

## **Setbacks: Destroyer or Strengthener?**

### **Ready:**

“But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.”

-Hebrews 10:39 (NIV)

### **Set**

This year I turned 50 years old. It’s amazing to see how God has stood by my side through a half century of life. Has it been easy? Is a life with Multiple Sclerosis, like the one I lead, a life without challenges? Is training for bodybuilding competitions, something that is virtually impossible with MS, a walk in the park? Is God prepared for victory even as I face a battle that man says cannot be won? The answers are NO, NO, NO and YES!

Training with a debilitating disease is certainly challenging. MS has left my extremities with numbness and lack of coordination. I sometimes wonder why God has chosen me to do what I am doing, but I always come back to the same conclusion. He has His purpose, and I am just a vessel for His work.

In April of 2008, while bench pressing, I could not feel the strain I was placing on my muscles and my right pectoral muscle tore from the tendon. Ouch! Needless to say I was in tremendous pain as the internal bleeding from the injury continued to spread throughout my upper torso, swelling my right chest and arm, and leaving me immobilized. My doctor told me it would be a long six-month recovery before I could train my chest again and that even training upper body would be difficult for some time. My first and very human response was, “The MS Bodybuilding Challenge is over.” But then my faith in our Lord took over, and I put it all to prayer.

As the days and weeks went by, I continued to train my lower body and keep on my training diet. I slowly began to do upper-body workouts and even ventured into doing very light chest exercises. Within two months I was back training my chest and continually adding more weights to my workouts. My doctor thought I was crazy for pushing the muscles so soon, but now almost nine months later, I am training with weights comparable to those I was using before the injury. My pectoral muscle is still torn from the tendon and could not be repaired, so it is evident when flexing that there is an injury there. That injury might cause me to lose necessary points to win a bodybuilding competition, but I will not give up unless God tells me to.

You see, there are always setbacks in life, whether you are trying to accomplish what seems impossible or just living a “normal” life. We must never take our eyes off of Jesus, or we will

surely sink into the water. I have chosen to remain steadfast as I look to God for my strength to press on despite the setbacks. I might have to postpone my competition to give me more time to train due to the injury, but I will not let a setback destroy my dream or His purpose for me. I have chosen to listen to God, put my hand to the plow and push forward without looking back.

God wants us to fulfill our purpose in life, regardless of the trials and tribulations He allows us to face. We must be strengthened by these times and seek our Lord for answers on how to push past the valley and continue on to the mountain. At times we let God lead us. At times we hold His hand. And at times we allow Him to carry us. Whichever position you are in at in this moment, keep your eyes on Jesus and let Him lead you in the way He knows is right for you. Let your setbacks become the strength of your life, not the destroyer of your dreams.

## **Go**

1. When setbacks happen in your life do you allow them to destroy you or strengthen you?
2. During a setback are your eyes on Jesus, or are you sinking?
3. Will you let God lead you, hold your hand or carry you as He sees fit when you face setbacks?

## **Workout**

Matthew 14:30

Luke 9:62

2 Corinthians 4:8-10

1 Peter 1:6

## **Bible Reference:**

1 Peter 1



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