

## The Challenge

### **Ready:**

“Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.” - Proverbs 27:17

**Set** Several years ago, as a senior on the baseball team, I had climbed the ladder and put in my time until it was finally my chance to be a starter. Each year I had been competing with older guys and had never ended up winning the job. This year, though, I was the oldest and most experienced, so I got the opportunity. All throughout our fall practices and into early spring I was performing well and was really earning my position. One week before our first game, though, our coach began moving other guys from different positions to begin working at third base with me. At first, this bothered me. I wondered what it was going to take for me to prove that I could do the job. Deep down, I felt like our coach was creating a back-up plan because he had no confidence in me and was waiting on me to fail. Through this experience, I began to realize that nothing worth having is ever going to come easily. In life, we have to work hard for things we want. Rarely will anything worth having just be given to us. And this relates to the Christian life as well. Living a life for Christ is not easy, but it is no doubt worth it. On the ball field, I realized that, as I felt like I had earned the starting position, it was always going to be a battle for me to keep it since there would always be guys capable of taking the spot. If I didn't have that competition and felt like the job was mine, I wouldn't feel the need to work as hard. I would become complacent and lazy. This is why we need other people involved in our lives to push us toward Christ. As the above verse from Proverbs 27:17 says, “Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.” While living for Christ is not a competition among Christians, it is still a daily battle to defeat our enemy. This is why it is vital to have people who challenge you in your walk with Christ to ensure that you don't become complacent and lazy and start thinking you can coast by on your salvation. Today, don't run from competition. Rise up to the challenge and realize the importance of others pushing you in sports and in your walk with the Lord. Keep God first; play for Christ; walk with and stand for Him. Do these things, and the Lord will never let you fall.

**Go** 1. In what areas of life are you most challenged by competition? What is your attitude toward that competition? 2. Do you believe it is a challenge to live the Christian life? Are you afraid of it, or are you able to face it with confidence? 3. How can you live up to the challenge of our calling to live for Christ?

**Workout** Psalm 37:23-24

**Bible Reference:**

Proverbs 27



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