

## **March Madness**

### **Ready:**

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."  
-1 John 1:9

### **Set**

Basketball in March — it's really good. I was thinking yesterday about what drives us to "madness" in March. I'll tell you the secret (hardly) ... it's because everything is on the line. From high school playoffs to the NCAA Tournament, it's "do or die" for every team. Win and move on — lose and be done. The season is at stake with no second chances. This inescapable fact loads every game weight and consequence. Everyone gives it all they've got, lest it be their last chance.

Thankfully our God is a God of second chances. Because God loves us so much, He gave us a second chance (and third, fourth, fifth...) by sending His own Son. Most Christians I've ever known are obviously thankful for this basic truth. But today I was challenged as I thought of our God of second chances. Sometimes it seems like we can take advantage of God's grace and mercy. Have you ever faced a temptation and fallen into sin partly because, in your mind, you were thinking something like "Oh, God will forgive me if I mess up just this once ... after all, He loves me unconditionally"? Do you ever take second chances for granted?

We see this in sports sometimes. A team might give up and give in during a regular season game because they know there will be another chance during the next game. Well, I'll be the first to admit that I've sinned (James 4:17) partly because it's easy to get a second chance. God HAS made it easy. He did the hardest work on the cross and simply asks us to confess and believe and follow. God chooses to see us through the cross. We may fall, but He forgives us and picks us right back up.

Don't let God's unconditional love be a mental excuse to slack. Live life more like March Madness. After all, if we really get what the cross meant in terms of love, grace and second chances, we'd do nothing less than play not to give up or give in, realizing that some missed opportunities may never come again. All our decisions and days add up to only ONE earthly life — no seconds. Live it hard.

### **Go**

1. Are you taking advantage of God's second chances?
2. In what ways does this harm your life? Your walk with Him?
3. How can you learn to better appreciate love, grace and second chances?

### **Workout**

Romans 6:1-2

2 Thessalonians 3:13

1 Timothy 6:14

Hebrews 13:16

**Bible Reference:**

1 John 1



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