

# New book reveals why Jesus means everything to US Super Bowl winners



The Philadelphia Eagles praying after winning a game in November 2017.  
(PHOTO: [Faith Wire](#))

*Originally published in [CBN News](#)*

Back in February, millions of football fans watched the Philadelphia Eagles win the Super Bowl for the first time in history, defeating the legendary New England Patriots.

But what also took centre stage was the Eagles players' bold faith and eagerness to give God the glory for their win.

Now, Christian author Joshua Cooley is taking fans deep inside the faith lives of quarterback Nick Foles and five other Eagles players in his new best-selling book titled *The Biggest Win*.

"Rarely, if ever, have I spoken to a group of professional athletes so committed to pursuing biblical truth together," Cooley said. "But I was immediately struck by their

unquenchable hunger for scripture and their commitment to genuine Christian discipleship, accountability, and obedience to Great Commission living.”

*First time being Baptized! Corporate Worship is a beautiful thing!! Cleansed & Reborn in JESUS name!! ☺☺☺ [#WholeHeartedly](https://pic.twitter.com/Qt0j2FyRMu)*  
[pic.twitter.com/Qt0j2FyRMu](https://pic.twitter.com/Qt0j2FyRMu)

– Marcus D. Johnson ☺ (@Mojomdj) [October 12, 2017](#)

Cooley told CBN News their faith “affects everything they do” in their personal lives and professional lives.

Fans got a peak early last year when a picture of the players praying while wide receiver Marcus Johnson was baptised in a North Carolina swimming pool before a game went viral.

Another video of linebackers Jordan Hicks, Mychal Kendricks, Kamu Grugier-Hill, and wide receivers Paul Turner and David Watford being baptised in the Philadelphia Eagles’ recovery pool late last year also got thousands of views.

The courageous faith of a few players has lead multiple people to Christ, Cooley shared.

“They told a story a couple of seasons ago of a rookie player who came to know the Lord in the hotel room that they were staying in one night just because of the witness of the players,” he said. “They play for a higher purpose than themselves and that just manifests itself every day.”

One way they minister to each other is by taking time to meet off the field.

“They make personal time with each other, personal time both as a team and as individuals,” Cooley explained. “That’s something I want readers to take away from this book, is that we can gather together in Christian community. We can use

sports to do that ... Sports creates community that you sometimes don't get anywhere else."

Cooley believes the Philadelphia Eagles can teach other NFL players something important about giving glory where glory is due. Foles and his teammates say it in their own words in the forward of *The Biggest Win*.

"We love football. We love what we do. But football is just a game. And one day we will retire from football. But becoming a follower of Jesus Christ means our identity doesn't have to be in our latest performance on the field – our identity is in Christ. Following Jesus means that our purpose is larger than being the best athlete. We have a whole new life of meaning, purpose, and service that will last longer than our football careers and have more impact in the world than anything we could accomplish on the field," they write.

It's a message Cooley hopes all his readers take away from the book.

"It was so neat to see these six guys give glory to where it was really due which is to our Creator – the One who gave these guys their gifts. If we don't get that right then we have completely missed the boat," he told CBN News. "No matter what sport you play, no matter what level you play at, it's all about giving glory to the One who created you."

Watch CBN News' interview with Joshua Cooley below:

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## Zanele Hlatshawayo runs to

# fight depression and save lives



Zanele Hlatshwayo, ultra runner and founder of the #Rise18 campaign to raise funds to support the fight against depression and suicide.

While she runs, she feels free, she feels safe – she is loved, says Zanele Hlatshwayo.

“I literally feel God take my hand when I’m running and He is with me until I cross the finish line,” says the ultra-marathon runner and campaigner for people who suffer from mental illness – especially depression.

She took on the challenge to run 18 races between January and July this year, in a campaign called #Rise18 in partnership with the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG).

Hlatshwayo has two more big races coming up – the Comrades Marathon on June 10, which is 90 km and the Washie 100 race of 161 km, which is held in the Eastern Cape over July 27-28.

“As daunting as it is, I know God is with me. My motto this year has been *For God has not given us the spirit of fear but*

*of power, love and a sound mind."*

For Hlatshawayo the fight against depression hits home. She was deeply depressed after the loss of her father, a man who she calls her hero, who committed suicide

### **Finding a cause**

Depression is a silent killer – in South Africa 23 people commit suicide daily – mostly men with teen suicide on the rise. It is statistics such as these that inspire Hlatshawayo to take the next step and make a difference.

"There are a lot of misconceptions about depression and suicide. The aim is to drive some form of change and for people to realise that suffering from mental illness is not a sign of weakness. We need to love and support those people who may suffer from it. It may be just the only thing that could save their lives, literally."

