

Praying for a WIN

Ready:

“Then Jesus said to the disciples, ‘Have faith in God. I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain, “May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,” and it will happen. But you must really believe it will happen and have no doubt in your heart. I tell you, you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you’ve received it, it will be yours. But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins too.’” - Mark 11:22-25 (NLT)

Set

Over the past several years, our family has joined in the annual FCA challenge of picking a word of the year. Every January, FCA sends out a series of Impact Play devotions asking readers to pray about a one-word theme for the year and letting God work through it in many ways.

In 2012 my word was prayer. I thought perhaps God would grow the depth of my prayer, bring people into my path who needed prayer, or maybe answer a big prayer, but I had no idea that He would bring me to my knees in a whole different way. I’m a ministry leader and the mom of two hockey-playing boys. We live a blessed life, and God is at the center of our family. But a few years ago, we went into a storm when my 9-year-old went head-first into the hockey boards and suffered a tough concussion. About a month into it, his symptoms hadn’t improved at all. The doctors said it could be weeks, months or years. Sure, he’ll heal someday, but when you’re a 9-year-old boy and you can’t do any physical or cognitive exercise, it brings you to your knees. Times like these lead us to the kind of prayer that Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane—blood, sweat and tears prayers.

But I still find myself asking this question: Am I praying with selfish motives or Kingdom motives? I have been praying for healing, for a quick recovery and for my son to not be hurting. But God convicted me in that prayer. Honestly, I had been praying for what was “easy,” and every athlete knows that anything worth WINNING doesn’t come easily. I can have faith that God hears my prayers, and I can believe that I’ll receive what I’m asking for, but am I asking for selfish outcomes or Kingdom outcomes? I think it’s OK to pray for healing for my son, but now I’m also praying for God to be glorified and for other kids to come to Christ as a result of this experience in our family.

I want to ask you athletes, coaches and parents of athletes—what are you praying for today? Are you praying to win the big game or for one of your kids to make it at the “next level”? I’ve prayed prayers like those before, but these days my prayers are not for a WIN in the game but for a WIN in God’s Kingdom.

I'm learning, slowly, that Kingdom WINS are painful but joy-filled. WINS for the Kingdom don't come easily; they come through tears, tough times and prayer. And WINS in our prayers come from a deep belief that God is sovereign and that what He says in Psalm 62:8 (MSG) is true: "My help and glory are in God—granite-strength and safe-harbor-God— So trust him absolutely, people; lay your lives on the line for him..."

Go

1. What are you praying for these days—a win in the big game or a win in the even bigger game according to God's Kingdom? 2. Are there prayers in your life that are going unanswered? If so, ask yourself these questions based on Mark 11: Is my faith in Jesus Christ or in my own ambitions? Am I holding a grudge against someone, or is my heart pure? Am I praying with selfish motives or Kingdom motives? Is my prayer request for the good of God's Kingdom or the good of my kingdom?

Workout

Matthew 26:39-41 Mark 14:38 Philippians 4:6-7



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