

## **Sidelined**

### **Ready:**

"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed." 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

### **Set**

One of the most frustrating parts of sports is when athletes get injured. We don't want to see others in pain. Beyond that, the athlete is a representation of strength, skill, endurance, discipline and, sometime, sheer will. To see someone on the side lines is contrary to the image of athleticism. It can feel miserable when we are that athlete. Yet every athlete who performs their sport does so with the knowledge there are inherent risks. So add courage to that list of qualities!

The reality is every one of us has limitations because we are born into a fallen world, surrounded by wounded people. We are personally fractured. The solution to the problem isn't Christianity. What? Entering into relationship with Christ ensures of us of salvation. But if we think, or allow others to think, that means we will never suffer we will be disappointed. God forgives sin but often we have to deal with the result of sin. The entire world is still experiencing the consequences brought on by Adam and Eve's disobedience. People who blame God for the condition of this world don't understand this truth:

The Garden of Eden is part of all our stories whether we choose to follow Jesus or not. Jesus said in John 16:33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." The assurance is of peace in the midst of trouble. Peace is available. Trouble is guaranteed.

A dedicated athlete doesn't give up a sport even though wounds are a possibility. Christians shouldn't give up when life gets tough. Athletes who overcome the rough spots realize the value of difficult times. If approached with the right attitude, these times make us stronger, draw us closer to God, bring us closer to one another and remind us there is more to life than we realize. I think it also makes us incredibly grateful. It is too easy to take skills and people for granted in this life. When something we treasure is threatened or taken from us, we start to approach life much differently. Remember what it says in 2 Corinthians 4: 18 "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." If you are being tempted to walk away from sports, academics, a job, a relationship or God because of tough times, please reconsider. Things are not always what they seem in the moment.

### **Go**

1. What area of your life are you facing the most challenge?
2. Do you spend more time talking about your problems than in prayer about them?
3. Do you have at least one trusted person who can help you navigate through tough times?

## **Workout**

- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
- Isaiah 53:3

## **Overtime**

Jesus you walked this earth in flesh and understand suffering. You bore my sins on the cross and saved me from eternal death. Lord, show me areas of my life that I am taking for granted. Forgive me for being ungrateful. Help me to notice all the ways you bless me. May I be a wise steward of all those blessings. I choose to trust you in times of need and praise you whatever the outcome. Thank you for your love, peace and grace. You are a mighty God! I step out in renewed confidence of who am I am in Christ. To you be all the glory, all the honor and all the praise! Amen!

## **Bible Reference:**

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Isaiah 53:3



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