### **Her saving grace**

For Hlatshawayo the goal of the project is not only to raise money for the cause – she wants to share her struggle with others to create awareness on how to overcome it.

After her father's suicide Hlatshawayo cried almost daily but eventually she got tired of crying. It was then that she knew she needed to do something to overcome this.

"So one day I decided to go for a run. At first I was running away from all the pain, anguish and the bitterness of it all but soon, I started to realise running made the whole ordeal bearable and most importantly made me feel stronger," she says.

"Running was and is my sacred space where I get to make decisions about my life. There are no interruptions just me and my thoughts."

### **The struggle is real**

After her father's death Hlatshwayo struggled with her anger towards God.

"I couldn't pray and wondered where God was on that fateful day when my father took his life, or even worse, was He there but did nothing?"

During these difficult times her grandmother heard her cry in the evenings, and she comforted her by praying for her, when she couldn't."

Hlatshwayo finally started praying for herself again.

"I asked God to help me forgive myself and to forgive my father, and grant me the wisdom to accept what had happened."

Then God spoke to her. "God wanted me to share my story. He told me it would not be easy but that because of this, lives would be saved. I believe by being obedient to God I have stepped into my purpose.

"Through my pain I have found that my purpose is to save as many lives as possible."

Through this journey Hlatshwayo came to realise that God is love.

"Even in the midst of darkness God is love and He understands our tears, even when no one else is there. This year I have seen the hand of the Lord work miracles through #Rise18. At the beginning I was scared. How could God trust me while I still suffered and how do I muster the courage?

"But God carried me through it all despite everything. Even after I have suffered injuries because of the running, I know God will see me through. It is a journey I have to complete!"

To support #Rise18 go to [www.backabuddy.co.za/rise18](http://www.backabuddy.co.za/rise18) or join Hlatshwayo's cause by following her on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram

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# PE pastor running Comrades for smiles



Pastor Matthew Cullis on the road.

As 20 000 runners gear up for the 2018 Comrades Marathon on June 10, Port Elizabeth pastor Matthew Cullis aims to make the most of his third Comrades attempt by raising money for a cause close to his home and heart.

Before Matthew's son, Joel, was born with a cleft palate, he never imagined that he would be raising funds for reconstructive surgeries on babies and children affected by cleft lips and palates across South Africa, let alone that he'd be running marathons.

After a sports injury he had stopped all forms of exercise and had gained a considerable amount of weight.

"I broke my collarbone playing rugby. During my recovery period I began gaining weight, feeling impatient, and found myself depressed and stressed about finances. A close friend confronted me about this, and that's when I decided to run my first 5km race."

Motivated by the medal he received he ran his next few races.

"I showed up to my first 42.2km race in rugby shorts and three year old tekkies. I was wearing glasses as well. I went from completing a 5km run to running a full marathon that December. At the 27km mark, my legs were cramping and I was convinced I couldn't go any further, but I did.

"When I reached the finish line, I felt like I had nearly died."

Three years later Matthew attempted his first Comrades Marathon.



Matthew Cullis running his first



marathon in 2013 .

This year will mark his third attempt at finishing the world-famous race, and though he wasn't able to finish the first two, he's not giving up on reaching the finish line.

"I'm not giving up on finishing. Comrades is a massive challenge, but my son has faced an even greater challenge. Families who are not on medical aid and have children who are born with cleft lips and palates face such a great challenge.

"There is no comparison between that and my third attempt at Comrades. I'm doing this for my son, and to prove that you can keep going, even when the challenge seems too big. Have a go!"

Matthew admits that running races – and losing weight as a result thereof – has had a great impact on his preaching, marriage and overall wellbeing.

"I was unhappy with myself. When the weight started coming off I felt more confident, and this had an impact on my preaching. Around people, with my wife and even in my relationship with God, the way I felt about myself and my weight-gain was getting in the way. It was bugging me. When the weight came off, my life improved."

As he prepares for the 2018 Comrades Marathon Pastor Matthew Cullis, who is running in support of The Smile Foundation, regularly updates his Facebook followers on his Comrades journey and the total funds raised for the reconstructive surgeries.

If you would like to support him, visit his profile on <https://www.backabuddy.co.za/champion/project/iron-man-for-smile>

Find out more about The Smile Foundation and how you can support this initiative at <http://www.smilefoundationsa.org>

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# 'Running has changed my life forever,' says talented LIV village teen



Brian, with his Two Oceans trail run medal.

The LIV-story [started with a dream given to Tich Smith](#) in 1997, to build a village for orphan and vulnerable children where they will have a roof over their heads, food to eat, a mother who loves them and where they will come to know God as their Father in heaven.

