

## **Under Pressure**

### **Ready:**

"When pressure or persecution comes because of the word, immediately he stumbles."

-Matthew 13:21

### **Set**

All competitors face pressure-packed situations, but often the difference between the good and the great is displayed in how one handles the pressure. University of Tennessee women's basketball star Candace Parker was voted the ESPN.com preseason player of the year partly because of her ability to thrive under pressure. "What impresses me is how well Parker handles pressure, seems unfazed by what's happening around her and wants the ball in key situations," said ESPN analyst Beth Mowins. Adds Parker's coach, the great Pat Summitt, "Candace Parker has a chance to be the best to ever play this game. And if she isn't, I'll be very disappointed." How's that for pressure?

In Matthew chapter 13 Jesus tells a story of a farmer who went out to sow some seeds and "as he was sowing, some seeds fell along the path. . .others fell on rocky ground. . .others fell among thorns. . .still others fell on good ground" (vv.4-8). As Jesus explains, "And the one sown on rocky ground -- this is one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy. Yet he has no root in himself, but is short-lived. When pressure or persecution comes because of the word, immediately he stumbles" (vv.20-21).

When we are not handling pressure very well it's because we have a "root" problem. We often stumble under pressure because deep down our roots are drowning in fear. I believe that being "rooted" in Jesus Christ can help us thrive under pressure both athletically and spiritually, because His perfect love drives out the fear we have (1 John 4:18) and gives us confidence to face the pressure head-on.

I encourage you to plant your roots deep in the solid truth of God's love for you in Christ Jesus so that you may thrive under pressure in and out of competition. You may not always make the last-second shot, but at least you won't be afraid to take it.

### **Go**

1. How well do you handle pressure during competition? As a Christian?
2. Why do we fear certain pressure situations? What does our fear communicate?
3. What pressure are you facing today? How can Jesus help you face it?

### **Workout**

Daniel 3

Luke 23:20-25

2 Corinthians 4:7-10

2 Corinthians 12:10

### **Bible Reference:**

1 John 4



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