

LIFE LESSONS FROM THE OLYMPICS

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 2 August 8, 2021

“The Thrill of Victory, The Agony of Defeat”

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for never leaving us or forsaking us. But you know that when we go through trials in our lives we tend to say “where are you God?” So, Lord, when we start to lose faith, surround us with a community of people who can give us a better perspective on our circumstances. And at the same time, let us feel your presence like we have never felt it before. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NIV)

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

James 1:2-5 (NIV)

²Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

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INTRODUCTION

Most of the media attention during the Olympics focuses on the greatest athletes who are winning medals. But there are many more athletes who do not win medals. And many of the athletes that win medals had a difficult road that led to victory. What happens when those athlete’s dreams don’t come true? What lessons can we learn from them when our dreams don’t come true?

Often times, what shapes our response to adversity in our lives, is the support that we have around us during these experiences. Is there a community of people that help us frame these circumstances in a way for us to see that God is not doing something to us, but is doing something in us and through us? What can you do this week for individuals you know who are facing a faith-stretching trial?

QUESTIONS

1. What was your favorite moment in this year’s Olympics?
2. Has your faith or confidence in God ever been tested? Did you pass? Did you emerge with your faith intact? If so, why? If not, why?
3. Read James 1:2 on page 1. What stands out to you?
4. In addition to your faith being exercised and strengthened, what other positive outcome might result from your current trial(s)?
5. Do you have a community of people around you that can help you through trials and adversity?
6. In *The Problem of Pain*, C.S. Lewis writes: “God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.” In your opinion, why is it so easy to factor God out of our lives when things are good, and so difficult to factor him out when things aren’t? Why does God almost always become part of the conversation when bad things happen?

FINAL APPLICATION

This week pray: *Heavenly Father, use this (your trials) until you choose to remove this.*