



Total Surrender

Featuring Brandon Slay

Olympic gold medalist

Tapping out. It's the absolute last thing any wrestler ever wants to think about doing. Giving up during a match is the kind of nightmare scenario that will make the most competitive among us wake up in a cold sweat at 2 o'clock in the morning.

Tapping out is admitting defeat. Tapping out is giving up because the other opponent has outmatched you or overpowered you. Even worse, tapping out sometimes means you've been injured and can't physically continue.

It might surprise some people, but U.S. Olympic gold medalist Brandon Slay faced a similar situation that could have ended his career before it had barely begun. At the age of six, Slay followed his athletic father's footsteps and decided to give wrestling a try. That first year, he finished with a dismal 0-20 record. Slay very easily could have tapped out and quit before achieving that greatness that was before him.

But while training for the Olympics, Slay realized that, in at least one circumstance, tapping out might not be such a bad thing.

"My grandmother was an amazing Christian influence in my life, but when I went to wrestle at Penn, I lived a rebellious lifestyle and didn't take a stand for God," Slay says. "When I moved to Colorado Springs, my life really slowed down. I did some soul searching and learned about other religions. If I was going to do down that path of seeking God, I wanted to know what other religions believed."

After several months of exploring other faiths, Slay came to an understanding of how Christianity was different. It was the only religion that had a Savior.

"All I had been trying to do was save myself," he says. "But I needed someone to die for my sin and my rebellion. I needed someone to pay for that wage of sin. When I realized that, I was finally able to completely surrender my heart to Jesus."

It was Jesus Himself who taught this truth during His ministry on the earth.

"If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it." (Matthew 10:39/NLT)

Slay is no different than anyone else. We too are looking for salvation and purpose and hope. But so often, we look inward for those answers or we seek those things out through relationships, physical and emotional pleasure, or material gain. Eventually, the things that we hold onto will vanish and only what matters to God will remain.

Spiritually speaking, tapping out is the best decision you can ever make. It's admitting to God that you can't do it alone. It's giving up your dreams in exchange for even greater dreams that He has for you. It's telling Him that you're outmatched and confessing that you can't live without Him. Tapping out means letting go of the temporary things of this world and allowing His eternal Spirit to take residence in your heart and guide you the most fulfilling life possible.

Tapping out. Fully surrendering to God. It's the absolute *best* thing a follower of Christ should ever think about doing.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever had to tap out during a match? If so, how difficult was that decision and how long did it take you get over the disappointment?
2. Go back and read Matthew 10:39. What are some examples of a situation where someone might lose their life (or struggle in their relationship with Christ) because they clung too tightly something?
3. In your own words, how would you define the concept of finding your life because you gave it up for Jesus?
4. Do you feel like you've fully surrendered your heart to Christ? If not, what do you think is keeping you from doing so?
5. What are some things that you need to give up so that you can be a more effective follower of Christ?

Closing Prayer