

Get In the Game!

By Percy Edmonds

BASKETBALL IS A GAME that men have enjoyed playing since 1891. It was created by a physical education instructor named James Naismith and has been a tool used to build character in young men. Samson Green and Percy Edmonds are two men who can relate to that. Samson played basketball in high school and college. He coached Christian high school teams for nineteen years and has loved the experience. Percy Edmonds played basketball in Jr. High School and five years at Dayspring Bible College. He loved the competition, as well as traveling from state to state for games and being in national tournaments each year. These two played the game of Basketball but played a more dangerous game as well. Samson Green and Percy Edmonds were both members of street gangs in Chicago and drug dealers with a dark future. These were the type of men you would see on the street and cross over to the other side to avoid them.

However, we serve a God who can change hearts, and these men are both pastors overseeing the Men's Bible Program at Pacific Garden Mission. Samson was led to the Lord at the mission February 1995. Percy came to the mission from the penitentiary and was

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Percy Edmonds (left) and Samson Green head up the Men's Bible program at PGM.

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discipled on the program in 2004. This Bible program is for one year and includes Bible classes, counseling, and a work assignment at PGM. A number of the men have struggled with drug addiction, gang life, prison, and other destructive lifestyles. Men like this often feel like no one can relate to them and are in a cycle of defeat and hopelessness. God has taken two men from that very lifestyle, changed them through the Word of God, and has given them the privilege of ministering to hundreds of men whom they can relate to.

How do men like Samson and Percy change? How do ex-gang members become

ministers of the Gospel? There are a few ways to answer those questions, and these ways are the very principles they teach the men now at Pacific Garden Mission. It all starts with having a personal walk with God. By this is meant having daily prayer, spending time in the Word, and sincerely desiring to honor God in all that we do. The Bible says in Micah 6:8, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" This means reading Christian books, reading the Bible from cover to cover, taking notes in church as the pastor preaches the Word, and praying to God for wisdom to apply what you have learned. Samson and Percy both took notes while on the program and have now taught those same principles to the men who are under their care. Second, being involved in a local church is the key for anyone who wants to grow spiritually and mature in the things of God. Percy remembers being on the program and taking the train to church on Thursday evenings to pass out Gospel tracks with the pastor and members from the church. Samson got involved in prison ministry and evangelism at his church on the South Side of Chicago. Studying God's Word, spending time in prayer, and offering their service in the local church has matured both of these men. They have become a light of hope to thousands of men who have come to Christ at Pacific Garden Mission and now desire to become godly men. By God's grace, they have purged themselves of the issues that afflict young men from the inner streets of Chicago, issues such as drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and criminal pursuits. These two men's Christian walks cause the men to look upon them with certain wonderment. In them they see two men who like them have been devastated by the consequences of sin yet have found victory in Jesus and have been



Percy and Samson having fun with the men of the program as they relate the Christian life to the game of basketball.

raised up by God to be uncompromising spokesmen for the Lord Jesus!

How about you? What type of games are you playing with sin that you need to stop? The Bible says in Romans 3:10, "As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one." Maybe you are someone whom God has brought out of some stronghold to sin. You are now in a position to help another man or woman who is currently struggling with the same sin God has delivered you from! We are all called to walk with God, pray, attend a local church, and get involved in Christian service. It's time for all of God's people to get off the bench, so to speak, and get in the game. That means win souls, live for God, walk with the Lord, and have a solid testimony. *Get in the game!*



INDEPENDENCE DAY

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they *are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.* ~ THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE July 4, 1776

AMERICA WILL never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves
~ ABRAHAM LINCOLN



AS WE CELEBRATE Independence Day we also know a true "independence day" is coming. When it arrives, no one will miss it or its importance; for it will bring freedom from the greatest oppressor - Satan.

MAY GRADUATION

The Old Lighthouse Bible Academy May 2013 graduating class received diplomas and enjoyed a commencement address by Pastor Michael Allen (Uptown Baptist Church, Chicago, IL).

