



## **Authentic Faith**

**Featuring Kelsey Campbell**  
*2012 U.S. Olympian*

There's nowhere to hide on the wrestling mat. Once you step inside the circle and the referee starts the match, everything is instantly out in the open—your strengths, your weaknesses, and your preparation, or the lack thereof. It's just you, the opponent, the referee, the judges, and the fans cheering from a distance.

Perhaps you were hiding an injury. Maybe you weren't as focused in practice that week. Some personal problems might have taken you off your game. And now, everything you've been dealing with in private is suddenly everybody's business. That's when things start to get real.

Kelsey Campbell had a similar crisis during her high school years, but her issues weren't directly related to her athletic pursuits. She was quite comfortable and composed as a competitor. How else could you explain her rapid rise in the national women's wrestling scene in such a short period of time or the fact that she became the first woman to earn a spot on the Arizona State men's wrestling team? On the mat, Campbell has always been the real deal.

Instead, it was her spiritual life where she was struggling with authenticity. She wasn't being real with God.

"I grew up in church, but I was a selfishly ambitious person," Campbell says. "Being a part of a religious group like FCA back in high school was good for business. I was saying the right things, but that didn't mean I was right with God. I had faked myself out and created this image that wasn't an accurate portrayal of who I was on the inside."

Campbell came to a point where she had to be honest with herself and admit that she had been going through the motions. It was in a moment of profound brokenness that she made Jesus Christ the Lord of her life.

"I still have dreams," she says, "But now, my whole motivation is to be faithful to God and to seek and save the lost."

Like Campbell, there comes a time when we have to get real with God. But first, we need to be honest with ourselves and take into account a deep truth that Jesus revealed to the woman at the well in John 4.

**"For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24/NLT)**

That passage should lead each of us to a challenging question: Are we worshipping God in spirit (with our lips) yet not worshipping Him in truth (with our lives)? In other words, are we saying all the right things publicly about our faith, but privately living in a way that doesn't honor God and doesn't follow Christ's example?

If so, then just like the athlete who isn't prepared for a match, we will eventually be exposed for who we really are, and be forced to face the difficult consequences of sin. On the other hand, when we get real with God, He is faithful to forgive us, (I John 1: 9 - 10), restore us back to a right relationship with Him, and allow us to experience the benefits of authentic faith.

**“But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.”  
(First Corinthians 15:57/NLT)**

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Can you think of a time when you weren't prepared for competition? If so, what caused you to be unprepared and how did that impact your performance?
2. Did you try to hide those issues from your coaches, teammates, family members, or friends? Explain.
3. Would you describe yourself as someone who is open about their life or someone who is closed off and doesn't like talking to others about personal problems? Has that approach helped or hindered your ability to get through difficult times?
4. On a scale of 1 to 10 (one being not honest at all; 10 being completely honest), how would you rank your honesty with yourself as it pertains to your spiritual life? Do you find it easy or difficult to be honest with God about the things going on in your heart? Explain.
5. Do you struggle worshipping God in truth? If so, in what ways do you think that could potentially cause problems? On the other hand, how do you think having authentic faith might have a positive impact on your life?
6. What are some things you need to do today that will help get real with yourself and get real with God?

### **Closing Prayer**