

## Trying to Win

### **Ready:**

“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

-Micah 6:8 (NIV)

### **Set**

So, right now I'm sitting on my couch after coming home from our high school's outdoor conference meet. We've just won back-to-back triple crowns, and, last year, we won state. We're on top of the world! But the whole year hasn't been like this—at least not for me personally. Being part of a team full of winners is hard. A team like that is hard to be around, especially if you are a loser.

I've realized that it's easy to be psyched and thankful when you're winning, but, when you're losing, you think to yourself, “God, what did I do to deserve this? Did I not thank You enough? Are You punishing me for forgetting to do my Bible study?” So, throughout the year, I have been trying to figure out how to please God. Do I have to pray before I throw the shot put or discus? Does He want me to read my Bible every night? Finally I just gave up.

One night while talking to my mom about this, I realized (or maybe God told me) that I was acting just like the pagans who tried to please their gods with sacrifices. When I would read my Bible for a week and then do bad at a meet, I would think to myself, “Well, that didn't work. What do I have to do now?” But my mom showed me the verse Micah 6:8 (please re-read), which shows what God does require of you. It's not a set standard of reading your Bible every night or praying right before you compete, but by acting justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with your God.

When I saw that, the stress that I had built up trying to please God with different actions and disciplines just melted away. The pressure was off! I didn't have to do something to have God make me throw better. I just needed to compete for Him as a way of thanking Him for giving me those gifts for a purpose. I still need to actively seek Him through reading His Word, but realize that I no longer need to do that in order to make Him happy. He loves me just the way I am.

### **Go**

1. Are there any ways in which you are trying to make "deals" with God so that you can be good at your sport?
2. Does it put a lot of stress or pressure on you because of it?
3. In what ways can you get back to the basics of just loving God and not worrying about always being right?

**Workout**

Proverbs 3:5-6

Matthew 6:33

Matthew 22:36-40

Ephesians 2:8-10

**Bible Reference:**

Ephesians 2



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