

# CHAPTER 16

## THE CONSOLATION PRIZE



Biblical Lessons for Students, Athletes & More

Individual or Group Experience

### FOCAL VERSE

When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy.

Psalm 94:19 (NIV)

### WISE WORDS

"Satan was defeated by Christ at the cross, but he's seeking you as a consolation prize."

John Piper

### Introduction

**QUESTION:** Have you ever been in a tournament or competition in which you didn't win the "top prize," but you still walked away with a trophy or an award? How did that make you feel?

Not everyone gets to win first place in a contest, and this reality isn't always easy to accept. This is usually when a consolation prize makes its welcomed appearance. It's intended to *console* the contestants who didn't advance to the championship round but did good enough to take home an award or trophy in some other phase of the competition.

### Pages 107-109

Read through the entire lesson, then pause before "Chalk Talk." With the ever increasing battle of anxiety and depression in young people and adults, let's settle in for an honest conversation with either yourself or your small group. *Why?* Because it's easy to say, "*Look to God to console and comfort you,*" but the reality is this: **unless we are dependent on God to meet all our needs, (and there's not one need He can't meet), it's likely that we will look to someone or something else to console (or comfort) us.** Here are some discussion questions to consider:

- How widespread do you believe anxiety is amongst your peers? Is it something you and your friends talk about with each other?
- Does basketball ever stir up anxiety? If yes, why?
- When you're feeling anxious or depressed, how do you tend to make yourself "feel" better?
- What are some *unhealthy* ways people deal with anxiety? What are some *healthy* ways to deal with anxiety or depression?

*But first...*

Reflecting back on the previous lesson, "No Holding Back," did you get an opportunity to practice the "extra ounce" principle? If so, what difference did it make?

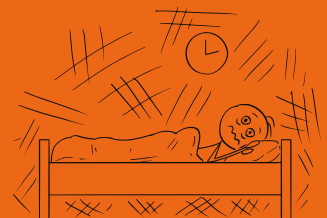
### DISCUSSION QUESTION:

Examine the quote below by Epictetus, a Greek philosopher.

- Do you agree or disagree with his statement?
- Share examples of a recent fear you had that wasn't worth worrying about at all.

*"Man is not worried by real problems so much as by his imagined anxieties about real problems."*

—Epictetus



- Read today's focal verse (Psalm 94:19) in a few different versions. In some form or fashion, each version points towards God comforting David.
  - **Put yourself in David's shoes. In what various ways do you think David was comforted by God? In what ways does God bring you comfort?**

Leader, this would be an opportune time to emphasize how God's Word can be consoling. Share some verses that have brought you comfort during a season that was otherwise trying or traumatic. Encourage your group to engage regularly in scripture, so that when times of anxiety come, *and they will come*, they are more able to endure suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:3), knowing that in all things God works for the good of those who love him and have been called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28).

### Chalk Talk

After reading through the player, parent & coach applications, spend some time talking about how our attitudes, and responses towards "bad seasons," can impact you or the team, both positively and negatively.

### Page 110

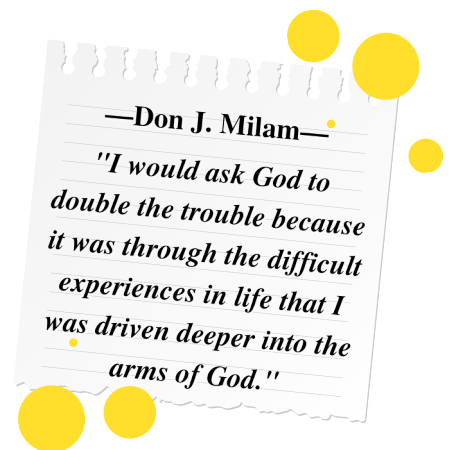
#### Personal Training

**Personal Discussion:** If you could choose to live your entire life without ever experiencing anxiety, depression, or trouble, would you?

- **Read Romans 5:3-4. According to the scripture, what type of consolation (comfort in a time of disappointment) can come out of our trials and suffering?** *Answer: We can glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.*

**Meditate on this powerful story from the Bible study *One on One With God*:**

- The late Reverend Don J. Milam was asked, "If you had your life to live over again, what would you ask God to give you?" He replied, "I would ask God to **double the trouble** because it was through the difficult experiences of life that I was driven deeper into the arms of God. It was during those times I discovered that:
  - God alone is sufficient for all my needs.
  - Nothing can separate me from the love of God.
  - Nothing can snatch me out of his hand."



We can clearly see from Milam's bold response that he found joy in his sufferings because of the consolation he found in his Heavenly Father.

In 1 Peter 5:7, Peter, a fisherman, directs us to cast our anxiety on God because He cares for us.

- **Explain in your own words what Peter is directing us to do with our anxiety.** *Emphasize the fact that Peter calls us to "throw forcefully" our anxieties on God, but he never told us to reel them back in. We naturally do this when we give God control of our lives but then we stubbornly try and take control back again.*

### Post-Game Prayer

Use the closing prayer on page 111 to end session sixteen or personalize your own.