21 years later, LIV stands firmly and is going from strength to strength – all to the glory of God. Here, at the village in Cottonlands, KwaZulu-Natal, lives are being rescued and restored, leaders are being raised and stars are being released in many shapes and forms.

Over the past seven years many experts in their field, have joined the LIV family to share their knowledge and invest in

the lives of the LIV children. One such person is Lindi Meyer – a triathlete with a passion to uplift children through running.

### **LIV2Run**

Lindi made the SA Triathlon Team for age groupers (this is the non-elite division) in 2011 and 2012, and was the female SA champ in 2017 for the age group 27-39. She joined LIV in 2014 and started a running club (LIV2Run) for all the kids and moms on the village.

“Running is a safe and healthy vehicle to create a space for people to experience God. It allows us to reach much more people and opens doors to redeem rural spaces for the Kingdom of Christ,” Lindi says.

At the moment LIV2Run operates just on the village but in the future the aim is to open the club up to surrounding communities.

Through LIV2Run, the children are exposed to Parkrun, cross country, trail running, road running and track athletics. Attention is also given to strength and conditioning as well as mental preparation and training for specific races or goals.



LIV Village, an inspiring village for orphans and vulnerable children, in

## Cottonlands, Verulam, KwaZulu-Natal.

Many success stories have already been written and even though they may not seem extreme to the outside world, at LIV we celebrate each and every small victory towards healing and restoration. Like the 7yr old boy who could barely run 100m without collapsing in exhaustion due to malnutrition and neglect, who finished his very first 5km fun run recently. These stories are worth celebrating.

### **Strong runner**

Lindi keeps a very close eye on the children as they train to make sure she doesn't miss out on any hidden talents. A while ago she spotted major potential in Brian, 17, an older boy who started running in 2015. Lindi saw that he is a strong runner who is able to start fast, maintain his speed and finish fast.

With the permission of LIV leadership, she started a one-on-one training programme with him, with the goal of racing at the Two Oceans 24km Trail in Cape Town. This programme commenced in January 2018 with the race taking place on March 30 2018.

Training took place on the village with runs down to the Hazelmere dam, Sugar Rush Park, Dolphins time trial in Salt Rock and racing at the various KZN Trail Races around KZN over the weekends.

KZN trail running are one of the many partners who come alongside LIV2Run and offer our development athletes free entries into all their events. City Logistics sponsored the LIV2Run club clothes and this has brought a tangible sense of belonging to the team.

Brian has natural talent. He is a born runner with a passion that is so visible whenever he is doing what he loves most. Lindi managed to get sponsors who donated the compulsory kit for the race, clothing and plane tickets to Cape Town.

## **Amazing job**

Brian did an amazing job amidst very misty and wet conditions and finished 1<sup>st</sup> in his age group and 43rd overall, in an amazing 2hrs 52mins 11sec.

“Running has changed my life forever,” says a very reserved Brian with a big smile on his face. He is a gentle-hearted, humble young man who never ceases to thank the people who make it possible for him to chase after his dream; running for his country, competing in the Olympics and to, one day, be the founder of an elite sport brand.

“I run because I am inspired. I see people who are cripple or sick and still they run races, so why shouldn't I? Running has taught me discipline and perseverance which are traits that are very useful in everyday life.”

Brian's short-term goal is to become the best he can be. He uses faster runners to become faster by chasing them to increase his own speed. At the Deloitte Challenge in March 2018, he finished the 21km in 1hr 17mins 21sec and came first in his age group and 20<sup>th</sup> overall (out of 2 636 runners) and was the first junior at the Checkout half marathon at Kings Park very recently.

“I have watched Brian grow from a teenager into a gentleman who knows who he is and Whose he is. Through intentional training and allowing him to explore his talent and see what he is capable of, LIV2Run has given him hope for a future.

“God is in the midst of everything we do at LIV and equipping and releasing these children into the world as confident individuals, is close to our Father's heart,” says Lindi when she speaks about Brian.

It is always so amazing to see what intentional loving and a stable environment can do for children who have been through a lot. LIV creates such an environment and exists to launch new-

generation Christian leaders into society.

### **More to come**

Brian is only one of the talented runners that are being mentored by Lindi at the moment. LIV2Run teaches the LIV-children discipline but there are some very exciting partnerships in the pipeline, which will open many doors for LIV2Run in the world of trail running.

Watch this space! The journey for Brian (and a few other runners) has just started. Embark with us on it and be part of changing lives and releasing stars!

To find out more, please contact Lindi at [run@liv-village.com](mailto:run@liv-village.com).

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## **Golf champion aims to shine for Jesus**



Webb Simpson celebrates winning The Players Championship at TPC Sawgrass on May 13. (PHOTO: USA Today)

*By Grant Winter*

The next biggest golf tournament in the world after the four Majors is The Players Championship in the United States and Webb Simpson was quick to get his priorities right after winning it on Mother's day Sunday.

