

Breaking Free

Ready:

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

2 Corinthians 3:17

Set

In 2008, I made my first U.S. Olympic Soccer Team. I was still in college, and I was one of the youngest players on the roster. I was also replacing star player Abby Wambach who couldn't compete due to an injury.

Then in 2012, I was chosen for the Olympic squad again, but this time I was considered a veteran with several major matches under my belt, including the 2008 Olympic gold medal game and the 2010 FIFA World Cup. While both situations were very different, they were also very much the same. There was a great deal of pressure that came with the job.

The pressure of high expectations can be difficult to manage. If you have a bad game, you can't blame anyone but yourself. If you have a great game, you can be tempted to get prideful and unknowingly set yourself up to fall. The hardest part is playing free and not allowing the pressure to negatively impact your performance and steal your joy in the process.

In order to break free of the pressure that comes with expectations, there are some important steps that you must take. First of all, make sure that your confidence is in Christ—not in yourself. Secondly, understand that your identity is in Him. And finally, always keep in mind that your sport should be, as it says in Romans 12:1, your spiritual act of worship. Whatever talent Christ has blessed you with ultimately belongs to Him.

Those steps will help relieve the pressure from high expectations. They will also bring you true joy and allow you to give God the glory in everything you do.

Go

1. Describe a time when you felt pressure as an athlete. How did it impact your performance?
2. Of the three steps listed, which ones have you applied to your life? Which ones are difficult to walk out?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 3:17. How might inviting His Spirit into your athletic life bring freedom and help you better deal with pressure?

Workout

John 8:32, Romans 12:1-2, 2 Timothy 1:7

Overtime

Lord, I want to break free from worldly expectations and the pressures that accompany it. Transform my way of thinking and fill my heart with the kind of joy that only You can bring. Amen.

Bible Reference:

2 Timothy 1



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