

LIVING WITH A VISION (II): LIVING FOR GOD’S GLORY

+ THE PURPOSE OF OUR BEING IS TO LIVE FOR GOD

⁷ *Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made. (Isaiah 43:7)*

- Video Clip: Jeremy Lin is an Asian American basketball player in the NBA. For many years his skills were overlooked by his NBA coaches and he sat on the bench for the majority of the games. He was also discriminated against; his teammates despised him because of his race. At first, Jeremy was angry at his teammates. However, he learned to not play out of anger and to rely on God. He used his difficult situations to draw closer to God.
- Recently, Jeremy has been scoring high points in NBA games. It has lead to a term called “Lin-Sanity” (This is analogous to the term Tebow-ing). Despite all the attention from the media, Jeremy credits his excellent performance to God’s guidance. Like Tim Tebow (who often prays on one knee on the football field), Jeremy talks openly about his faith in God to the media.
- In the future, Jeremy would like to attend seminary school and become a pastor and work with underprivileged children.

+ GOD GIVES US GLORY SO THAT WE CAN TESTIFY TO HIS GOODNESS

¹ *After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. (John 17:1)*

- Jesus glorified God when he went to the cross. In human eyes, the cross is a shameful place of punishment. Jesus died to testify to God’s goodness and allow us to live in His glory.
- 42 years ago, God told Bob Jones that He was going to remove glory from the church for 42 years. He was going to do this because people in the church were glorifying themselves and not God.
- This year, God’s glory will return to the church and God will reveal His glory in many supernatural events. God gives peace, renewal of Spirit, and glory to those who want to live for Him, but the key is that in order to glorify God we must first die to our flesh.

+ WE MUST HAVE THE RIGHT MOTIVES

- Jeremy Lin faced a lot of disappointment on his journey to NBA fame. He grew up in Palo Alto dreaming of playing basketball for Stanford University. However, he was rejected by the Stanford basketball coach. Through prayer, God opened the door for him to attend Harvard (not a strong basketball team). He was the first player since 1954 to enter the NBA from Harvard. He was cut

after a short time with the Golden State Warriors. For a while, Jeremy felt depressed and considered giving up on basketball.

- God let Jeremy know that he had to walk humbly with God. Jeremy needed to have the right motives for why he wanted to succeed in the NBA. Jeremy decided that he didn't want to succeed for fame and money; he wanted to succeed to glorify God.
- Jeremy also realized that his happiness depended on his performance on the basketball court. He felt great pressure to perform on the court. Foremost, he had to define who he was: an NBA player or a Son of God. He had to find his eternal happiness and value in God.
- We may face difficulties at work, school, and family. Like Jeremy, we should ask God for our purpose. We should be willing to live solely for God.

✦ LIVING SOLELY FOR GOD ALLOWS US TO OVERCOME DIFFICULTIES

- Once Jeremy was willing to live solely for God and play basketball for God, God gave him great peace. He was no longer nervous on the basketball court. He felt free from the expectations of his family, fans and basketball team. As a result, he was able to play phenomenally for the Knicks when given the opportunity.
- When we are willing to live for God, God can lift us up from rejection and lowliness. When we are going through difficulty, we can praise God.

³ ... but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. (Romans 5: 3-5)

- Testimony: Last semester, a church sister needed to enroll in a college class. However, the class was full and she was number 60 on the waitlist. The professor rejected her petition to join the class twice. According to her natural stubborn and competitive personality, she wanted to give-up. However she remembered the church messages from the previous weeks and humbled herself, praying to God to make a way for her to enroll. She believed that God loved her and wanted to help her overcome her stubborn and competitive personality. Eventually, she audited the class for 2 weeks and even turned in the homework. The professor was impressed with her humility and perseverance and allowed her to enroll in the class.

✦ DYING TO SELF GLORIFIES GOD

- God gives us glory, but we must first put our old selves on the cross. Our old self can be a barrier to God's blessing.

- Jeremy was able to become a success because he did not give-up and accept his failure and rejection. In his most difficult times, he sought God whole-heartedly. God pruned his heart to prepare him to handle NBA success. Thus, he is not ashamed to talk about his faith to the media. Also, God taught Jeremy that his attitude to his opponents and teammates mattered more than his basketball skills. In his daily life, his attitude and actions had to testify to God's glory.
- God wants to give us glory, but we must accept His pruning and correction. For example, if we face rejection in finding a marriage partner, we should dedicate our marriage to glorify God. If we are searching for a job, we should dedicate our job to God.
- We should do everything for God, so that when we attain success, we will handle it in a healthy way. Our heavenly father wants us to align our values to his values.
- We can glorify God with our lives. When we encounter difficult situations, we should treasure them, not despair, and rely on God. If we have talents and interests (e.g. dance, speech, teaching) perhaps God wants us to use these to glorify Him. We must work hard and put in our best effort for God. Then, trust that God will do the rest.

+ ACTION PLAN

1. Have you experienced a difficult or challenging situation recently? Practice giving thanks to the Lord for these difficulties and challenges. Ask the Lord to reveal His purpose for you and the work He wants to do in your heart during this time. Meditate on Romans 5:3-5: ***Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.***
2. What talents or interests do you have, e.g. playing music, writing, sports, drawing, dancing, media, etc.? Ask God how you can use these "gifts" to glorify His name. Make a practical plan to help you achieve your goal.

+ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Based on Pastor Martina's message, what impressed you the most about Jeremy Lin? Did you learn anything from him? Please share.
2. This week, did God reveal to you areas in you that are still unhealthy? What does your "old self" consist of?
3. What do you think is God's impression of you? Do you truly believe in it? If not, why do you think you are unable to believe it?

4. Recently, has God been working on you and making you healthier? Please share your testimony with us.