



PART 3: GAME OVER

In the game of life, it's easy to and yourself down and heading into the bottom of the ninth. Sometimes you make a comeback. But sometimes life doesn't work out as you hoped or planned. You lose—and loss hurts. Where can you and hope when hope disappears?

BIG IDEA: *How we live as we lose determines if we can be used.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Talk about a time when you lost in some way, small or large. How did you respond? What did you learn from the experience?
2. We live in a culture that celebrates winners. What are some of the costs—cultural and personal—of not recognizing and admiring the strength of those who persevere through loss?
3. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Acts 7:51–60.*

“You stubborn people! You are heathen at heart and deaf to the truth. Must you forever resist the Holy Spirit? That’s what your ancestors did, and so do you! Name one prophet your ancestors didn’t persecute! They even killed the ones who predicted the coming of the Righteous One—the Messiah whom you betrayed and murdered. You deliberately disobeyed God’s law, even though you received it from the hands of angels.” The Jewish leaders were infuriated by Stephen’s accusation, and they shook their fists at him in rage. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed steadily into heaven and saw the glory of God, and he saw Jesus standing in the place of honor at God’s right hand. And he told them, “Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the place of honor at God’s right hand!” Then they put their hands over their ears and began shouting. They rushed at him and dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. His accusers took off their coats and laid them at the feet of a young man named Saul. As they stoned him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” He fell to his knees, shouting, “Lord, don’t charge them with this sin!” And with that, he died.

Acts 7:51-60 (NLT)

4. In what ways does Stephen’s death (despite his great faith) challenge your assumptions about God?
5. During the message, Chris said, *“How we live as we lose determines if we can be used.”* Is that statement difficult for you to believe or accept? Why or why not?
6. When have you prayed for a *bottom-of-the-ninth* comeback in your finances, marriage, parenting, dating, or health, only to lose the game? How did that loss affect your relationship with God?
7. If you’re struggling with loss right now, what can you do this week to fight, finish well, and keep the faith? How can this group support you?

MOVING FORWARD

Are you currently facing a *bottom-of-the-ninth* moment right now? Are you down and maybe even out? Pray this prayer:

God, while I do not desire to be in this circumstance now or in the future, I do want you to use every day for your glory and your good. Give me strength to fight for what you would fight for. If I lose the game, I pray that I will finish strong and increase the faith of others. I pray this in your Son’s name. Amen.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 2 Timothy 4:7