

Working for Victory

Ready:

“God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. 9 Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.” -- Ephesians 2:8-9

Set

Athletes work extremely hard to achieve success in their field of endeavor. They put in hours of training to achieve victory in their sport. When someone wants to know the outcome of an event we ask, “Who won?” We don’t care who lost. We are only concerned about the winner, and the “loser,” is an afterthought. When the final horn sounds, we want to celebrate as winners!

Jesus knew the emotion of victory and defeat. He left the glory and majesty of Heaven to become incarnate (“God in the flesh”) or Immanuel (“God with us”). Jesus came to teach us how to be like Him, to love and show compassion, to speak truth and to do justice. Even so, as His disciples, we can teach others to be like Him by our example. Ultimately though, Jesus came to save us from our sins so that we can have eternal victory. Jesus knew the negative emotion of defeat as He was led to a cross to die a terrible death. As He hung on a wooden cross, He was jeered at by the crowd that surrounded Him. “Loser,” they shouted, “You didn’t defeat Rome! You are no King!” they said. As He died hanging on a cross and carrying the weight of all our sins, He accomplished eternal victory. We know how the story ends! He was laid in a tomb and wrapped in linen, just as He was wrapped when He was born as a baby. And in a miraculous comeback, Jesus rose from the dead and left the tomb where over 500 people saw Him, alive! Some ate with Him, some spoke with Him and some touched Him, and many did all three.

Soon after, Jesus ascended into Heaven where He now sits alive at the right hand of the Father. Jesus snatched victory from the hands of defeat! You and I can have that same eternal victory. We too can be lifted into Heaven and live forever praising and worshipping our King! And the best part is that we don’t have to put in hours of practice or hard work to attain this victory. Jesus did all that for us and eternal life is offered to us freely. We only need to believe in Him as our Risen King, who died on a cross for us and believe that He is The Way, The Truth and The Life.

Will you accept this challenge? *****See below for OPTIONAL Call to Salvation prayer prompt*****

Go

- How do you redirect your focus to Jesus when you are being praised for your efforts?

- In defeat, how do you approach the victors in the contest? What does your body language say?
- How has Jesus taught you to handle those moments of glory and moments of failure?

Workout

Romans 8:37; 1 Corinthians 15:5-7

Overtime *****Use this prayer if you prefer not to do the call to salvation*****

“Jesus, thank You for Your sacrifice on the cross. Because You bore the pain of our sin, we can be seen as sinless in the eyes of our Father in Heaven. We can have eternal joy and peace praising Your name. In the strong name of Jesus, Amen.”



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*****OPTIONAL Call to Salvation Prayer Prompt: For coaches who are comfortable, ask your players to bow their heads and close their eyes. Then ask who wants to accept the challenge today and receive Jesus as their savior. After the show of hands, ask everyone on the team to repeat this prayer aloud:**

Father God, thank you for the gift of your son Jesus, who died on the cross for me. Today, I want to accept Jesus as my savior and ask for forgiveness of my sins. Make me new and restore me to a relationship with you. Thank you for the freedom and eternal life that I now have in Christ. AMEN!***