First up, I'm a child of God and He has given me a gift to play golf so it's all thanks to him or this, said the American who picked up a cheque for \$1.97-million which equates to about a hefty R24-million.

There's big money and celebrity status for those who succeed in professional golf but Simpson, who has always spoken openly about his Christian faith, remains humble and grounded.

The 32-year-old won the tournament with an 18-under-par total of 270, with South African Charl Schwartzel sharing second place on 274. But for Simpson, who did win a Major in 2012 when he captured the US Open, this was first victory in almost five years.

So I've had my struggles and at one stage I felt like my game was at the bottom of the barrel and there have been many tears shed over dinner with my wife, Taylor Dowd. But she has stood by me all along, and so have a lot of others who have never stopped praying for me.

Golf is actually a team sport for me. I have all this support so I'm just the one hitting the shots out there, adds the father of four, who dedicated the win on Mother's Day to his mum Debbie and to the memory of his father Sam who passed away last year, and had introduced him to golf and always told him to never give up.

### **Tribute to SA golfer**

Part of the Simpson team is his caddie Paul Tesori who shares his strong Christian faith and not only did Webb thank the bagman for all the encouragement he has given him, but he also

paid tribute to fellow golfer, South Africa's Tim Clark.

An encounter with Clark exactly a year ago, on the eve of the 2017 Players Championship, helped turn Simpson's golf around. Clark, the 2010 Players winner, talked Simpson into using the so-called claw grip with his putting. It was on the putting green last year and Tim asked me how I've been putting, Simpson recalled. I told him, pretty inconsistent. He asked me had I ever tried the claw grip, and I said no. So I tried it. I liked it. So, thanks to Tim I started putting much better last year. Now he's one of the top putter's on tour.

But with Simpson it will always be God first, and not golf. In an interview with The Gospel Coalition, when his game wasn't at its best, he had this to say: "I don't see my gifting as unique. My gift happens to be golf, but another guy's might be preaching and another's teaching. The Lord spreads us out for his purposes and for our enjoyment of him.

### **Great Commission**

My calling isn't to be a golfer. Like every other Christian, I'm called to participate in the Great Commission to go and make disciples of all nations. And for me that commission is meeting and having fellowship with the guys on tour and the people I come across."

And Simpson knows his security is not being good at golf, but being looked after by his Father God: "Any time I hear a bird chirping, I think of Matthew 6, when Jesus talks about how the birds neither toil nor store up for themselves, but God takes care of them. And how much more valuable are we than the birds? It's a little reminder to me that God is good and taking care of me, no matter what it looks like. He's always working for my good, no matter where I am."

And he doesn't see himself, being a top golfer, as a role model for younger golfers: When young people look up to me, it often sounds something like, I would love to be that good at



golf or win that tournament. It's hard because I know their desire to win a tournament is not bad, but I don't want anyone to envy me for what I've done in golf. I want them to see the light that is inside me. That's my hope when I'm around young people. I'd rather they be more impressed with Jesus than with me, the golfer.

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**100-year-old runner, ex-fighter pilot and Christian author sets five world records**



Orville Rogers recently broke five world running records for the 100 to 104 age group.

*Originally published in [Fox News](#)*

A 100-year-old Texas man says he's on "the top of the world" after breaking five world running records for his age group during a championship meet in Maryland last weekend.

Orville Rogers, a Dallas resident who trained bomber pilots during World War II, is proof age is just a number after his record-setting performances at the USATF Master Indoor Track and Field Championships.

"I have a total of 18 world records and I'm very grateful that God has blessed me with the ability and the motivation to run well," Rogers told Fox and Friends Tuesday.

The centenarian entered his first race when he was 90. He competes in the 100 to 104 age group.

He is also the author of *The Running Man: Flying High for the Glory of God*.

Rogers explained his secret for living to 100.

“I’m a Christian and God promises a long life,” he said. “I have a wonderful wife who died 10 years ago. I have a great family. I have lots of friends and I keep active mentally, physically and spiritually.”

The USATF posted video of Rogers, in a blue top, setting a new world age group record in the 60-meter dash with a time of 19.13 seconds.

He secured his other age group world records at the 2018 Indoor Championships in the 200-meter, 400-meter, 800-meter and 1 500-meter events.

Rogers said during the Korean War he flew the biggest airplane in the world, the B-36 strategic bomber.

“We had 16 crew members and 16 20-millimeter canons on each airplane for defence and we had a capability and we had the responsibility to retaliate against Russia if war had been declared,” he said.

