

Give thanks in all situations.

Despite political and tabloid clicks on social media, a big, worldwide event is happening this summer: the Olympic Games in Paris.

Many of the sports have concluded their trials and have presented “their” Olympic team comprised of elite athletes who have honed their skills over years and decades for this moment.

You may have witnessed the interviews with the athletes when they earned their spot in Paris. Many will give thanks and praise, “To their savior, Jesus Christ.” This is awesome. This is like Tim Tebow wearing a patch under his eyes which read, John 3:16. During the college championship game, 96 million people googled John 3:16. That is what I call witnessing for Christ.

But what happens to those athletes who came up short of their lifelong dream? Do they still give thanks to God for the opportunity to have competed on the world stage? If we truly believe that everything is part of God’s plan, why would we not give thanks?

In the athletic or business worlds, we witness skills, talents, and personalities. We are curious about what programs successful people follow. We like the accolades, but most will cringe at the reality and the sacrifice(s) made for the successes we see them achieving.

With success, there are also failures. What did they do or not do, which created the undesired outcome? Learning what to avoid or not do is also a learning situation, and we should give thanks for what we learned along this path.

Give thanks for learning what to do, but also what not to do.

Wherever you place your focus, that will determine your opportunity for growth. We often have to “give up” for us to gain.

Romans 6:4 *We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too live a new life.*

Focus on God, not on yourself. Sounds easy, plays hard.

One example is how our society has lost its way; we are now expected to have clairvoyance and know how everyone wants to be acknowledged and use their chosen pronouns. Their choice takes priority over God's decision and choice for each of us.

For me, they can play their games but do not expect me to play along.

This is people saying, “Focus on me,” not what God created me to be.

According to Merriam-Webster, “righteous” is defined as acting according to divine or moral law: free from guilt or sin.”

I want to add that being righteous means, “being right with God.” If we are right with God, we are also free from sin. He cannot do evil or act sinfully.

Focus on God, not on ourselves.

Continuing forward, in Romans 6:5, *“If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.”*

If we focus on God, His plan will make us the best version of ourselves.

As I go through life, making mistakes and sinning, again and again, I just need to ask for forgiveness, and through the death of Jesus, these sins are forgiven.

He makes me clean. I have died in my former self, and I live through his resurrection.

So, if someone persists in asking what my pronouns are, I can smile and say, “I identify as Sinner and Saved,” and the medal I receive will not be placed around my neck on a podium in Paris but at the right-hand of God in His kingdom.

Vivat Jesus