

## Defeating the Pressures

n/a

### **Ready:**

“Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” - Philippians 4:6-7

### **Set**

It's finally over. I just completed my first tax season as an accountant. It was a huge transition for me as last year at this time I was competing in a baseball season. This year, it was tax season.

In baseball we all look forward to opening day. We can't wait for the day when we finally get to quit scrimmaging our own teammates and suit up against another team. As opening day draws nearer, we all get those pre-game jitters. We know we are ready to play, but the fact that it's something new causes us to be a little bit nervous and anxious.

I have played baseball my whole life, from T-ball through four years of college ball. As a recent college graduate, I entered my first tax season as an accountant a few months ago. I was a little scared and nervous because I didn't know what to expect. There were some tasks I was given where I didn't always know how to begin, and on certain days, I let not knowing exactly what to do stress me out and get the best of me.

Tax season is a very busy time of year for accountants who work long hours to meet the April deadline. Through my first experience, though, the Lord showed me a great lesson about handling pressure. Every day when I showed up to work, I would tell my boss, “Good morning.” He would always look at me with the biggest smile on his face and say, “Good morning, buddy.” He would also take time at least once every day to personally go over some mistakes I had made and try to help me understand what I'd done wrong. As a partner in the firm, my boss had a tremendously busy schedule, but that didn't stop him from investing time in me. Even when I made rookie mistakes that would have frustrated most employers, he remained calm and always looked for ways to explain the issues and help me understand how to avoid repeating my errors. Through observing his patience, I realized how great of an opportunity that time of year was to witness to those around me. And, while I didn't always handle them very well, the deadlines and pressure helped me learn how to deal with those situations.

Life is full of pressure, but we can't let it consume us. Instead, we need to acknowledge them as opportunities to shine the light of Christ in the midst of it. Inevitably, this will lead us to

greater faith and serve as a powerful testimony to those around us.

Pressures also are a test of our faith. God had equipped me for tax season, but it took my boss investing in me to see that I hadn't been handling the pressures in a way that was glorifying to God. Because everything had been new to me when tax season began and I wasn't always sure if I was doing things correctly, I felt like things were completely out of my control. But that was a good thing, as I realized that God was the One in control and that He is with us in the good and the bad.

When we feel pressure and stress, we need to examine our hearts and see if there is a desire for control or a lack of faith in the Lord. For me, I forgot how great He was/is, and I let uncertainties in my job distract me from His glory.

Today, whatever pressure you are feeling, whether in sports or in life in general, know that God is in control. While He never promised us a life without pain and suffering, He did promise to never leave or forsake us. Pressures arise to challenge and strengthen our faith, and through our reliance and submission to Christ, we will watch as He delivers us through it.

## Go

1. In what areas of your life do you struggle with surrendering to the Lord? Why?
2. Do you trust God fully?
3. How can you find peace amid pressure and stress?

## Workout

Psalm 4:8

Matthew 11:28-30

John 14:27

2 Peter 1:3



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