



REFLECTIONS

October 30, 2016

**But thanks be to God, who gives us the
victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

1 Corinthians 15:57

Turning Points

Most of us will never reach such a high point in our lives. The pinnacle may live in our dreams, but those dreams are seldom achieved. But an athlete's dream became real when he stood on the podium, his country's national anthem playing in the arena and his country's flag raised above his head.

Meanwhile, across the world another young man's reality fell well short of his dreams. Rivers of painful disappointments battered his self-image into despair. He found solace in others with similar experiences; still, he found no lasting comfort from their camaraderie. Finally, in efforts to escape the pain of disappointment and failure, he yielded to the lure, and drugs found their way into his life.

Life is marked by time and events that alter the course we dream to walk during the journey through this world. Graduation, marriage, birth of a child, purchase of a home, and the start of a career are such life altering moments. Each of these mark a significant alteration in our lives; but those course-altering events serve more to clarify life's purpose than to transform it. But the contrasting stories of two young people with differing life experiences were more than course-altering events for each of them. They were turning points in their lives.

The Olympian soon found life at the top is fleeting. Championships must be defended, and once a new champion is crowned, past champions often find life spiraling downward with little sense of purpose. Disappointment isn't lasting either unless hope is lost. Turning points call for new platforms.

An Olympic podium may be replaced with a stage for encouraging others. And just like an athlete's success, conquering addictions can provide a platform to offer encouragement and hope to those suffering through life's painful disappointments.

At the pinnacle of his life, Jesus stood on a mountain top with Moses and Elijah. He heard his Father say of him, "*This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.*" (Luke 9:35) That day on the mountaintop wasn't for celebration of a great achievement. Rather it marked a turning point that offered Jesus reassuring words for the task ahead.

Later, in Gethsemane, Jesus prayed, "*Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me.*" (Luke 22:42) Though drops of blood dripped from his forehead, it was not a time for hopelessness or despair. Through prayer, he found courage and hope for the sacrifice he was called to make.

Turning points. In God's plan, they may come as gold medals or disappointments. But in hope, *thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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