Graduates are: Back Row (left to right) Carl Montgomery, Stephen Welch, Russell Consdorf, Tony Worthon, Brian Holland, Andrew Gilmore, (Middle Row) (left to right) Robert Galbreath, Maurice Koonce, Vernon James, Frank Moss, Herman Boyd Jr., Vincent Johnson, (Front Row) (left to right) Melissa Lammons, Mariah Carter



PGM's Gospel of John Ministry

"THANK YOU for helping me with my walk with Christ. PGM & "Unshackled!" has been a gift from God," says Ryan, a PGM Gospel of John Bible Correspondence Course participant. Did you know PGM has a correspondence course based on the Gospel of John averaging approximately 500 participants at any one time? As was noted in *"Get in the Game,"* Percy Edmonds, a director at PGM, came to PGM directly from jail. Unlike Percy, however, most in jail will not have the freedom to come to PGM and yet are touched by the "Unshackled!" stories and want to grow in their new Christian faith. These inmates, as well as many other "Unshackled!" listeners, particularly those persons who have yet to become involved in a local Christian fellowship, are helped in beginning their walk with Jesus by these correspondence courses.

Very early on in the history

of "Unshackled!," persons making professions of faith while listening to a story were asking, "What's next?" In response to these requests, a PGM employee named Wayland Moore, an active participant-member in the Navigators, felt prompted by God to try to meet these listeners' need. Using the knowledge of Scripture and Bible study learned in the Navigators, Wayland created a six lesson correspondence course based on the Gospel of John. These lessons are followed up by a final exam. The lessons help disciple these new believers by providing a basic starting point for living the Christ-centered Spirit-filled life we all desire. The lessons encourage disciplines such as prayer, abiding in the Word of God, Scripture memorization, and principles for multiplying Christian disciples, laborers, and equippers. It is the prayer of PGM that persons who've complete these courses will continue their study of Scripture by becoming involved in a local Bible study, local church, and/or continuing correspondence courses with one of the organizations that specializes in providing studies.

PGM is forever indebted to Wayland Moore, a faithful man of God. His dedication and love of God's Word and his skilled craftsmanship in creating the Gospel of John Correspondence Course to teach others how to know Christ and to make him known has benefited a multitude of believers over decades of time. Please join us in praying for the Holy Spirit's working in the hearts of those participants in the Gospel of John correspondence course. Even those imprisoned can be freed by the joy found in the Gospel.

(left) Alison Blue in her office shown grading a lesson from a new Christian believer.



John Brewster

ARE YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW 70 1/2 OR OLDER? Have an IRA? John Brewster, PGM's Financial Officer, would like to pass on information he received from the IRS which may apply to you. The U.S. Congress has extended a provision in the tax-code authorizing withdrawals from IRAs, which would otherwise be taxable, to count toward meeting your minimum distribution requirement for the year provided they are transferred to a qualified charitable organization (like PGM). If this applies to you, and you would like to know more about how you can contribute to this ministry and avoid tax penalties, please contact John Brewster at (312) 429-6760. He is happy to provide details and walk you through the process.

Our Source of Confidence

THE ACCOUNT FOUND IN 1 Samuel 17 is an example of trusting the Lord to be our source of confidence, rather than in human resources. Goliath challenged the Israelites to choose a man to fight him, and the army of the winner would be considered the victor. No one in the army of Israel was willing to accept the challenge.

Then young David came looking for his brothers and heard of the giant Goliath's challenge, and offered to fight him himself. At first he wasn't taken seriously. Then David recounted how he had killed a lion and a bear while he was tending his father's sheep, and he was confident the Lord would deliver the giant into his hand. Saul agreed to let David fight Goliath, but before he sent David to battle he gave him his armor. David knew he would be unable to wear the armor in battle because he was not used to it. Also, the armor is an example of man-made protection in warfare.

David's past victories were because of trusting God, not due to trusting in a man-made provision or armor. King Saul was a man of weak faith; his confidence was in his armor. David was a man of strong faith; his confidence was in God.

