

## **Identity and Injury**

### **Ready:**

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”

-1 John 3:1

### **Set**

In the summer of 2008, the world’s greatest female distance runners took to the streets of Beijing to compete in the Olympic women’s marathon. U.S. representative and 2004 bronze medalist Deena Kastor was among the group and was expected to finish among the leaders of the race. However, just a few steps into mile 3, Kastor felt a “pop” in her foot, and she sank to the curb. She’d broken her foot, and her Olympic race was over.

Think for a minute about her situation. She’d trained hard for years, she had the expectations of her country on her shoulders, she had personal ambitions to do well, and she only had one shot. But injuries were out of her control, and she will now have to mentally deal with what happened.

Personally, I can’t think of many challenges that would test an athlete more than that one. You get to the Olympics—the biggest race you can run. You’re carrying the name of a nation on your chest. You put in a million hours of training. You have so many goals and aspirations. Then, less than 1/4 of the way into the race, everything collapses, and your dream is over.

What if that happened to you? How would you react? I tell you what, a good indication of where you place your identity lies in how you would answer that question. For the athlete who places his or her identity in sports and how well they perform, that situation would crush them. But for the athlete who is defined by his or her identity as a child of God, that situation would only make them stronger. Yes, it would still be challenging and their faith would be tested, but they would still be able to walk away from the moment knowing that their worth wasn’t tied up in whether or not they took home a medal.

Whether you have been in that situation or not, if you compete long enough, chances are good that you’ll experience something similar. The Lord may allow you to be stripped of your sport for a time so that you will learn that your worth isn’t based in what happens on the track (or field, or court). It is based first in the fact that you are His redeemed and dearly loved child.

Today, examine your heart. Test yourself and see where you place your identity. If you find that your worth is based too much in your sport, ask the Lord to give you a true understanding of what it means to be identified as His child. Then, when your faith is tested through injury or

some other unexpected challenge, you'll be able to come through out of it even stronger than you were before.

## **Go**

1. If someone asked you to describe who you are, what would you say?
2. Do you place your identity in anything above Christ?
3. What does it mean to "find your identity in Christ"?

## **Workout**

2 Corinthians 5:17

Galatians 2:20

Ephesians 2:10

## **Overtime**

"Heavenly Father, thank You for lifting me up with I fall. Help me to remember that my worth is not defined by my earthly performances but what You have designed for my life. Amen."

## **Bible Reference:**

1 John 3



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