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**First Nigerian to qualify for  
action sport in Winter**

# Olympics



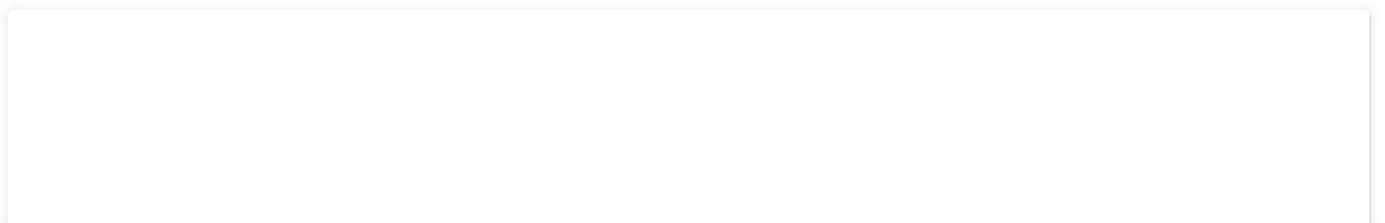
Simidele Adeagbo, the first African woman to qualify for the sport of Skeleton in the Winter Olympics.

*Originally published in [CBN News](#)*

Simidele Adeagbo is the first African woman to qualify for the Winter Olympics in the sport of Skeleton.

The 36-year-old athlete will be representing Nigeria after only taking up the sport last year – a feat for which she gives all glory to God.

“It’s official! I’m an Olympian! I’m honored to be the 1st Nigerian, African & Black female athlete to be represented in the sport of Skeleton at the Winter Olympics! Faith has turned my God-given dream into a reality! Thx everyone for all ur love & support. Next stop is Pyeongchang!” Adeagbo wrote on Instagram when she first announced the big news.





It's official! I'm an Olympian! I'm honored to be the 1st Nigerian, African & Black female athlete to be represented in the sport of Skeleton at the Winter Olympics! Faith has turned my God-given dream into a reality! Thx everyone for all ur love & support. Next stop is Pyeongchang! 🇳🇮🇳🇮🇳🇮🇳🇮🇳🇮🇳🇮🇳🇮🇳🇮🇳🇮🇳🇮🇳🇮🇳🇮🇳🇮🇳🇮🇳🇮#breakingbarriers #historyinthemaking #bsfnigeria #godissogood 📷@candicewardphotography

*A post shared by [SimiSleighs \(@simisleighs\)](#) on Jan 15, 2018 at 7:53am PST*

This isn't Adeagbo's first bid for a spot at the Olympic Games. After moving to the United States from Nigeria as a child, she spent much of her time training as an athlete.

By age 26, she held the National Collegiate Athletic Association record in triple jump at the University of Kentucky. However, when she attempted to qualify for the Olympics in triple jump she didn't make it.

Disappointed, Adeagbo gave up on being an athlete. Fast forward 10 years later and she still couldn't shake her dream of going to the Olympics. So, she decided to learn Skeleton, a

sport in which an athlete rides face down on a sled reaching speeds up to 80MPH with nothing but their body weight to steer.

She quickly became a world champion and after a lot of hard work and prayer, she finally achieved her goal of becoming an Olympian.



10\* days (depends on ur time zone) to go until the 2018 Winter Olympics! I'm prayed up and ready to go! Swipe to check it out. Thx @everynation.rosebank family. Keep the prayers coming please! ☺☺#whenjesussaysyes

*A post shared by SimiSleighs (@simisleighs) on Jan 29, 2018 at 1:25pm PST*

“10\* days (depends on ur time zone) to go until the 2018 Winter Olympics! I’m prayed up and ready to go! Swipe to check it out. Thx @everynation.rosebank family. Keep the prayers coming please! #whenjesussaysyes,” she posted on [Instagram](#) a little over a week before the Olympics began.

Adeagbo has also used her Instagram to share scriptures and positive encouragement to her fans.



Happy Sunday everyone! “Worship renews your faith and restores your joy”-  
@pastorrickwarren☐☐Isaiah 40:31

*A post shared by SimiSleighs (@simisleighs) on Jan 21, 2018 at 8:39am PST*

Happy Sunday everyone! “Worship renews your faith and restores your joy” – @pastorrickwarrenIsaiah 40:31

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# NBC Superbowl commentator stands by his comments on star quarterback's faith



Tony Dungy former player and coach looks on from the field prior to Super Bowl LII between the New England Patriots and the Philadelphia Eagles at US Bank Stadium. (PHOTO: John David Mercer-USA TODAY Sports)

*Originally published in [Urban Christian News](#)*

NBC commentator Tony Dungy has been attacked over his remarks that Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Nick Foles would 'play well because his Christian faith would allow him to play with confidence'.

