

## Cleaning House

### **Ready:**

*“Then he did away with the idolatrous priests the kings of Judah had appointed to burn incense at the high places in the cities of Judah and in the areas surrounding Jerusalem.” -2 Kings 23:5*

### **Set**

We are athletes, but we may differ in how we utilize our abilities. And although we may not connect within the same sport, there *is* something that still connects us within the participation of our different sports: The pressure to perform. We can all relate to thoughts of anxiousness, feelings of self-doubt and overwhelming fear of failure that are all rooted in our pressure to prove ourselves: To our parents, our coaches, our peers, and yes, maybe even God.

How can we handle this pressure?

As we read God’s Word, there are plenty of men and women who understand this pressure and stress, including King Josiah. Josiah was handed the keys to the kingdom of Israel at just 8 years old, and for 31 years, he led God’s people. I can only imagine the pressure of leading an entire nation, yet he did it well.

There were things made for other gods that were brought into God’s house and the king had them removed. Like Josiah, there are times we just need to “clean house.” What have we brought into our minds, hearts and bodies that do not honor God and adds pressure to our lives? Are we watching shows on Netflix that lead our minds to dark places? Are we listening to songs that make us more anxious? Are we spending hour after hour scrolling on social media comparing ourselves to others? It’s time to remove the things that lead us further from the Lord and ask Him to help remove it if it is something we have a tough time letting go.

Josiah didn’t just remove things, but people. There are times that God wants us to remove a toxic relationship or friendship that has not been leading us towards Jesus or been encouraging. Then there are those people who can’t be removed from our lives, but we can remove what space we let them have in our minds. We can remove what they say and replace them with what God says. He says we are beloved (John 3:16), chosen (Jeremiah 1:5), redeemed (Ephesians 1:7), among so much more.

The pressures we are under are often rooted in the need to prove ourselves, but God clearly marks out a better way to relieve the pressure and life in His strength. We don’t have to live to prove ourselves to the world; we just have to be living proof of a *risen* God.

### **Go**

? What are your three biggest pressure points as an athlete?

? How can you take the points above and integrate them into these struggles?

? Prioritize spending time in God's Word and handing Him your burdens each day.

### **Workout**

Jeremiah 1:5

John 14:1

Ephesians 1:7

### **Overtime**

"Father, thank You that I don't have to hold under the pressure to perform. Your Word gives us the path to righteous living, and Your heart leads us deeper into living out Your Kingdom here on earth. Help me assess what I am putting into my mind, body and heart, and who I am allowing to speak into me. I want to make room for Your rule in my life. In Jesus' name, amen."



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