

Champion

A quick session thinking of the Olympics and sport in general !

Jokes

OK so here are two sporting jokes I found and heard. Many would disagree they are jokes but I leave you with them anyway. If you can think of better ones, please do as these are pretty bad...

Which Bible verse mentions tennis, badminton and volleyball...?

Psalm 66.11 – (from the Old King James version) – "Thou broughtest us into the net..."

Sports mentioned in the Bible...

Tennis – Moses served in Pharaoh's court (Exodus 2)

Basketball – Peter denied Jesus three times while in the court (Mark 14.66)

Usain Bolt Video - 100m World Record

Direct Link – <https://youtu.be/By1JQFxfLMM>

Testimonies

In the Salvation Army magazine called 'The War Cry' (No: 7281, 6 August 2016), there were a couple of testimonies from Christian athletes taking part at the 2016 Olympics.

American athlete English Gardner is a 100m runner. Having missed out on qualifying for the 2012 Olympics she was determined to make the 2016 Olympics. She wants to be a champion and even to be the greatest of all time. On her Twitter feed she wrote:

"God's delay is never a denial. He desires your blessing not only to be special for you, but to be able to touch lives in the process."

Another athlete who was part of the 2016 Olympics is British gymnast, Claudia Fragapane who won four medals at the Commonwealth Games in 2014.

"It's an absolute honour" she said, revealing how much time and effort she has put in to preparing for the Olympics. She talked to the War Cry magazine about her church and her faith saying what a lively atmosphere her church has in worship and lots of happy people.

"My faith is important to me" she said, revealing that she prays about everything. Her favourite Bible verse is from Philippians 4.13 which says, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."

"I feel as though God is working inside me, keeping me humble. I know that I will always need him to help me. If I didn't believe in God, it would be like losing half of myself, because my faith has been a part of my life forever."

The 2016 Olympics

The synchronised 10m diving competition saw two USA athletes win silver medals. After they had won, they were quick to give credit to God for what had happened. According to a report in the Christian Examiner, David Boudia and Steele Johnson both spoke about God's influence in their lives.

Boudia said, "... we both know that our identity is in Christ, and we're thankful for this opportunity to be able to dive in front of Brazil and in front of the United States. It's been an absolutely thrilling moment for us."

Johnson added, "The way David just described it was flawless – the fact that I was going into this event knowing that my identity is rooted in Christ and not what the result of this competition is just gave me peace ... and it let me enjoy the contest..." Many other athletes from the USA also credit God for their success.

Champion - Bryan and Katie Torwalt

Direct Link – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6dZrUNtNbes>

The Bible and The Champion

Isaiah 42.10–13 – Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you islands, and all who live in them. Let the wilderness and its towns raise their voices; let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice. Let the people of Sela sing for joy; let them shout from the mountaintops. Let them give glory to the Lord and proclaim his praise in the islands. The Lord will march out like a champion, like a warrior he will stir up his zeal; with a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies.

The song from the Torwalts talks about how Jesus is our 'champion'. Everyone who takes part in the Olympics wants to win – that's the reason they are there. But when you're a Christian, it's important to know that God wants you to be a 'winner' as well.

But this isn't about making a name for yourself and winning at any cost just to win. This is about God working in and through you to help you be all that he has made you to be. God has a great plan for your life – to give you a future, to give you hope and to help you be more than a 'conqueror' (Romans 8.37). This means that through Jesus you can overcome bad things, stay positive, live life, be full of hope and God's kind of happiness (called joy) and be full of God. God doesn't have a plan for you to barely get by and just about survive. He wants to enable you to be all you can so that you can be all you can for him and for others.

How do we do this? Through the Holy Spirit who lives in us and helps us – and because of what Jesus has already done. It may sound cheesy but the most impressive thing done in the world was what Jesus did when he died for our sin and made it possible for there to be a way back between man and God. In the book of Colossians in the Bible it tells us that Jesus overcame the power of death and defeated the enemy and all the evil in the world.

So we can be 'more than conquerors' because Jesus lives in us through the Holy Spirit and he has already won the battle against evil. So we fight (not physically but spiritually!) from a place of victory that Jesus has already won when he died and rose again. It doesn't mean that everything is easy and that there isn't an enemy! We still have a spiritual battle to fight and win each day but Jesus has won the ultimate victory. The book of Revelation tells us that one day Jesus will return, make everything right, make everything new and create a whole new heaven and earth.

Not only is Jesus the victor, one day he will march out like a Champion for the absolute ultimate and final victory and we will see evil gone forever and see God's goodness fill everything, everywhere!

Until then, God gives us his power to keep going, to overcome tough things, to see good things happen in us, for us and through us to others.

We're here to enforce God's victory against evil. And he's chosen you.

So in many ways you are already a winner - through and because of Jesus.

Do you know the Champion?

But this isn't true if you don't know Jesus personally. If you want God in your life then you have to ask him. The best way to do this is to say words in your heart or out loud, telling God you are speaking to him. Say sorry for the wrong you've done and ask God to forgive you; ask Jesus to come into your heart; and ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit in God's life, love and power. Then tell someone what you've prayed and get stuck into a youth group, a church and a Bible! And keep communicating with God every day asking for his help.