

I have fought the good fight?

n/a

Ready:

?I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.?

-2 Timothy 4:7 (NIV)

Set

As March Madness winds down, we can clearly see the parity that exists at the highest level of college basketball. It's been exciting to watch the thrilling overtime victories and the games that have been decided by three points or less. Teams have matched up toe-to-toe, scraped, hustled and competed to extend their seasons for one more game. At the end of every game, one team has been left celebrating while the other has left empty-handed, perhaps stunned, that the game got away in the final ticks of the clock.

What has struck me the most from this year's tournament has been the number of players who could truly walk off the floor, look each other in the eye and say "I left my all in the arena today." No, those words don't offer much consolation after a stunning loss, but they do mean quite a bit in the long run. As a coach myself, I just think, "What more could a coach ask for?" Whether their team is outdone by talent or is evenly matched, every coach desires that their athletes give their best effort. Coaches understand that on any given day, if the ball bounces right and the whistles favor us, our teams have a chance to do something wonderful IF the effort is there.

Scripture offers us a glimpse at a very zealous person: the Apostle Paul. As a Pharisee, he had zealously sought to root out the fledgling Christian church. Then, when he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus, he was launched into a purpose-driven, Christian life. Paul counted it a privilege to suffer along with Christ, knowing that he suffered for the right reasons. Many of his epistles were written from a jail cell as he exhorted others to continue to grow in the faith and be transformed by the gospel. As his life drew to a close, he faced death with confidence and the assurance that he had poured out his life for Christ.

Many athletes competing in this year's tournament were zealous about a cause. They truly gave their all for the game of basketball. Regardless of class, rank, school size or conference, they came to play. They came with a true sense of purpose because they were given a direction. Their coaches had given them a philosophy, which they bought into, and then gave them a game-plan to follow. They played with passion because they could go forth with confidence in their plan.

As Christians, we can do the same. We have a God who seeks to coach us and build a relationship of love and loyalty with us. He has given us a glimpse into His master plan and

given us a game plan in His Word. As members of His team, we have to buy into His plan. We have to take risks for His sake because we trust that He will keep His promises. When we begin to do so, perhaps we will, as well, turn the world upside down just as Paul and the early Christians did.

Today, let's pour out our lives so we can echo Paul's words at the end of our journey. May we fight the good fight and finish the race.

Go

1. Have you ever lost a game even though you gave it your all? How does that compare to losing a game in which you know you could have competed harder?
2. Do you buy into your coach's game plan? How does that help your confidence on the field?
3. Do you buy into God's plan for your life? Why or why not?

Workout

Jeremiah 29:11

Matthew 10 (The sending of the 12)

2 Timothy 4:6-8



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