

## **Focus on What is Ahead**

### **Ready:**

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.” – Matthew 5:10

### **Set**

One summer, I had the honor of disciplining a college volleyball player who had just come to know the Lord. She was on fire for Christ and was so excited to start learning more about being a disciple of His.

We met up one day, and I saw she was defeated. After we talked, I found out that the girls she used to hang out with who lived a lifestyle that did not honor Christ were giving her a hard time about her new choices. She felt excluded and cast off by her teammates, mocked for carrying her Bible, and laughed at for praying to God.

I comforted her and tried to explain the hard truth that once you become a believer, life doesn't get easier; often, it gets more challenging, especially if you are living for Jesus. Jesus' last point in His Sermon on the Mount reminds us that if we follow the seven other characteristics of living for Him, we will experience persecution here on earth. The upside is that even though this life might be hard, we are promised to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven if we stand for Jesus now.

It's hard to look that far into the future and have reassurances. In the moment, that reassurance didn't take the pain away from my friend, who felt hurt by her teammates. What assurance does is give us the fuel to keep pushing through and living for Christ.

Our days here on earth are fleeting, but eternity waits for us on the other side of all this pain.

### **Go**

- How has persecution shown up in your life?
- Does the promise of Heaven help you in your day-to-day?
- What gives you the strength to stand for Christ?

### **Workout**

[Matthew 6:33](#)

[Luke 17:20-21](#)

### **Overtime**

“Abba Father, You remind us in Your Word that we will face hardships. Today, provide us comfort and strength to keep fighting for Your Kingdom. Even though we will experience pain, we know that our reward is life with You. Amen.”



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