

Win The Day Week #1 | Flip The Script

Big Idea: If you want to change your life, you have to change your story.

Scripture: Genesis 50:20

On April 20, 1913, Sir William Osler delivered a speech at Yale University. It was a simple message. I'll give you the cliff notes. Four words—**LIVE IN DAY-TIGHT COMPARTMENTS**. That is easier said than done—but if you can pull it off, if you can put it into practice—it is the solution to a thousand problems!

It's a simple yet so important a concept:

According to psychologists Matthew Killingsworth and Daniel Gilbert, the average person spends 46.9 percent of their time thinking about something other than what they're doing in the present moment. In other words, we're living in the wrong time zone. We're depressed about the past. We're worried about the future. We're distracted. We're frustrated. We're overwhelmed by this, that, and the other thing. We are HALF PRESENT, HALF THE TIME, which means we're HALF ALIVE. The only way to be FULLY ALIVE is to be FULLY PRESENT, and the only way to be FULLY PRESENT is to, you guessed it, live in day-tight compartments.

This is not just a good idea. This is a God idea.

Give us this day our DAILY BREAD.

Take up your cross DAILY.

This is THE DAY that the Lord has made, rejoice and be glad in it.

His mercies are new EVERY MORNING.

Don't let the SUN GO DOWN on your anger.

Don't worry about TOMORROW.

Here's the bottom line.

Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Our job is to *Win the Day*, that's it.

I have no idea what goal you're going after, what problem you're trying to solve, what habit you're trying to break or build, but I know the secret to your success. It's gonna happen one day at a time. You have to *Win the Day*, then you have to get up and do it all over again the next day. Do this two days in a row, and it's called a winning streak. It's also called sanctification.

Here's what we're going to do over the next seven weeks—we're going to unpack seven habits that will help you stress less and accomplish more—***Flip the Script, Kiss the Wave, Eat the Frog, Fly the Kite, Cut the Rope, Wind the Clock, and Seed the Clouds.***

Let me plant a seed of faith right here.

Almost anyone can accomplish almost anything if they work at it long enough, hard enough, and smart enough. You are capable of more than you can imagine! How do I know this? Because God is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine.

That said, 75% of New Year's Resolutions fail within the first month. Why? When you think in one year timelines, it's overwhelming. You feel like quitting before you even start. So here's the question, and we'll keep coming back to it during this series. Pick a habit, any habit. Can you do it for a day? You have to take your life goals and reverse engineer them into daily habits. Here's the good news: the only ceiling on your intimacy with God and impact on the world is daily spiritual disciplines. If you meet with God every day, He is going to show up and show off.

If you have a Bible, you can meet me in Genesis 50:20. Before we zoom in, let me zoom out. "There are decades when nothing happens," said Vladimir Lenin, "and there are weeks when decades happen." Let me push this envelope and up the ante: there are days when decades happen. Having said that, let me say this. You can't just flip the calendar, and expect everything to change. You have to flip the script. It's the first of seven habits you'll find in Mark Batterson's book, *Win the Day*. Here's the big idea: *if you want to change your life, you have to change your story.*

Main Teaching

In the science of cybernetics, there are two kinds of change. First-order change is *behavioral*—it's doing something *more* or *less*. If you're trying to lose weight, eating less and exercising more are steps in the right direction.

First-order change can facilitate a quick-fix, but second-order change passes the test of time. Second-order change is *conceptual*—it is mind over matter. And that's where the magic happens! Everything is created twice. The first creation is *mental*, *it's internal*. The second creation is *physical*, *it's external*. Everything was once a thought, and that includes you. You don't just bear His image, you are His idea. You are His workmanship. You are a unique expression of God's imagination. To see yourself as anything less is to believe a lie.

There never has been, never will be, anyone like you. Not a testament to you. A testament to the God who created you. The significance is this: no one can worship God like you or for you. No one can serve God like you or for you.

