

Patience, Peace and Perseverance

Ready:

"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed." -- 2 Corinthians 4:8

Set

I guarantee that this year's season didn't go according to plan, for any coach or athlete. Losing this 2020 season was gut wrenching for me as a head coach, and I can only imagine the utter disappointment my athletes experienced.

This past season marked my third year as a head coach for a high school girl's lacrosse program. There was so much built up anticipation and excitement for this year because it was supposed to be our season. We were supposed to be champions!

When arriving as the new head coach three years ago, I was under the assumption that the team was competing at a high level and ranked first or second in the state – as it used to be when I had the opportunity of playing on it in high school, “back in the day.” Well, that was not the case! The year prior to stepping in as the head coach, the team had ranked nearly last of all the teams in our metropolitan area, and there was a general lack of excitement around our program.

After my first season with the team, the girls moved up the rankings to the sixth seed in our division. We made some serious progress! But there was still a lot of work to be done, and the girls knew that. The following season, they came ready to work. And that work paid off.

In our second season, the team finished in second place! We went into playoffs jazzed up and thought we'd have a fairly easy journey to the championship. Unfortunately, we lost in the semi-finals in a hard-fought, double-overtime game. There were some tears shed, as the girls – and myself included – felt like we had worked so hard to earn the championship title, just to have it ripped from us so abruptly.

We all knew – and felt – that this 2020 season was ours for the taking! As we started practices, I think there was a mutual excitement and giddiness amongst the girls and the coaching staff. We couldn't wait to play our first game!

Then the unthinkable happened. Out of nowhere, with no warning, COVID struck and our season was cancelled. It felt like it all happened in the blink of an eye. One week we were all together on the field practicing and the next we were in quarantine.

I think everyone can agree that 2020 has been a uniquely difficult, yet revealing year. I have been forced to grow spiritually, relying on God in so many ways to provide for me in my time

of weakness. Not only that, but God has exposed selfish and prideful aspects of my life – especially pertaining to sports and being a coach! I have been humbly reminded that as a follower of Christ, although it's OK to be upset by difficult circumstances and experience disappointment, it is vital to continue to trust God and remain steadfast in Him.

God has peeled back so many nasty layers in my own life this season, and He is slowly starting to rebuild me more into His image every single day. It's not always easy or stress free, but I know that when I'm battling disappointment and despair or carrying worries and concerns, I can put my trust in God to experience true peace and live in freedom.

Throughout this, I have learned that regardless of bleak circumstances, heartbreak, fear or loss, God is still good, and He is still worthy of my praise. It shouldn't matter if we're experiencing the favor of God or it seems like all hope is lost, we can lift our eyes to our Heavenly Father and be reminded that Jesus is Sovereign.

As a coach or athlete, you may be dealing with the loss of hope after yet another cancelled season. My hope and prayer is that this devotion will encourage you to pursue God and find rest in Him when all hope seems lost.

Go

- Have you felt hopeless because of a lost season? If so, what specifically has been so disappointing about it?
- How have you seen patience, peace or perseverance played out in your life during this time?
- What is God teaching you through this lost season?

Workout

Psalms 28:7; Exodus 18:23; James 1:12; Romans 12:12

Overtime

“God, in Proverbs we are reminded that ‘Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.’ Extend Your loving grace over us as we become disparaged when our plans don't work out. Remind us that through it all, You are sovereign. You will work all things out for Your purpose. Help us grow, in patience, perseverance and peace. Mold us more into Your image every day.”

Bible Reference:

2 Corinthians 4:8

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