

June 11, 2025 – “In the Game” – Gymnastics/Figure Skating

Sports/Parables. Strengthen relationship w/ God... **Practical** Christian living
Gymnastics/ice skating: require balance, coordination, mental focus & body awareness. Both are physical sports w/ artistic expression & choreography.

7 principles:

1 – Falls are Part of the sport... & Part of Life ... but God lifts us back up.

Prov. 24:16 – “*Though a righteous person falls seven times, he will get up, but the wicked will stumble into ruin.*”

- What’s the difference? The righteous **rely on God**. We know where our help comes from. We worship Him.
- **Psalms 145:14** – “The LORD supports all who fall, and raises up all who are bowed down.”
 - We’re going to fail. . . fall down. But **God doesn’t leave us there & He doesn’t leave us alone**. God lifts us up & strengthens us.
 - **Isaiah 41:10** - “Don’t be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.”
 - **Don’t fall down & stay down – reach for God.**

2 – Skills & Artistic Judging. How it’s done matters as much as what’s done

- Too often, people believe there’s no harm if the outcome is good.
 - “It’s only business” or “All is fair in love and war.”
 - People will say and do most anything to get what they want.
- But **God is absolute** about right & wrong. Ends don’t justify the means.
 - It’s not acceptable to God that we use dishonest or harmful ways to get a good outcome.
 - **A good end does not make a morally wrong action acceptable.**
 - The Ten Commandments make it clear that murder, stealing, lying, coveting what others have is unacceptable to God. He makes no "escape clause" for motivation or rationalization.
 - **King David** had it in his heart to build a temple for God... but he could not b/c he waged wars, too much bloodshed.
 - **Moses** could not enter the promised land.
 - **How we live our lives matters.** We lose rewards/blessings.

3 – Balance & flexibility are key skills.

Balance: the ability to maintain control of your **body's center of gravity** over your base ... maintaining a fixed posture.

- **Balance is at the core** of gymnastics & figure skating.

Christians should live a balanced life.

- That means **maintaining God** at the **core/center** of all we do.
 - **It's not** just living in moderation... balancing your time.
 - **It's seeking God first...** God at the center of everything we do.
 - **Matt. 6:33** – *“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.”*

Flexibility: the ability of joints to move unrestricted pain-free in a r.o.m.

- In Christian life, it is moving & adjusting to what God has planned... being open to Him changing our schedules and circumstances.
 - **Paul** was open to where God opened doors ... his plans could be modified. Acts 16:7– H.S. blocked. Paul was adaptable/flexible.
 - **Psalms 32:8** – *“The LORD says, “I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.”*
 - **Flexibility** requires being **in tune** with the Holy Spirit . . . and allowing God to re-arrange our schedules, pain-free.

4 – Leave your mark.

In skating, you can always tell where you have been. Trail left on the ice.

■ Do the same in our Lives.

- 1 Thess. 1 tells of the faith of the Thessalonians believers:
- **1 Thess. 1:6-7** - ⁶So you received the message with joy from the Holy Spirit in spite of the severe suffering it brought you. In this way, you imitated both us and the Lord. ⁷As a result, you have become an example to all the believers in Greece—throughout both Macedonia and Achaia”

■ Leave a mark... make an impact.

5 – Core strength is required!

- It's not just about being physically strong... need core strength to maintain balance and alignment.

- Think of “**core strength**” as **inner power**...but not our own power.
- Core Strength allows us to persevere through challenges, find joy in the midst of suffering, and to serve others with humility and grace.
 - **Eph. 3:16** – “I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit.”
 - **Col 1:11** – “We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need.”
 - Always remember where your strength comes from.

6 – **Need to have your bearings.** Spins will get you dizzy.

- **Gymnasts** use a “**spot**” **technique**, they focus on a specific point to maintain balance during spins/turns.
 - There will be plenty of moments when life is spinning. To keep your bearings, keep your **focus on God**.
- He must be your center...
- **Heb. 12:2** – fix our eyes ... [Cont. Engl Ver] - “*We must keep our eyes on Jesus, who leads us and makes our faith complete.*”
 - **To not lose your way, let your eyes come back to God.**

7 – **You’ll have to take a leap of faith.**

Jumps and leaps are some of the most exciting moves. Skating... throw-quad sow-cow.

- 2 Cor. 5:7 – “For we walk by faith, not by sight.”
- It takes faith to live the Christian life. It’s both exciting and scary.
- **Take a leap. Go all in. Get in the game!**
- “Victory comes from you, O LORD.” – Psm 3:8