



For the Good

Featuring B.J. Futrell

NCAA All-American; University Worlds Silver Medalist

As athletes and coaches, it's inevitable that disappointments are going to come our way. No one can win every match. No one can win every championship. And sometimes, even worse things than losing can happen such as getting injured, not making the team, or getting fired. In those moments, it's never easy to understand why we are going through a tough time. It's even more difficult to imagine that anything positive might come out of a negative situation.

This is equally true in our everyday life away from the mat. Disappointments, hurts, rejections, and personal losses can often leave us trying to make sense of it all.

For B.J. Futrell, adversity came in some incredibly difficult circumstances that negatively impacted his burgeoning wrestling career. While wrestling at the University of Illinois, he tore the labrum in his shoulder. As Futrell rehabbed that injury, God started to do a work in his life.

“Up until that time, wrestling had become the most important thing in my life,” he says. “It was my identity. When I couldn't wrestle, that's when I realized how desperately I needed a relationship with Him. He showed me that I was created to worship Him and to live for His glory.”

Futrell certainly didn't enjoy being injured. It was frustrating for him to stand idly by as his teammates practiced and competed that season. But God took a bad situation and made something good out of it. Futrell's life-changing circumstance was yet another confirmation of the Apostle Paul's teaching to the Christians in Rome:

“And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.” (Romans 8:28/NLT)

Futrell went on to earn All-American honors, but then faced yet another challenging health problem that prematurely ended his senior season. A heart irregularity required surgery and for a time, his career was in question. But this time, Futrell had a much different attitude.

“I had peace in my heart,” he says. “Even though it seemed like a disaster, I had knew that God had a plan for me. I couldn't understand it in the moment, but eventually became clear that He was working for my good in both situations.”

A year later, Futrell won a silver medal at the 2014 University Worlds and was emboldened to continue pursuing his Olympic dream. He refused to allow a setback to knock him off the path that God had prepared for him.

Bad things are going to come our way. That's just a fact of life in this broken world we call home. But we don't have to let those circumstances stop us from fulfilling our purpose. In fact, if we get out of the way and let God do His work, those bad things can be used to get us to where we need to be. More importantly, they can bring even more glory to Him.

Discussion Questions

1. What is one of the worst things that has happened to you as an athlete or coach? How did you deal with that circumstance?
2. When something bad happens to you, how does it usually impact your outlook on life and your enthusiasm for your personal pursuits?
3. Go back and read Romans 8:28. Have you ever experienced this in your athletic career? Explain. What about in your personal life away from wrestling?
4. Are you currently going through a bad situation right now or do you know someone else who is? Explain.
5. How might believing and embracing the truth found in Romans 8:28 help you or someone else get through those difficult times?

Closing Prayer