

## Defining Moments

n/a

### **Ready:**

“But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

-Joshua 24:15 (NIV)

### **Set**

Many discussions about this year’s men’s Final Four have been filled with a number of main storylines: VCU and their improbable run, Butler’s incredible two-year dominance, UConn’s amazing post-season string, and Kentucky’s resilience. As story after story emerges about each team and their journey, members of each squad are discussing their season’s defining moments.

Each of these programs has had to overcome adversity at some point during the year. UConn was picked to finish tenth in the Big East, actually finished ninth with a 9-9 record, and then ran the table of the Big East tourney and haven’t let up yet. Kentucky was supposed to be in a rebuilding year after losing all five starters to the NBA. VCU lost its last four regular-season games, yet they received an improbable bid to the Big Dance. Butler, after falling one bucket shy of victory in the 2009 championship against Duke, was supposed to quietly return to the life of a “one-and-done” bracket-buster team, but they not only rebounded to win the Horizon League tournament after starting the season 5-6, they continued to find a way to emerge victorious in the NCAA Tournament.

As coaches and players talk about the season, I quietly wonder what shaped them. What molded them into the team they became? Was it a decision they reached together? Was it a particular moment in a certain game? Did the coaches make a change that brought the team together? Regardless of the reason, many analysts are trying to determine each team’s one defining moment.

In Scripture, we read about one such moment in the life of Joshua. Many would say it was during his campaign to take the land of Canaan, but I think it began back in Numbers 13.

Moses sent one man from each tribe to scout the land of Canaan. Within those 12 were two young men named Joshua and Caleb. After the team had investigated the land, they returned and reported to Moses: “We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are

fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there? (Numbers 13:27-28, NIV).

The people of Israel broke into an uproar, crying and fearful. Israel rebelled against God's command to take the land. Joshua and Caleb, however, tore their garments and proclaimed, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them?" (Numbers 14:7-9, NIV).

In that moment, God honored these two young men. He brought calamity upon Israel, and the entire generation of Israelites—except for Joshua and Caleb—was not allowed to enter the land and spent 40 years in the wilderness.

Just like Joshua and each of these Final Four teams, we all will face a moment in our lives when we will have to make a major choice, and that choice may define who we will become. Howard T. Dickens Jr. once said, "If we don't decide to step out of our box—come out of our comfort zone—we won't progress and live beyond our present potential, but regress and remain in the reality of our own limitation."

VCU, Butler, Kentucky and UConn are reaping the results of the choices they made when they faced their defining moments. Joshua and Caleb were allowed to enter Canaan because they faced their defining moment and "stepped outside of the box." On the flipside, an entire generation of Israel failed to realize their potential as the people of God and failed to receive the power of God when they didn't step up.

Today, when your moment comes, face it with eternity in sight. Trust Christ, the author and finisher of your race, to strengthen you to make the right choice and take a stand. Let your decision be God's decision, and allow it to define who you will become according to His perfect plan!

## **Go**

1. To this point in your life, what has been your most defining moment?
2. How did that shape who you are today?
3. What decision are you facing now that could impact your future?
4. What fears do you have surrounding that decision?
5. Have you trusted the Lord and sought Him in prayer? If not, do so now and trust Him to guide you!

## **Workout**

Read 1 Samuel 15-17. Pay close attention and ask one more question: How did Saul and David each face their defining moments and what were the outcomes?

## **Bible Reference:**

Joshua 24



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