

# THE PRIZE: Under Pressure

## Session 7 – Stepping into God’s Plan for Your Life

### Student’s Guide

Featuring Guzan, Cacau, Enoh, Kaká, Mulenga and Solomon

DVD – 22:06 to the end

#### WARM-UP

Share a time with the group when you had an experience or were given a gift that made you happy or that you were thrilled to receive.

#### TEAM HUDDLE

Top international footballers get many rewards for their achievements. Discuss the kind of lifestyle you think many of them “enjoy.”

Retired footballers often have high levels of mental illness, suicide, dependency (alcohol, drugs, gambling), higher-than-average divorce rates, and even financial difficulties. What is your reaction to this? Why do you think this might be the case?

#### COACH’S CORNER

Read Ecclesiastes 1:12 – 2:11

*I, the Teacher, was king of Israel, and I lived in Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>I devoted myself to search for understanding and to explore by wisdom everything being done under heaven. I soon discovered that God has dealt a tragic existence to the human race. <sup>14</sup>I observed everything going on under the sun, and really, it is all meaningless—like chasing the wind.*

*<sup>15</sup>What is wrong cannot be made right.*

*What is missing cannot be recovered.*

*<sup>16</sup>I said to myself, “Look, I am wiser than any of the kings who ruled in Jerusalem before me. I have greater wisdom and knowledge than any of them.” <sup>17</sup>So I set out to learn everything from wisdom to madness and folly. But I learned firsthand that pursuing all this is like chasing the wind.*

*<sup>18</sup>The greater my wisdom, the greater my grief.*

*To increase knowledge only increases sorrow.*

*Chapter 2*

*I said to myself, “Come on, let’s try pleasure. Let’s look for the ‘good things’ in life.” But I found that this, too, was meaningless. <sup>2</sup>So I said, “Laughter is silly. What good does it do to seek pleasure?” <sup>3</sup>After much thought, I decided to cheer myself with wine. And while still seeking wisdom, I clutched at foolishness. In this way, I tried to experience the only happiness most people find during their brief life in this world.*

*<sup>4</sup>I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself and by planting beautiful vineyards. <sup>5</sup>I made gardens and parks, filling them with all kinds of fruit trees. <sup>6</sup>I built reservoirs to collect the water to irrigate my many flourishing groves. <sup>7</sup>I bought slaves, both men and women, and others were born into my household. I also owned large herds and flocks, more than any of the kings who had lived in Jerusalem before me. <sup>8</sup>I collected great sums of silver and gold, the treasure of many kings and provinces. I hired wonderful singers, both men and women, and had many beautiful concubines. I had everything a man could desire!*

*<sup>9</sup>So I became greater than all who had lived in Jerusalem before me, and my wisdom never failed me. <sup>10</sup>Anything I wanted, I would take. I denied myself no pleasure. I even found great pleasure in hard work, a reward for all my*

labors. <sup>11</sup> *But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless—like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere.*

With what things does the writer of Ecclesiastes say he has filled his life?

1:12-18

2:1-3

2:4-6

2:7-8

Do these things bring the writer of Ecclesiastes contentment?

How does he describe them? Does this surprise you? Why or why not?

Wealth, fame, achievements, status and sex, when used appropriately in the right context are not bad things, but they cannot bring us lasting fulfillment. Why do you think people make these things the sole aim of their lives?

*Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me will never go hungry, and he who believes in Me will never be thirsty."* John 6:35 (NIV)

What do you think Jesus means by this?

According to all the players on the video, only Jesus can bring us lasting fulfillment. As Brad Guzan says, "I think everyone needs Christ in (his/her) life." How do you respond to this statement?

## **WARM-DOWN**

Spend some time in silence asking God if there are any things in your life that are more important than your relationship with Christ: ambitions, possessions, hobbies, activities, relationships, ideas, ways of looking at the world (however good they may be), etc.

Read Psalm 42:1-2 together:

*"As the deer longs for streams of water,  
so I long for You, O God.*

*<sup>2</sup> I thirst for God, the living God.  
When can I go and stand before Him?"*

Pray that the Holy Spirit would reveal to you more of the reality of who God is, and that you would have a desire to know Him more and serve Him more.

## **EXTRA TRAINING**

### **Memory Verse**

*Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me will never go hungry, and he who believes in Me will never be thirsty."* John 6:35 (NIV)

### **Prayer/Worship Focus**

Spend time reflecting on what you have learned and how God has spoken to you through this Bible study series. Thank Him for anything you have learned that has challenged you or encouraged you in your walk with God.

**Putting it into Practice**

Look over the previous sections of “Putting it into Practice.” Is there any area where you really need to take steps to put into practice what has been suggested?

If you have not yet made a commitment to Christ, or are still not sure what that might mean, why not talk about it to your group leader or someone in your group who is already a follower of Jesus?