helped A.C. to believe in his talent, and through rigorous discipline and coaching laid down the beginnings of a path to NBA stardom.

Just as in sports, A.C. Green understands the need for coaching in young people’s spiritual lives. It is not enough just to believe in Christ; you have to live it out in public. He hopes that this Bible study inspired by *Glory Road* will help people on their path to change the world for Jesus. For more information, go to: www.acgreen.com

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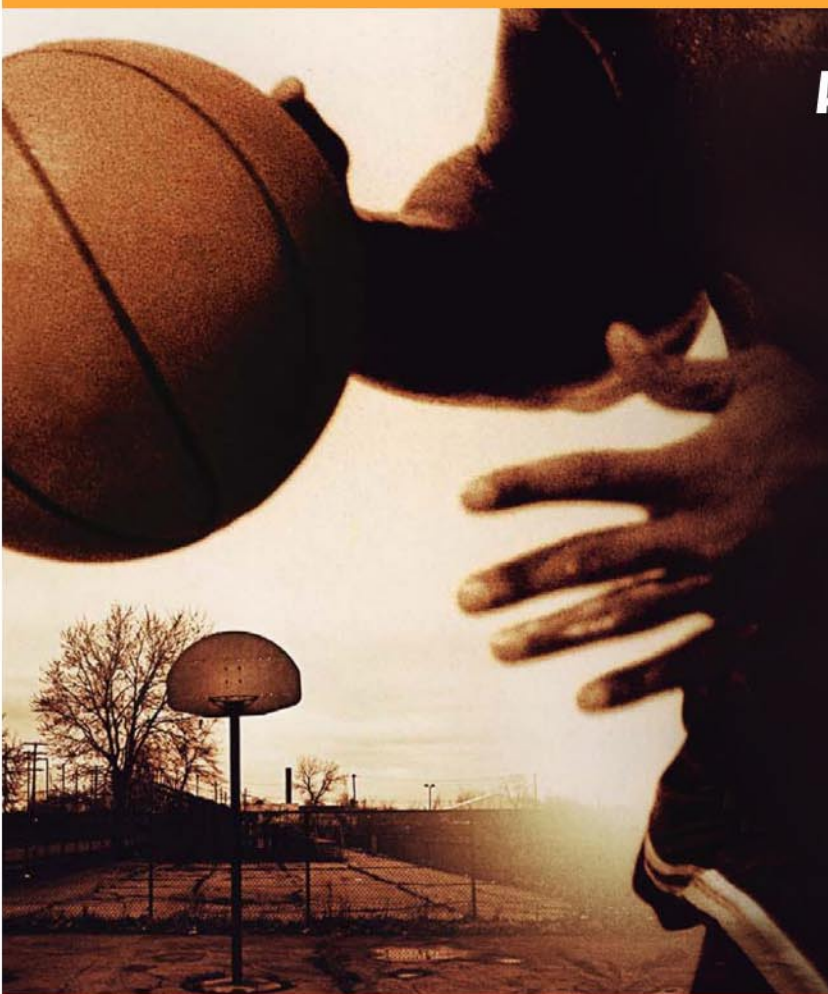
Marc T. Newman, PhD, is the president of MovieMinistry.com — an organization that provides teaching and preaching illustrations and Bible studies drawn from popular Hollywood films. Marc’s goal is to help Christian pastors, youth ministers, and lay leaders reach out to people with the Gospel of Christ by using the popular culture of movies. As a college professor for over 20 years, Marc has been writing and speaking on the persuasive power of mass media, particularly film, at churches, on the radio, and at conferences across the country. His columns on faith, movies, and culture are syndicated through Agape Press and he is heard regularly on the Faith Radio network. The MovieMinistry.com site provides free discussion cards to steer after-film conversations about blockbuster films toward issues of eternity. For more information go to: www.movieministry.com



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BIBLE STUDY

Glory Road

What Does It Take to Change the World?

One: Recruiting Strategies

(Luke 14:15-24; 1 Corinthians 1:24-31; and John 3:16-18; John 1:12-13)

How does Coach Haskins change his recruiting methods after the traditional methods fail?

In school, when a team “captain” was choosing up sides for a team — what determined if someone got picked or not?

Have you ever wanted to be part of something — knowing you could do well — only to be rejected? Or have you ever rejected someone because of their race, the way they talked, the clothes they wore, or where they lived? Describe your experience.

When Paul comments about “the wise” who do you think he is talking about? Who would represent the “wise” in Glory Road?



What kind of people does God “recruit?”

What does God use as His standard for who makes the team?

Two: Good Players Need Good Coaching

(1 Corinthians 12:12-27; 2 Timothy 2:2-7)

Name some of the behaviors that players on the Texas Western team had to overcome in order to become winners.

What kinds of things did Coach Haskins do to discipline his team so that they would work together?

What does this passage say about why some people might not work well together?



Name some roles Christians play in changing the world for Christ.

Describe a coaching or mentoring relationship you have or had in school. What effect did the coaching have on your performance? What characteristics did you most appreciate in the person who was helping you?

What does Timothy — and the rest of us — learn about playing on God's team from each of the examples that Paul uses?

Where should we go to find out what we should do, what the rules are, and how to work hard?

Once we have learned how to change the world for Christ, what does Paul say we should do with that knowledge?



Three: Great Players Persevere

(1 Peter 5:8; 1 Peter 4:12-19; James 1:2-3, 12 and Romans 5:1-5)

What were some of the responses people had when the Texas Western team began to win — especially when they began to beat highly-ranked teams?

Once things got really bad, what happened to the team?

How was their internal conflict demonstrated outwardly?

Who is one of our opponents?

In what ways do you think the devil tries to devour Christians?



Why shouldn't we be surprised that we face opposition?

What does it mean to be reviled?

What do James and Paul say we should do in the face of difficult opposition?

What is the end result of endurance and perseverance?

Four: Players Don't Stand Alone

(Romans 12:4-13, Philippians 2:1-11 and Hebrews 10:23-25)

When Coach Haskins announces his decision to his team — what is their response?

Some of the white players would never again get a chance to play in a championship tournament, so why do you think they agreed to sit out the game?



What lines of support did you see develop that helped Texas Western to prevail?
According to the Bible, what are some ways we can show support for one another?

How does meeting together regularly contribute to the support of all members?

Five: All Players Triumph through Belief and Action
(James 2:14-26)

What obstacles have you overcome in your life?

Can you give some examples of how action confirms belief?

Based on what we have studied so far, what kind of actions can you take that will lead others to Jesus and help to change the world for Christ?



Conclusion: Go Play to Win! (1 Corinthians 9:25-27)

What one thing will you change about yourself this week to help win the world for Christ?

What one thing will you commit yourself to do for someone else in this room to help them in their faith?

Join together with one or two other people and discuss what you can do to reach out to others and help them to join God's team.



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