Dungy, a former head coach for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Indianapolis Colts, described Foles' strong Christian faith on air during Super Bowl LII.



Foles is outspoken about his faith and has said he wants to be a pastor for high school students after he finishes his NFL career.



Congratulations to the Eagles. Nick Foles told me last week that he felt the Lord had him in Philadelphia for a special moment and he played like it tonight.



10:21 PM - 4 Feb 2018

After the game, Dungy reported that 'Foles told me last week that he felt the Lord had him in Philadelphia for a special moment and he played like it tonight.'

Some critics ripped into Dungy on Twitter, accusing him of 'preaching on air'.

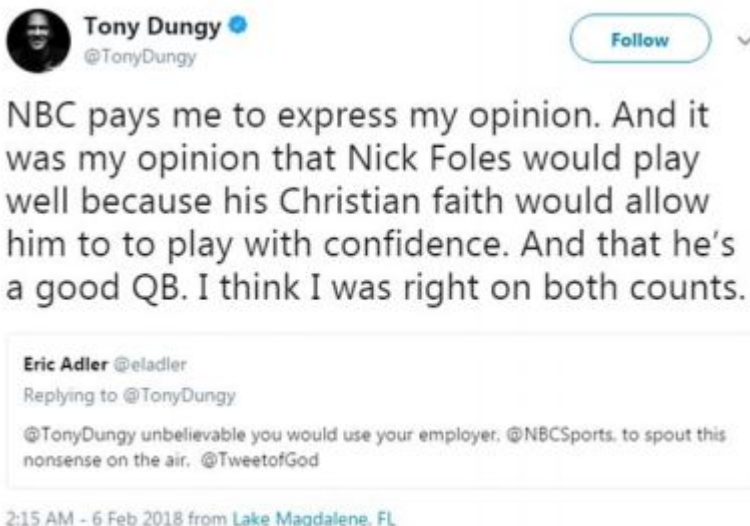
'Really think the LORD is into football? Get a grip,' wrote one critic.

'Why would He not be?,' replied Dungy, who spent much of Monday patiently replying to the scorn heaped upon him by online critics.



Nick Foles raising the Super Bowl trophy after the Philadelphia Eagles beat the New England Patriots. (PHOTO: Matthew Emmons-USA TODAY Sports)

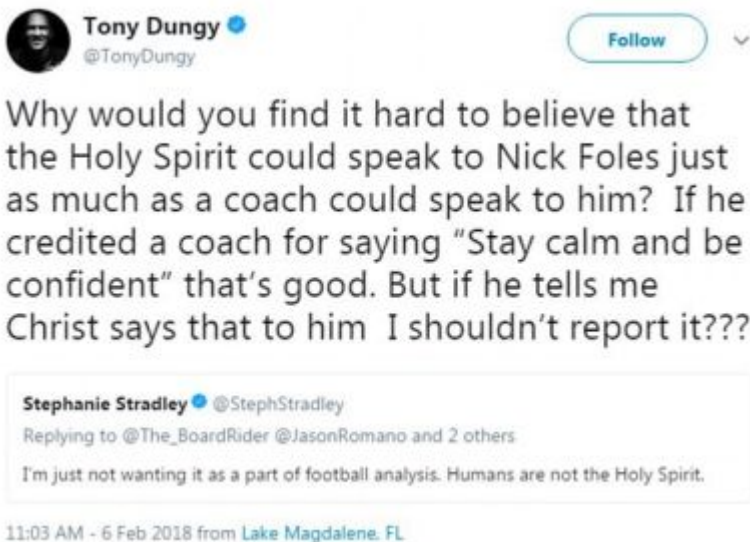
Some accused the former coach of somehow discrediting NBC with his remarks about faith. 'Unbelievable you would use your employer, @NBCSports, to spout this nonsense on the air,' one wrote.



'NBC pays me to express my opinion,' replied Dungy. 'And it was my opinion that Nick Foles would play well because his Christian faith would allow him to play with confidence. And that he's a good QB. I think I was right on both counts.'

'Why would you find it hard to believe that the Holy Spirit could speak to Nick Foles just as much as a coach could speak to him?' Dungy continued.

'If he credited a coach for saying 'Stay calm and be confident' that's good. But if he tells me Christ says that to him I shouldn't report it???'



After the Eagles' upset victory over the New England Patriots, Foles said he gave 'all the glory to God' during the nationally televised awards ceremony.

Many were surprised by the moment, with one Twitter user writing: 'It's just so rare for people to thank Jesus after they win. Amazing!!'

To Christian critics who said he was trivialising the religion by involving it with mere sports, Dungy replied that they had missed the point.

'This was much bigger than the score of a football game,' Dungy wrote.

