The Hidden Power of Preparation
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How to Use This Tool
This Conference Classics process tool is designed to accompany an audio recording of a Willow Creek Association conference session. You can refer to the tool while listening to the session and use it afterward to dig deeper into the content, or you can use the tool to get the highlights without even listening to the session.

This tool consists of three parts:
- The PREVIEW section lists the problem that the session addresses and the recommendation that the speaker makes.
- The KEY CONCEPTS section breaks the session down into the core ideas most important for you to understand.
- The REFLECT section includes questions to help you practice, apply, and implement what you’ve learned. Although the questions are geared primarily to individuals, groups can use them as a discussion guide.
Problem: Although church staff and volunteers know the importance of spiritual disciplines, many neglect to practice them on a regular basis — which affects the impact of their ministries.

Recommendation: Discover how God uses spiritual disciplines to prepare believers for ministry, and turn routine actions into divine interactions.

**Key Concepts**

**The Importance of Preparation**
- None of us want to live wasted lives.
- God prepares us for lives that count through spiritual disciplines.

**Paul’s Preparation for Ministry**
- In Acts 9:1-19, Paul was accosted by Jesus on the road to Damascus.
- He was blind for three days, then spent a season sitting with the apostles, and finally was commissioned into ministry.
- The practices Paul engaged in during this time have been shown to be key in the life and development of Christian character:
  - Silence and solitude: He was probably sitting alone for a good portion of those three days trying to make sense of what had just happened.
  - Study: When he regained his sight, he learned from the apostles what it meant to be a follower of Jesus.
  - Fellowship: The apostles got to know Paul, and he got to know them.
- These things prepared him for ministry.

**The Apostles’ Preparation for Ministry**
- In Acts 2, the apostles prepared for the birth of the church through corporate prayer in the upper room.
- In Acts 13:2, while the church at Antioch was worshipping and fasting, the Holy Spirit called Paul and Barnabas into ministry.
  - Sometimes God prepares us for ministry in powerful ways and sometimes in subtle ways through the still, small voice of the Spirit.
  - After fasting and prayer, the community placed their hands on Paul and Barnabas and sent them off — launching them into a greater degree of ministry.

**The Prophets’ Preparation for Ministry**
- As described in Exodus 24 and 34 and Deuteronomy 9, Moses spent 40 days in solitude.
  - Through the ages, solitude has been a platform for greater growth in believers’ spiritual lives and for greater effectiveness in ministry.
  - As Moses fasted and spent time with God, he was being prepared to lead Israel into worship and obedience.
  - Moses journaled on the mountain, writing out what God said to him.
  - Journaling involves writing what God says to us as well as writing our prayers to God.