



## Trials and Tests

Featuring Steve Goudy

*Three-Time Ohio State Championship High School Coach*

If winning was easy, everyone would be a champion. But that's clearly not the way it works. Winning *isn't* easy and even those who become champions face adversity along the way.

Take, for example, Steve Goudy and his experience as the head coach at Troy Christian High School in Troy, Ohio. After wrestling in college at Wright State and spending time in the military, Goudy moved back home to pursue a coaching career. He spent 12 years at Milton Union High School before accepting an offer to coach at Troy. His initial inclination was to turn the job down. Goudy wanted to win a state championship and that didn't seem likely at a small private school with no prior success on the mat.

Troy Christian's athletic administration wanted to win a state championship too. They told Goudy that their vision was to "build a platform to share the gospel of Jesus of Christ."

Goudy was sold.

After three years, the program finished as state runner-ups. The following year, Troy Christian won its first of three consecutive championships under Goudy's leadership. But it wasn't easy.

"Everything was coming against us," he recalls. "We felt like the enemy was trying to keep us from getting that platform. During our second title season, we had three starters get injured the week before state. Some of the moms covered us in prayer and we believed that would perform a miracle. And that's what happened. Those kids were healthy going into state."

That was just one of many difficult circumstances the team faced. To help his wrestlers remember why they were competing, he had them wear inspirational t-shirts. In Goudy's first season, the shirts said, "It's Not About Us." The next year, the shirts continued that thought with this message: "It's About Him."

Through it all, Goudy learned to truly appreciate these apostolic words that were written over 2,000 years ago:

**"Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing." (James 1:2-4/NLT)**

"We were never promised that we wouldn't go through trials," Goudy explains. "Jesus was

persecuted. Who do we think we are? We're going to go through some things. But not matter what the world throws at us or what the enemy throws at this, God will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). And no matter how lonely we might feel at times, we're never alone when go through those valleys."

In the athletic realm, trials and tests usually involve injuries or difficult losses, but in other areas of life, adversity can present a wide array of physical and emotional difficulties—a family issue, a health concern, the death of a loved one, etc.—can knock us around and sometimes even bring us to our knees.

But later on in that passage, James gives us good news that, if we keep God's perspective on things, the inevitable adversities of life will bring us strength and encouragement.

**"God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him." (James 1:12/NLT)**

The adversity Troy Christian's wrestling faced on its journey to success, taught Coach Goudy's team the most valuable lesson of all: That ultimately, those who "patiently endure testing and temptation" will receive "the crown of life" in Heaven, which the Lord Himself has promised to all who love Christ. In the meantime, we can be assured that any challenge we face—big or small—is nothing we can't handle when we place our trust in God and rest in Him.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What is the most difficult challenge you have faced in your athletic career? What did you learn from the experience?
2. What is the most difficult challenge you have faced in your personal life? How did it compare to any adversity you've faced as an athlete?
3. Have you dealt with any adversity specifically because of your Christian faith? If so, explain. If not, do you ever anticipate a time when that might be the case?
4. Go back and read James 1:2-4. What are some ways you might be able to find joy while enduring a difficult time in your life?
5. Go back and read James 1:12. How might truly believing and embracing the principle of endurance and blessings help you deal with the trials and tests that might come your way?

### **Closing Prayer**