

## **Advantage of Adversity**

### **Ready:**

“For I know the plans I have for you—this is the Lord’s declaration—plans for your welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.” — Jeremiah 29:11

### **Set**

Athletes typically respect one another. We all share a single-minded, committed lifestyle that tends to be laced with adversity, but the adversity is the price we pay to excel. An athlete’s identity and purpose all too often hinge on performance, so what happens when adversity strikes, making our performance less than ideal? If our identity is wrapped up in athletic success, then we are resting on shaky ground.

It’s important to remember that what we see as adversity, God sees as opportunity. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers (Gn 38), and was imprisoned for thirteen years for a crime he did not commit. Nevertheless, at the end of his ordeal, Joseph was able to say, “What men meant for evil, God used for good.” He was right. Joseph became second in command over all of Egypt.

When I was a young man, playing ball meant the world to me. God blessed me with natural ability, and I excelled at my sport. Then adversity struck. The first NFL team that signed me, cut me. I saw myself as a failure and thought that my life was over. Down and out, I grudgingly headed to Tampa Bay to play for the Bandits, part of the USFL. It was there, through the Bandits’ chapel program, that I met Jesus, and then God called me to do youth ministry. God can do great things with circumstances that appear discouraging to us. Whether we are deceived, beaten, jailed, surrounded by lions, or cut from a team, we are being prepped through adversities for divine opportunity.

### **Go**

1. What adversities are you currently facing? What is being revealed about your character?
2. How will you choose to respond to the current adversities you are facing?

### **Workout**

Genesis 50:20–21; 1 Samuel 17:45–47; Psalms 23

### **Overtime**

Lord, I pray for grace and humility to see my troubles as opportunity for blessing, both for myself and for others, and as a means for You to be glorified through my life Amen.

### **Bible Reference:**

Jeremiah 29



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