



Endless Supply

Featuring Tervel Dlagnev

Two-Time NCAA Champion; U.S. Olympian; Pan American Games Gold Medalist

As athletes, there are a lot of things we need.

We need practice. We need training. We need nutrition. We need coaching. We need time. We need energy. We need focus. We need strength. We need endurance. We need patience. We need perseverance. We need dedication. We need confidence.

We need a lot of things, and there never seems to be enough.

Sometimes, the thing we need the most, however, is the one thing we give the least attention: a relationship with God.

Tervel Dlagnev was born in Bulgaria. His family immigrated in 1990 as the Soviet Union was falling apart. They wanted to escape the hard times that were ahead. Because of his family's commitment, Dlagnev was raised in the United States and had all of his physical needs met. But Dlagnev's father was an atheist who had been raised in a culture where the government regulated religion. Therefore, Dlagnev was never exposed to the Christian faith in a significant way.

One of Dlagnev's high school teammates first exposed him to the gospel at a national tournament. It was the first time he had been told that he had a deep, spiritual need. Then in college, a group of believers surrounded him and watered the seed that had been planted.

"They took me to a lot of Bible studies and that's when I started to understand the character of God," Dlagnev recalls. "The Bible also revealed *my* character and why I needed a Savior. After my freshman year, I gave my life to Christ."

Dlagnev realized that he didn't just have physical and emotional needs as an athlete. He now understood that he had also spiritual needs and only a heavenly Father could fulfill them. The apostle Paul talked about our human needs and reassured us that we have a faithful provider.

"And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from His glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19/NLT)

The key word in that passage is "needs," which is very different from our "wants." Sometimes what we want isn't what we need. And sometimes what we need isn't what we want. But thankfully, God knows the difference and makes provisions based on what is absolutely best for us in every situation we might face. "For me, God has put that to the test," Dlagnev adds. "When I fell just short of making the Olympics in 2012, I had to rely on the fact that He is sovereign.

What happened was absolutely in His plan and it was for my good. God will give you what you need. He's always there for anything.

Sometimes I try to control things and that's when I stress out. I'm most content when I'm taking time to pray and I'm seeking His face for answers."

We all have needs, whether our pride will allow us to admit it or not. God has an endless supply of strength, grace, love, forgiveness, patience, and peace. The quicker we own up to our inadequacies and call out to Him for help, the quicker we allow Him to be the perfect provider that He wants to be in our lives.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some things you need as an athlete? How does the absence of those things negatively impact your competitive success?
2. What are some of your everyday physical and emotional needs? Who meets those needs for you? Have you ever experienced a time when those needs were left unfulfilled? Explain.
3. How would you define the concept of spiritual needs? At what point in your life did you realize you had spiritual needs? Where have you gone to have those needs met?
4. Go back and read Philippians 4:9. Is the concept of God as your provider something you've easily embraced or something you've struggled to believe? Explain.
5. What are some needs that you haven't always trusted God to supply? What do you need to do today that will allow God to be the number one provider in your life?

Closing Prayer