

Monday Men's Bible Study
Mark Batterson — "Gradually Then Suddenly"
May 18, 2026
Chapter 10 — "The Day When Decades Happen"

Theme

"Don't Quit Before Your Suddenly"

Anchor Scripture

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."

Opening Hook

Every man in this room has had moments where it felt like nothing was changing.

You prayed... but nothing moved.

You worked... but nobody noticed.

You stayed faithful... but the breakthrough never seemed to come.

And one of the greatest temptations in life is quitting in the "gradual" season because you cannot yet see the "suddenly" season.

But Batterson's point in this chapter is powerful: Sometimes God compresses decades of preparation into one defining moment.

One day.

One opportunity.

One breakthrough.

One encounter.

One act of obedience.

And suddenly... everything changes.

But the “suddenly” only happens because of all the faithful days that came before it.

Chapter Summary

In Chapter 10, Batterson explores the reality that life-changing moments are often preceded by years of unseen preparation, discipline, prayer, failure, growth, and consistency.

He argues that what appears to happen “overnight” is usually the result of years of quiet development.

The “day when decades happen” is the moment when preparation meets opportunity.

This chapter reminds men:

- Don't despise slow seasons.
- Don't underestimate hidden growth.
- Don't walk away from the process too early.
- God often works gradually before He moves suddenly.

Teaching Movement #1 — God Uses Long Preparation Before Big Moments

David was anointed king as a teenager... but did not immediately sit on the throne.

Joseph dreamed as a young man... but spent years in pits and prisons.

Moses spent 40 years in the wilderness before leading Israel.

Jesus spent 30 hidden years before 3 public years changed the world. Preparation is never punishment.

Many men become frustrated because they want public impact without private development.

But God develops character before platform.

Key Scripture:

James 1:4 (NLT)

“So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.”

Man Talk

Some brothers are discouraged because life is moving slower than expected.

But hear this tonight:

Slow does not mean stagnant.

Just because you do not see visible progress does not mean God is absent.

Some things are developing beneath the surface.

A tree grows underground before it grows above ground.

And many Black men know what it means to survive long seasons of struggle before seeing opportunity.

Our history teaches us:

- survival before success,
- faith before freedom,
- endurance before elevation.

God has always specialized in bringing greatness out of long hardship.

Teaching Movement #2 — Consistency Creates “Suddenly” Moments

Most breakthroughs are built on boring faithfulness.

Prayer.

Discipline.

Showing up.

Reading Scripture.

Taking care of responsibilities.

Being present for your children.

Staying faithful when nobody applauds you.

Everybody wants the miracle moment... but few people respect the daily grind that produces it.

Batterson’s idea challenges modern culture because we live in an era of shortcuts.

Everybody wants instant success.

But God still honors consistency.

Key Scripture:

Luke 16:10 (NLT)

“If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones.”

Sports Illustration

Nobody watches an athlete become great overnight.

People celebrate the championship... but ignore:

- the early mornings,
- the workouts,
- the discipline,
- the rehab,
- the film study,
- the sacrifices.

The game-winning moment is usually built on years nobody applauded.

And spiritually, many men quit in practice season because they cannot yet see game day.

But your suddenly may be closer than you think.

Teaching Movement #3 — One God-Moment Can Change Everything

The beauty of God is that He can shift a man's life in one moment.

One sermon.

One prayer.

One opportunity.

One introduction.

One act of obedience.

One decision.

And suddenly:

- addiction breaks,
- families heal,
- doors open,
- purpose becomes clear,
- destiny unfolds.

Peter fished all night and caught nothing... but one word from Jesus changed everything.

Blind Bartimaeus had one encounter with Jesus and his whole life shifted.

The woman with the issue of blood touched Jesus once... and twelve years of suffering ended.

Never underestimate what God can do in one moment.

Key Scripture:

Habakkuk 2:3 (NLT)

“If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently, for it will surely take place.”

Cultural Bridge

African-American history itself is a testimony of “the day when decades happen.”

Rosa Parks sat down after generations had already been standing strong.

Dr. King stood on bridges built by unnamed people nobody celebrates publicly.

The Civil Rights Movement did not happen overnight.

It was decades of prayer meetings, survival, sacrifice, endurance, organizing, faith, and resilience.

And many brothers today are standing in blessings built by men who never saw the full harvest themselves.

That ought to challenge us:

What are we building for the next generation?

Discussion Questions

1. What area of your life currently feels “slow” or frustrating?
2. Have you ever almost quit something that later became a blessing?
3. Why do men often struggle with consistency and patience?
4. What daily disciplines could prepare you for your next “suddenly” moment?
5. What is one area where God may currently be developing your character privately?
6. How can we encourage younger Black men not to abandon the process too early?

Weekly Challenge — “Stay In The Process”

This week:

- Pray every day.
- Read one chapter of Scripture daily.
- Encourage one other man intentionally.
- Stay disciplined in one area where you normally drift.
- Refuse to quit prematurely.

Write this down:

“I will not abandon the process before God reveals the purpose.”

Closing Charge

Brothers, do not measure your life only by visible results.

Some of the greatest things God is doing in you right now cannot yet be seen.

Do not quit in the gradual season.

Because one day... God can do in one moment what took decades to prepare you for.

And when your suddenly comes... you will realize that none of the struggle was wasted.

Closing Prayer

Lord,

Give us strength to stay faithful in slow seasons.

Teach us patience when life feels delayed.

Develop our character while we wait.

Help us trust You even when we cannot see immediate results.

Prepare us for the moments You already have planned for our future.

And when our “suddenly” comes, let us remain humble, grateful, and grounded in You.

In Jesus’ name,

Amen.