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## Men's Bible Study – February 9, 2026 – 7:00 P.M.

### “PLAYING THE LONG GAME”

Based on the Prologue of Mark Batterson’s \*Gradually Then Suddenly\*

#### I. PROLOGUE SUMMARY — WHY THE LONG GAME MATTERS

In the Prologue of \*Gradually Then Suddenly\*, Mark Batterson challenges the modern obsession with instant results. He reminds us that most God-sized outcomes don’t happen suddenly first—they happen gradually through faithfulness, obedience, and perseverance.

What looks like “sudden” to others is usually the result of years of unseen faithfulness.

The long game is about endurance over excitement, consistency over convenience, and obedience over applause. For men, this speaks directly to marriage, fatherhood, leadership, integrity, and spiritual growth—areas where faithfulness is often unseen but deeply formative.

#### II. SCRIPTURAL ANCHOR

Galatians 6:9 (NLT)

“So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up.”

#### III. SPORTS-BASED ILLUSTRATION — THE SUPERNATURAL LONG GAME

Yesterday’s Super Bowl reminds us that championships are not won in one night—they are revealed in one night.

Teams do not prepare for the Super Bowl during Super Bowl week. They prepare through months of conditioning, discipline, repetition, film study, and sacrifice. Every early morning workout, every practice rep, every unseen moment matters.

When the lights are brightest, what shows up is not hype—it’s habit.

In the same way, God prepares men for “sudden” breakthroughs through gradual obedience. Spiritual victories are built long before they are celebrated.

#### IV. BIBLE LESSON — PLAYING THE LONG GAME WITH GOD

##### 1. Faithfulness Is Formed Before Fruit Is Seen

James 5:7–8 (NLT)

God grows us the same way He grows crops—slowly, seasonally, and intentionally.

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## 2. God Rewards Endurance, Not Impulsiveness

Hebrews 10:36 (NLT)

Shortcuts may look efficient, but they short-circuit character.

## 3. Sudden Breakthroughs Sit on Gradual Obedience

Habakkuk 2:3 (NLT)

Delay is not denial. God's timing is purposeful.

## **V. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Where are you tempted to rush God?
2. What unseen work might God be doing in you?
3. What disciplines are strengthening your endurance?
4. Who models the long game of faithfulness in your life?

## **VI. CLOSING CHARGE**

Brothers, the Christian life is not a sprint—it is a championship season.

Declaration:

"I will play the long game with God. I will not quit. I will stay faithful."

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