'How many young boys are going to look up to Nick Foles because of what he did in this moment? When they do they'll see something about LIFE!'

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# What is your motivation? – Cobus Kruger



**A monthly Christian sport column by Cobus Kruger, a professional triathlete who is passionate about evangelism, leadership and community development through sport.**

This, for me, is always an exciting but difficult time of the year. It is as if everybody wants to do all the things they didn't get to do in the year, but it is also the time of the year when the body is tired and just needs that break over Christmas, which is so close but yet so far. So at this time of the year I'm always taking a look at what my motivation is for doing what I'm doing.

Do you feel the same about this time of the year? If so or even if not, the question that I want to ask you today is: what motivates you?

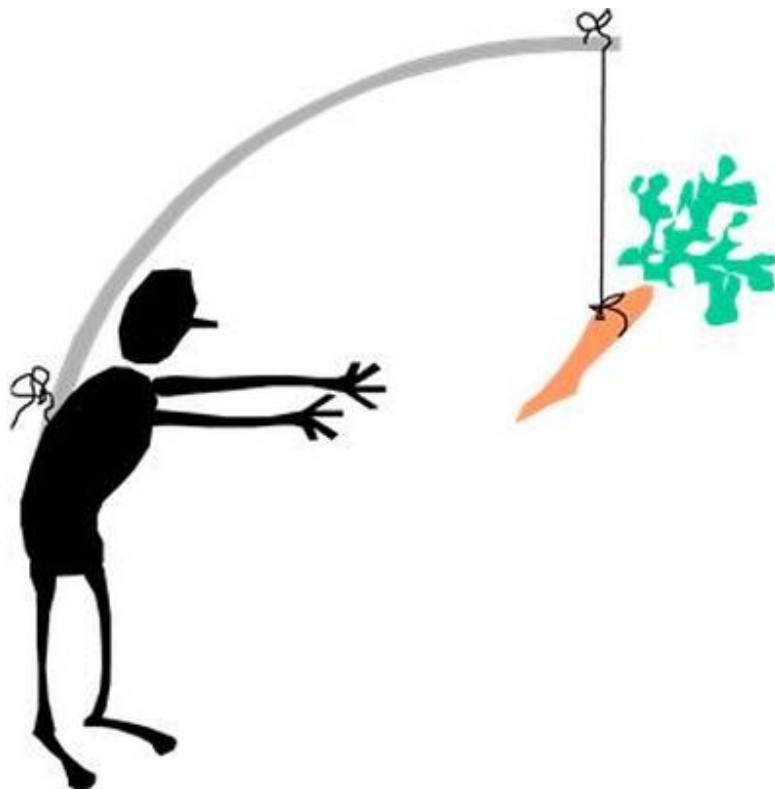
Recently my wife and I assisted Athletes in Action with their Ultimate Training Camp. One of the principles that we use on this camp is the "Inside Game" principle.

We help sports people work through the theory and practicality of this principle. The purpose of this session is that the athletes take a look at their lives and sport to discover what their motivation is.

If the athletes truly understand their identity in Christ, then His love, grace and truth would fuel and form an entirely new motivation for competition and life.

### **Let me explain**

If we look at the sport world then we see many different motivations that drive sports people pursue their ultimate performance, but these motivations are not everlasting. These motivations can only drive you to train and perform in certain conditions and periods of your life and sport career. These motivations can be fear of failure, revenge, recognition, pride, accomplishment, anger, coach, parents, friendships, money, winning – and there are so many more outward motivations that are not everlasting.



(IMAGE: [Lynn Albro](#))

### **For example**

A practical observation that I have made as I have worked with athletes through the years is that when we play a game just for points and teaching purposes of the principles, then the intensity changes from low to moderate and back during the

game. It is not constant. But as soon as we play the final game where we have a big prize for the winning team, then suddenly the intensity level goes much higher in the game.

The question that I normally ask after the game when we evaluate the players' motivation points is: Why did our intensity suddenly go up? The answer normally is because there is this prize that motivates us to play harder.

### **Here is my point**

If Jesus – His love, His grace, His presence – who gives us life to the full from the inside, is our motivation, should we not then always play with full intensity for the sake of His Glory, and in His Grace, whether there is a prize or not? Should our intensity level not stay more constant then? Something to think about...

So at the end of this year, when you are maybe tired and frustrated, think of what or who your motivation is for what you do.

God's love moves us from fear into freedom – let's walk into this inside motivation as we do what we do in the freedom of glorifying God without the fear that our outward motivations could give us.

May Jesus be your way, truth and life!

Have a blessed Jesus Fest over December!

Blessings!

***My Program Generator (MPG) fitness training with Cobus Kruger***

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# It's all about SHAPE – Cobus Kruger



**A monthly Christian sport column by Cobus Kruger, a professional triathlete who is passionate about evangelism, leadership and community development through sport.**

Today I want to talk about the coaching side of sport.