We tend to think of habits as *external* exercises that increase proficiency or productivity. It's practicing scales. It's practicing skills. Those external habits will pay dividends, no doubt. But the biggest return on investment, what I would call high leverage habits, are the *internal* habits that no one sees. It's your internal monologue. It's the way you explain your experiences to yourself. It's the stories you tell yourself day in and day out.

On average, about 60,000 thoughts fire across our synapses every single day. According to a study done by the Cleveland Clinic, 80% of those thoughts are negative. Houston, we have the problem. The problem is our stinking thinking. "*As a man thinketh in his heart,*" said the writer of Proverbs, "so is he."

Your thoughts have a psychological and physiological effect. Your thoughts have the power to lower your blood pressure, slow your pulse, and boost your immunity. Or do the exact opposite. The battle is won or lost in the mind. Either way, the stories you tell yourself are far more important than the situations you find yourself in. That's when and where and how we **flip the script.**

With this as a backdrop, let's talk about Genesis 50:20.

Genesis 50:20 New American Standard Bible

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to keep many people alive.

Let me set the scene.

When Joseph was a teenager he had a dream, a dream that his brothers would one day bow down to him. He makes the mistake of telling his brothers about this dream, and his brothers fake his death and sell him into slavery. Life goes from bad to worse. Joseph ends up in prison for a crime he did not commit. If anybody could have played the victim card, it's Joseph. But this isn't the story Joseph narrates to himself.

Long story short, Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream. Pharaoh puts his signet ring on Joseph's finger and makes him second-in-command. Thirteen years after selling him into slavery, his brothers come knocking on his door, begging for food because of a famine. Genesis 43:28 says his brothers bow down before him. I can only imagine what Joseph must have thought, must have felt. It's a day when decades happen. The vision he had at seventeen—the vision that went off the rails, the vision that took a wrong turn, the vision that seemed so far away, the vision that doesn't seem possible—that vision is fulfilled in this moment.

This is the day when decades happen.

Alright, chapter 50, verse 20. It's like a time lapse video. Joseph looks back on all the ups and downs, all the pain and suffering, all the twists and turns, and this is what he says: "You intended to harm me, BUT GOD intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

May God give us 50:20 vision.

Let me make this as simple as 1,2, 3.

If you want to flip the script, you have to get three things.

1. You have to know your name.
2. You have to fix your focus.
3. You have to change your story.

1. You have to know your name

More than a century ago, Charles Horton Cooley, founder of the American Sociological Association, said, “I am not what I think I am, and I am not what you think I am. I am what I think you think I am.” Little bit of a tongue twister, mind bender. But I bet it sounds vaguely familiar. Cooley called it the looking-glass self and it’s basing our sense of self on how we believe others see us.

Our sense of self comes from lots of different sources. Sometimes it’s as simple as someone saying you’re *good at this* or *bad at that*. Either way, it’s letting other people narrate your story. It’s living your life according to their expectations.

So, it’s critical for us to take our cues from Scripture. Why? Scripture is our script-cure. The book of James likens the Bible to a mirror—

James 1:23-25 The Message

22-24 Don’t fool yourself into thinking that you are a listener when you are anything but, letting the Word go in one ear and out the other. Act on what you hear! Those who hear and don’t act are like those who glance in the mirror, walk away, and two minutes later have no idea who they are, what they look like.

25 But whoever catches a glimpse of the revealed counsel of God—the free life!—even out of the corner of his eye, and sticks with it, is no distracted scatterbrain but a man or woman of action. That person will find delight and affirmation in the action.

This is where we discover who we are in the eyes of God. This is how we know our name. This is how we flip the script.

Let me dive back into Joseph's story from Genesis.

After playing a few mind games with his brothers, which I think is totally justified, Joseph finally reveals his identity. Genesis 45:3. He says, “I am Joseph.” We read right past this, but Joseph knows his name. Well, of course Joseph knows his name. It’s his name. Not so fast. Fun fact. Daily Double if you know this. When Pharaoh makes Joseph second-in-command he doesn’t just give him his signet ring. He gives him an Egyptian name; *Zaphenath-paneah*. It would have been so easy for Joseph to forget who he was. If you allow it, culture will name you or tame you. It will label you. It will define you. Cancel culture will chew you up and spit you out. You have to know who you are. You have to know whose you are. You need to know your name.

