

## **Beyond the Bases**

### **Ready:**

When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" Then bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. -John 19:30

### **Set**

Playing softball was like breathing.

Effortless, natural, a piece of me woven so tightly inside it sunk into my soul and became a source of life. It was born in my veins and tethered in my family's history, a part of my destiny.

I was familiar with the feel of dirt beneath my cleats and glove laced and broken in to know my rhythm. My feet moved on their own accord to field ground balls, arm swung easily through the air to slap a pitch across the plate. The crack of ball hitting bat was a melody that played sweetly through my ears. Adrenaline surged when the game was on the line, when a runner perched on second and I knew it was my duty to send her home with a hit. The mountaintop high of victory and plummeting heartbreak of defeat- I knew both well. It all folded together as bookends to my story being written from the field. I found my home on the diamond and the cheer of the crowd on a cool spring day reassured me of my calling. I knew the game, knew it well and loved it more.

As a former collegiate athlete, I trained my body to perform at its peak. I woke, lived, and slept softball and all the pain, preparation and performance were tools used to glorify God in my game.

But when I legged out my last single, jogged once more to my spot on the field, and listened to the final out calling my career to an end, I began an unfamiliar journey. What once came so natural now would only be recalled by memory. I was finished with what drove me through decades and it was time to forge my way through life relying on more than athletics.

Where was my identity? What was embedded beneath my DNA deeper than the dance of a rundown and beauty of a double play?

Maybe I must remember not what, but Who, it is so valiantly within me.

The One who pitched a perfect game at the cross. The One who slid and took the strawberry of sin on His skin for me. Who stepped up to bat, dug His heels into the dirt and looked into my eyes and said of all my work, my sweat, my compulsion for perfection- "It is finished."

*When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" Then bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. (John 19:30)*

Jesus holds all the records, all the trophies, and deserves all the accolades and praise. Long after my legacy fades into the hollows of the softball field, Christ's redemption will remind me that while the game I love came so fluidly and full of joy, His competition came with a much greater burden and effort.

That is an identity that will resonate beyond the bases.

## Go

1. What comes effortlessly to you? Do you take too much pride in what comes so naturally?
2. Are you a perfectionist? How does this trait both help and hinder you?
3. How do you compare your accomplishments to Christ?
4. What will happen when your playing days are over? Will you be holding onto the past or heading into the future with confidence?

## Workout

- Hebrews 12:1-3
- John 19:29-30
- 1 Corinthians 3:16-17
- 1 Corinthians 15:57

## Overtime

Lord, thank You that I can come in confidence that You are worth more than all I accomplished during my playing days. I thank You for my ability on the field, but most importantly, for my identity in You off of it. Please help me live sharing Your life with others, and to remind them of the cost for You to let us walk in freedom so effortlessly. Amen.

## Bible Reference:

Hebrews 12



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