Listen to David's words: "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day the Lord will deliver thee into mine hand" (45-46). David told Goliath that this was to be so, "that all the earth may know there is a God in Israel. And the assembly may know the Lord saveth, not with the sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands" (46-47). How could David be so sure? He had learned that confidence in the Lord is never misplaced. In the words of Ephesians 6:10, David was "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

The great need for believers today is to be "strong in the Lord." This is not a matter of progressive attainment; rather it is a matter of occupying our victorious position that

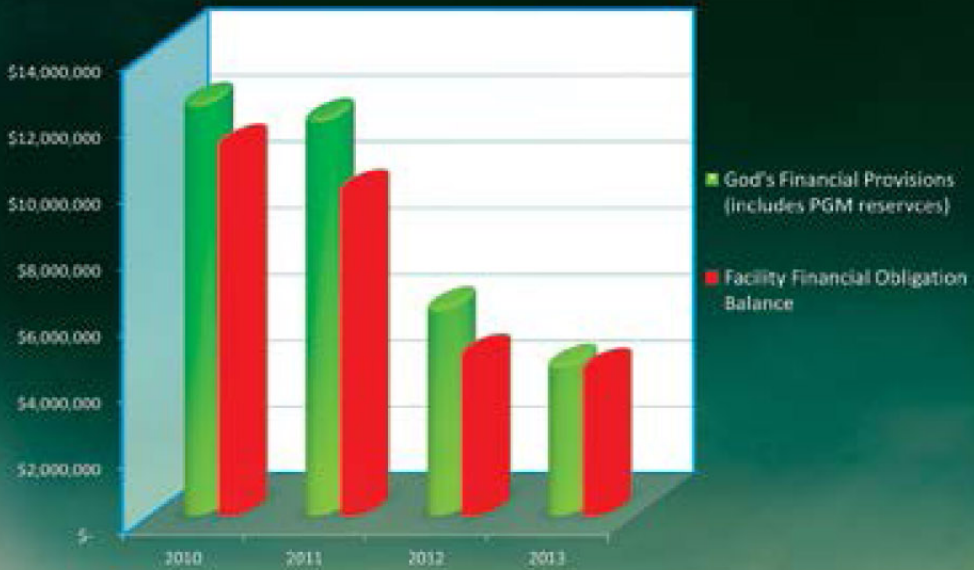
Christ has already gained for us. As we realize those truths and live accordingly, our faith will become stronger and more courageous, for we will see God working in our lives. But remember, we need to take our position with Christ before we begin the battle. Jesus Christ has already triumphed over our foes; therefore, we need to take our position with Him in the place of victory. There should be no question in the believers' minds because Christ has already accomplished the victory. The real victory over Goliath was won before David ever went to meet him in the valley. Our victory is a spiritual warfare that has already been won by Christ's death and resurrection before we entered the battle.

The conflict does not consist in fighting for a victory with the Lord's help. We do not need to ask for victory, because God has already gained the victory. We do not fight for victory, but from a position of victory in Christ. Because Christ has already gained the victory, the enemy has already been defeated and is a conquered foe.

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

—Ephesians 6:10





FINANCIAL UPDATE: Now that the fiscal 2013 has ended, it is apparent that expenses will exceed donations by 20 percent unless something miraculous happens. Of course God “owns the cattle on a thousand hills” and so he can easily provide for our financial needs. However, God also instructs us not to presume on Him. With that in mind, PGM is taking action to align costs to donation levels while at the same time being confident in the Lord’s provision. All of us at PGM thank God for the faithful supporters He has given PGM. Please let others know of the ministries of PGM and encourage them to consider supporting us. Please pray with us for God’s provision.

MAY 2013 NUMBERS

- 676** Daily average of homeless receiving aid and attending Gospel services.
- 904** Daily average of homeless sleeping overnight.
- 110** Number of men and women enrolled in Bible Study Program and provided room and board.
- 54,493** Approximate number of plates of food served.
- 62,837** Estimated number of items of clothing distributed at PGM or given to other missions.
- 407** Number of patients treated in free Medical/Dental Clinic.
- 99** Number of persons who professed faith in Christ!
- 3,001** Stations broadcasting in 14 languages (Albanian, Arabic, English, Farsi, Greek, Japanese, Korean, Macedonian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish)

PACIFIC GARDEN MISSION makes no charge for care. Food, clothing, overnight accommodations, and medical treatment are totally free. Financial gifts from faithful supporters—and their prayers—keep this ministry alive. PGM receives no city, state, or federal aid.

Areas of ministry include the Mission for Men, Women’s and Children’s Division, Medical/Dental Clinic, “*Unshackled!*” radio, Bread of Life outreach, Polish evangelism, and PGM Men’s Choir.

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