You are BLESSED.

You are CHOSEN.

You are BLAMELESS.

You are ADOPTED by the Heavenly Father.

You are REDEEMED by Christ.

You are SEALED by the Holy Spirit.

You are STAMPED with the Image of God.

Simply put, you are who God says you are.
If you want to flip the script, you need to know your name.

2. **You have to fix your focus.**

There's a saying in athletic circles and in the military: your focus determines your reality. That is what Qigong said to Luke Skywalker, but this is more than a Jedi mind trick. This is Philippians 4. "If anything is right or good or pure or just or admirable, think about such things." Why? Your focus will determine your reality.

If you're looking for an excuse, you will always find one.
If you're looking for something to be grateful for, you'll find it.

There is a concept in psychology called cognitive reappraisal. It's telling yourself a different story about what is happening. And Joseph is exhibit A. Joseph could have played the victim card. Right? He also could have played God and evened the score with his brothers. He doesn't do either of those things. Why? He's got a God's-eye view.

Dr. Martin Seligman, the former president of the APA, said that all of us have what he calls an explanatory style. "Explanatory style is the manner in which you habitually explain to yourself why events happen." It's those explanations—not the experiences themselves—that make us or break us! What is Joseph's explanatory style? It's Genesis 50:20. You intended to harm me, but that isn't where I'm going to focus my energy. God intended it for good, the saving of many lives.

There was a meme circulating social media at the end of 2020—the 2020 dumpster fire. Pretty funny, but it's the wrong explanation. 2020 wasn't a dumpster fire. It was a refiner's fire. And what comes out of the refiner's fire is always more pure, more precious, more valuable. Why? It's been refined by the touch of the master's hand. The prophet Malachi asked a question: who is able to endure? Who is able to stand? He will be like a blazing fire that refines metal, like a strong soap that bleaches clothes. He will sit like a refiner of silver, burning away the dross.

How do we fix our focus? The short answer is fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith.

I love this moment when Peter gets out of the boat in the middle of the sea of Galilee in the middle of the night. That takes a ton of faith. But here's the deal: if you want to walk on water, you've got to get out of the boat. Here's what happens. He gets out of the boat because he's focused on Jesus, and Jesus walks on water! Right? He's simply doing what he's seeing. That's what following Jesus is all about. Then he loses focus. He starts focusing on the wind, on the waves. That's when we start to sink. A couple easy applications right here.

One, keep a gratitude journal.

One of the simplest ways to fix your focus is to keep a gratitude journal. It will sanctify your reticular activating system—the part of the brain that determines what we notice and what goes

unnoticed. We don't see the world as it is. We see the world as we are. All of this to say this: your explanations are more important than your experiences.

Two, change of pace + change of place = change of perspective.

The key to spiritual growth is routine, but once the routine becomes routine, you have to change the routine. It's the law of requisite variety. Every year, I download a Bible reading plan thanks to my friends at You Version. But I also change translations. Why? It makes my synapses fire in a little different way. Last year I read the Amplified Version, which I absolutely love. This year I'm going back to the NLT—the New Living Translation. It's a change of pace for me. (Pastor - you may have a different example of changing the pace)

Lots of ways to put this into practice. You can do a silent retreat. You can practice meditation. Fasting is a fantastic way to flip the script.

Three, read old books.

