

## **The Crown**

### **Ready:**

Endure hardship...fulfill your ministry...In the future, there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness. — 2 Timothy 4:5, 8

### **Set**

The 1996–97 season was both victorious and sorrowful for the Detroit Red Wings hockey team. In this triumphant year, the team had won hockey’s greatest prize—the Stanley Cup. But joy quickly turned into tragedy as a car accident claimed the career of a leading player on their team.

Days after winning the Stanley Cup, Vladamir Konstantinov lay in a coma. He had fought an enormous fight to become a world-class player. Now he would have an even greater fight for his life. Remarkably, he fought back faster than anyone dreamed; yet it was clear that his career was over. Vladamir was now in a wheelchair. The following season, the Red Wings pledged to win for Vladamir. They wore special patches with the Russian words, “I believe.” The Detroit Red Wings had a remarkable year and repeated their Stanley Cup victory. At the end of the championship game, Vladamir was rolled onto the ice in his wheelchair and his teammates gathered around him. They pushed him around the ice with the Stanley Cup trophy on his lap. The expression on Vladamir’s face showed there was nothing as victorious as this moment of triumph.

As believers in Christ, we are not guaranteed the easiest of lives. There is no promise that we will avoid trouble and hardship. But we who have faith will receive an imperishable crown. Despite our hardships, failures, and scars, we will receive a crown of righteousness awarded by the Righteous Judge Himself. So keep fighting the good fight and “share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Tm 2:3). One day, in the presence of Jesus Christ, we will hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant!” Hearing those words will be an even greater triumph than holding the Stanley Cup.

### **Go**

1. What hardships are you facing?
2. Do the trials of life change the relationships with your coaches, family, or players?
3. What does it mean to “finish the race”?

### **Workout**

2 Timothy 2:3; 2 Corinthians 9:24–27

### **Overtime**

Lord, help me remember You are always with me, especially during tough times in my life. Remind me that Your trials are for my benefit and that You use time to build me up and make me stronger. Amen.

**Bible Reference:**

2 Timothy 4



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