

## News Story Summary

The University of Kentucky Wildcat basketball team lost against the University of Wisconsin Badgers, ending the Wildcats bid for an undefeated season. Kentucky ended the season 38-1 having the least number of losses and most wins of any college team, but that one loss cost them the chance to play for the national championship. When asked about the loss, Kentucky Freshman Tyler Ulis stated: “I just feel like we wanted to win the national title, and we didn’t do it – so the season was a waste.”

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the sentence “Wisconsin ends Kentucky’s undefeated run.”)

## Focus Attention

As the group arrives ask people if they watched any of the college basketball tournament games. Invite volunteers to share their picks going into the tournament. If Kentucky is not mentioned, remind the group of the expectations most had for Kentucky achieving perfection. Share the quote by Tyler Ulis, asking for their reaction to his assessment.

Ask: Have you ever been close to perfection but fell short? How did that feel?

Say: Kentucky will end the season with the most wins and fewest losses – but they weren’t perfect. They were close but that one stumble cost them. Even though we might come close to perfection, that one stumble costs us as well. We need God’s grace to bridge the gap we have between our ability and His expectation.

Transition: Zechariah continued to prophesy to the Hebrew people. Up to this point in his book, Zechariah had prophesied about the coming Messiah and the repentance and deliverance of the Hebrew people. In today’s session, Zechariah revealed the Lord’s cleansing and restoration.

Challenge the group to look for how God’s purifies His people and the goal of that purifying.

## Challenge

Remind the group about the story of the Kentucky Wildcat basketball team and the quote by Tyler Ulis. Invite volunteers to share times when they felt a similar feeling in their spiritual life when they have fallen into temptation.

Challenge the group this week to focus on the refining power of Jesus Christ through the work He did on the cross.

Ask: Who around you is defeated in their sin and needs to know the story of God's grace this week? Allow the group to share first name or only initials of the person or persons.

Pray: Guide the group to pray for each other as they interact with friends and family members that feel defeated by sin this week. Specifically lift up the names of those shared, and ask that God would draw their heart by encouraging their faith. Pray also that those in the group would resist the discouragement failure can bring and instead lean into the grace that Jesus offers through the cross.