

**John 10:3** “To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.”

All my life I have followed Major League Baseball. When I was a kid, I would listen to the radio each night in the backyard as Dave Neihaus brought the Mariner’s game to life over the airwaves. I would listen and pretend I was running the bases and that I was actually playing the game. It truly was a passion and pastime for me.

When I was in 8th Grade, I tried out for my school’s baseball team. It was three weeks of drills, workouts, and training. The last day of tryouts came, and I was sure I secured my spot on the team. I had shown up on time to each practice, worked hard on my drills and did everything asked of me. The right Field Spot was mine!

As we got set that afternoon for our last tryout, two other boys showed up who had never been to one tryout. In fact, one of them didn’t even attend school. Those two boys tried out for the team that afternoon and won spots and I was cut from the team. I couldn’t believe it when I looked at the roster. They hadn’t even shown up to any workouts except the last one. They didn’t wear any gear and didn’t bring their own equipment. One of them didn’t even go to the school. Needless to say, I was heartbroken, all that work and effort to have my spot on the team taken by some kids who didn’t try at all.

A few days went by, and I heard that our P.E. instructor was opening a martial arts academy at my school. I ended up joining and got to work right away learning the art of Kenpo which is an American Karate. About a week later after Kenpo, the coach of the baseball team approached me in the gym. He had tears in his eyes and wept as he admitted to me, he made the wrong choice and really wanted me to play on the team. I thought about how hard I worked and how much I had wanted that spot but eventually turned him down because I was happy where I was now. I spent the next two years at that self-defense academy and worked out year-round. Some of my best young teen year memories are being involved in that Kenpo School.

I learned a few valuable lessons through that situation. One: People make mistakes that affect me. Two: sometimes life is just not fair. Three: I think the biggest lesson I learned is that sometimes when a door shuts in your life, a much better door opens.

Many times, we feel God has overlooked us or hasn’t answered us because we didn’t get the specific thing we were asking him for. We thought we were asking him for something that he even wanted for us. I have learned that sometimes the best lessons come through the most pain. God uses that to shape and mold our hearts and to build wisdom in our lives. I am sure each of you can relate to this story in one form or another.

Let’s Trust God in the pain and trust him in the process!

I Love you and God loves you!

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