

## **Sweat Equity**

### **Ready:**

"You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result—the survival of many people" -Genesis 50:20

### **Set**

A mutual respect exists among athletes. To some degree, as athletes we all have a single-minded, committed lifestyle that is laced with adversity. This is the price we pay to excel. An athlete's identity and purpose hinges on his or her performance, but what happens when adversity strikes?

What we see as adversity, God sees as opportunity. In Genesis 38–39, we read the story of how Joseph was sold into slavery by his own family and then imprisoned for 13 years for a crime he did not commit. But Joseph stood firm. *"What men meant for evil, God used for good,"* he said (see Genesis 50:20). Joseph was right: Years after being sold into slavery, he became second in command over all of Egypt!

Adversity not only builds character, but also reveals it. In 1 Samuel 17, David, who was deemed too young to go to battle with his eight older brothers, cultivated his skills by fighting lions and bears while tending his flock. Armed with only a sling and stones, this small shepherd boy faced the giant that no other Israelite soldier dared to fight.

*"You come against me with a dagger, spear, and sword," David said to the giant, "but I come against you in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel's armies—you have defied Him. Today, the Lord will hand you over to me"* (1 Samuel 16:45-46). David declared that the battle was the Lord's, and he defeated the mighty Goliath.

Playing ball meant the world to me as a young man. God had blessed me with natural ability and I excelled at every level. Then adversity struck. I was cut by the first NFL team that signed me. Down and out, I begrudgingly headed to Tampa Bay to play for the Bandits of the USFL. It was there that I met Jesus through the Bandits' chapel program. God then called me to youth ministry.

I am living proof that God can do great things with what we consider discouraging situations. Whether we have been deceived, beaten, jailed, surrounded by lions or cut from a team, we are being prepped through adversities for divine opportunity!

### **Go**

1. What adversities and challenges are you currently facing in your life?
2. What is being revealed about your character in the midst of these adversities?

3. How will you choose to view the current adversities that you are facing?

### **Workout**

Genesis 50:15-21; 1 Samuel 17:45-47; Psalm 23

### **Overtime**

*Father, help me today to draw upon Your strength when facing adversity. Use these situations for Your glory and Your purpose. Amen*

### **Bible Reference:**

Psalms 23



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