As an athlete and coach myself, and as a pastor that is involved with the coaching of coaches in sport and life, so that they can coach holistically for a lot of years, I picked up a few common mistakes that coaches are making as they coach. It is interesting that we as believers also fall short in a lot of these aspects in our mission to reach the world and work as a “coaching” team together for the growth of God’s Kingdom.

Let me explain. This past weekend I attended a workshop on spinning instructing. (For you that don’t know, I have been a spinning instructor for a lot of years in gyms, as a ministry tool to reach people for Christ.)

In this workshop the facilitator went through some important things that we as spinning instructors should take note of.



A spinning instructor leading the class by example. (PHOTO: [Mom in the city](#))

## Coaching principles

Firstly, it is important that you know what you want to achieve in the class. Do things with an outcome in mind for that class. This actually goes for any coaching. If you, as a coach, pitch up for every session and drill in the training, it should build up to what you want to have as an outcome at the end of the session.

**It is important that you know what you want to achieve in the class.**

The second thing is that if you are a spinning instructor, you should make sure that you do what you want your class to do correctly, because they will follow how you do it. And the fact is that you as instructor should therefore be in shape, so that you can do things right so that people can follow you and also do it right.

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I personally feel really strong in all of my coaching that I should do illustrations of drills and movements correctly, because the athletes that you coach will follow what you do. That is why I normally will let somebody that can do it better than me do the demonstration if I coach



sports that I'm not mastering myself. Like when I coach high jump or long jump at schools, I will coach well because I know exactly what I want them to do, but when it comes to the illustration I will go through the coaching points with an athlete who can do it well, so that he or she can do the illustration. Or I will even show a video clip with the correct illustration if needed. Even when I coach something like swimming or running that I do well, but as the coach I'm not able to be in the water or in the correct clothing to illustrate, I will then let an athlete that is in the water, and who can do it well, demonstrate. Why? Because the athletes will do what they see, not what they hear.

And the third point that stood out for me is that you should keep on educating the class on the fundamentals of how to cycle correctly, while you showcase it in the class, so that the members also can get into shape.

**You should keep on educating the class on the fundamentals.**

These three points are some basic important things for a coach to understand and do if he or she wants to get the athletes that he or she is coaching to their optimal SHAPE and potential.

### **The coaching principles in our lives as believers**

In the same way, we should apply these three coaching principles in our lives as believers.

- We should always spend time building relationships with believers and non-believers with an outcome in mind, with a purpose. Jesus illustrated it well for us when He was on earth. He was always clear with His goals and purpose on this earth, and He also showed love and brought change in every person that He touched. Then, after He rose from death, He gave us as believers the

authority to do the same and more than He did on earth. So we should do what we saw Him do. Love people, not for the sake of our own ministry, structure, denomination, business or sports team, but for the sake of God's Kingdom to grow on earth as it is in heaven.

- We should be in shape and practice the fundamentals and truths of Christ in every action and thing we do in daily life. We are ambassadors for Christ on this earth and as we love and share Jesus as the main fundamental of Christianity, and start to coach them to walk and live in this truth, we should make sure that we are in SHAPE. Why? Because people are going to do what they see, not what they hear from you.

Are you in SHAPE? Here are some coaching points for us to look at to evaluate if we are in SHAPE:

S – Spirit Filled – Did you accepted Jesus as Saviour? Are you Spirit filled? Why? Because we receive power to walk in this earth in Jesus through Him, and fulfilment in His Spirit. Read John 1:12 and Acts 1:8.

H – Honest – Are you honest with yourself, and your life? Is Jesus your leader? Do you do what Jesus showed us to do in your daily life?

A – Accountable – Are you accountable to Jesus Christ as Head of the Church, and His Body, the fellow believers?

P – Practical – Is your faith and belief practical? Or is your faith without action? It should be faith in action.

E – Evangelical – Is your life evangelical? Is Jesus so real to you that you cannot stop living for Him, and you cannot stop sharing and talking about Him, because you know He is the only way, truth and life as we read in John 14:6? Did you take the evangelical call on your life that we

## SHAPE

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read about in Mark 16:15, and Matthew 28:28, to go out into all the world and preach what to live? And are you making disciples?

### **Follow me as I follow Christ**

If we are in shape like this, then we should also be able to say to people all around us the words that Apostle Paul used:

*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).*

Let's go and ponder on the following scripture, and ask the Lord to help us to get into shape so that we can coach and help the world and Church to get in shape for the sake of God's Kingdom:

#### *You Will Know Them by Their Fruits*

*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them. (Matthew 7:15-20)*

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