

Dedication

Ready:

"Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs--he wants to please his commanding officer."

-2 Timothy 2:3-4 (NIV)

Set

Years ago, when I ran track in college, I had the privilege of doing workouts with several elite athletes who trained at the same facility in California. One of the athletes in my workout group was a promising college freshman named Mark Crear. Three years later, I watched his career take off after he finished third at the NCAA finals in 1990. Over the the next 14 years, Mark emerged as one of the top hurdlers in the world. An Olympian with two Olympic medals, he held the No. 1 or 2 ranking in the world several times during that span. He is remembered most for taking the silver medal in the 1996 Olympics with a cast on his broken arm.

Years later, I reconnected with Mark when he came to the Midwest to speak at a youth rally and local FCA event. One day after speaking to our FCA Huddle, Mark informed me that he was going to do a workout. I showed him the indoor hallway where the team I coached ran in the winter months (it was mid-February) and let him get dressed in the locker room while I prepped for the team's workout. I didn't see him for about 40 minutes, so I went to check on him. I found him outside in the cold, driving, 38-degree rain.

When I asked him why he was out in the cold working out, he said, "If you are going to run at the world-class level, you have to realize that the guy just behind you is outside working out to catch you. The guy ahead of you is outside somewhere working out, because he knows you are working hard to catch him."

Mark endured many hardships throughout his career, dedicating himself to the excellence that was necessary in achieving world-class status. As a Christian athlete, he demonstrated the kind of great dedication that set him apart from many others.

In his final letter to Timothy, Paul encouraged his protege to dedicate himself to God. Paul said, "No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs." In 1 Peter 4:19, Peter echoed Paul's thought. He encouraged the suffering saints of Asia and Asia minor to endure persecution: "So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good."

As athletes and coaches, we each understand dedication. We have set apart a portion of our days and lives for our particular sports. We endure the pain of workouts, three-a-days and conditioning for the glory of victory. Let's apply that same dedication to Christ. Whether we are

suffering for doing God's will or simply trying to live day-to-day, we should dedicate our thoughts, words and deeds to the Lord.

Go

1. In your opinion, who is the greatest example of dedication to their sport?
2. What sets that person apart from others?
3. What principles does that person demonstrate that would help you spiritually?

Workout

- Psalm 4:3
- 1 Peter 2:9
- 1 Peter 4:19

Bible Reference:

1 Peter 4



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