“If you want new ideas,” said Ivan Pavlov, “read old books.” I love biographies. Why? They help me see my life from a different perspective. That said, no book is older, no book is better than the Bible. It gives us a God's-eye view! It reminds us of the metanarrative. The Jewish theologian, Abraham Herschel said that prophecy is “exegesis of existence from a divine perspective.” So good. So true. He also said this: “In decisive hours of history, it dawns upon us that we would not trade certain lines in the book of Isaiah for the Seven Wonders of the World.” I'm not sure if Herschel is referencing the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World or the Seven Wonders of the Natural World. Either way, Herschel is saying this: during times of crisis we need to get a word from God. Scripture is our plumb line. Scripture is our anchor line. Scripture is our life line. That brings us to number three.

3. You have to change your story.

According to a study done by Emory University, the best predictor of a child's emotional well-being is not getting them into a great school. It's not giving them lots of hugs and kisses. It's not taking them on a pilgrimage to Disney World. It's not watching Pixar films. According to these researchers at the Emory University, the number one indicator of emotional well-being, drum roll, is a child knowing their family history. Huh?!

Here's what I know for sure: all of us are born into someone else's story. We all have a family of origin, and that is our genesis story. Our children were born into our story. I was born into my parent's story. My parents were born into my grandparent's story. For better or for worse, all of us are born into someone else's story. Here's the good news, as children of God. When we get grafted into God's family, we get grafted into God's story. This is huge. Scripture becomes our script. This book is our backstory. And our lives become the rest of the story.

You are the fifth gospel. You are Acts 29. You are Revelation 23.

You are the only Bible some people will ever read. The question is this: is your life a good translation?

Here's how it works. You surrender your life to the Lordship of Christ. You can do that right here, right now. You give the Author and Perfecter of your faith complete editorial control, and He begins writing His story, history with a hyphen, in you and through you.

In Judaism, those who followed a Rabbi had four responsibilities. First, they would memorize his words. That's how we get the gospels. The second responsibility was adopting the Rabbi's unique interpretation of scripture. It was called the Rabbi's yoke. We call it the Sermon on the Mount and the Olivet Discourse. The third responsibility is imitating the Rabbi's way of life. I'll come right back to that one. The fourth responsibility was discipling others the way you were discipled. It's Paul saying, "Follow me as I follow Christ."

The third responsibility—imitating—is one key to habit formation.

There is a form of acting called method acting, and it involves taking extreme measures to get into character. It's the thing of legends in Hollywood. Dustin Hoffman went three days without sleep to prep for a scene in *Marathon Man*. Meryl Streep learned Polish and German for *Sophie's Choice*. Christian Bale lost sixty pounds to play an emaciated insomniac. Jamie Foxx glued his eyes shut to play Ray Charles. Leonardo DiCaprio slept in an animal carcass while filming *The Revenant*.

Discipleship is method acting. It's taking our cues from Jesus. We love like Jesus. We think like Jesus. We pray like Jesus. We treat people like Jesus did. Do that long enough, and you become like Jesus which is the ultimate goal of discipleship—to be just like Jesus.

Conclusion

I have a simple theory of spiritual maturity. When you first encounter a verse of scripture, it's nothing more than a theory. Right? You have to test the theory. How? By putting it into practice. Then that theory becomes your testimony. Maturity is testing God's Word. Maturity is that theory becoming our testimony.

I'll give you an example.

Jesus said, "*Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven.*" Matthew 16:19. We have been given tremendous authority but we have to exercise it. Now, I want to be careful right here. Every prayer has to pass a two-fold litmus test. It has to be in the will of God and for the Glory of God. Anything less, anything else, is a non-starter. God is not a Genie in a bottle, and our wish is not His command. Prayer isn't outlining our agenda to God. It's getting into God's Word and God's presence and letting God outline His agenda to us.

Remember the signet ring Pharaoh gave to Joseph? It gave him full authority! We have the full backing of the King and His Kingdom. We have to operate in that authority. We have to exercise

that authority. We have the authority to rebuke the wind and the waves. We have the authority to bind things on earth.

This is our script. We are method actors. The theory becomes reality, and when it does, it becomes our testimony. And testimony is prophecy. If God did it before, He can do it again.

Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Flip the script. WIN THE DAY!

Let's pray together.