



SERIES: APRIL – YES, YOU CAN! OVERCOMING YOUR STRUGGLES

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Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 3:3-4

TITLE: On the Rebound

Missing the game-winning shot is a pivotal moment for a player. It defines their path moving forward. But it's not so much the missing of the shot. It's the response of the coach to it.

You see, we'd all like to make the shot and receive the praise. The path forward is pretty straight. But to miss brings a heavy burden that can be unloaded quickly. When the player misses the shot, they need to know their value is not tied to the making or the missing of the shot. Their value is found in who they are.

Now chances are you are not a basketball player today. You're simply a person trying to do their best and remain faithful to God. But if you're like me, you miss the mark. The question is, how does God respond? And how does that impact our path forward?

This is what Paul writes in 2 Thessalonians 3:3-4, (CSB).

But the Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one. We have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will continue to do what we command.

Thank you, Coach Paul. Paul was not perfect. He started off thinking he was on the right team. He was shooting his shots. He felt like he was driving up the points. Only to find out that scoring any points whatsoever by playing the game of religion--it was futile. He knows the freedom and power of finding your identity and strength from Christ alone.

Here Paul is writing to the Thessalonian church, and they are experiencing persecution from some contemporaries. The driving force was Satan himself. We are tempted to stumble all the time. For some, it's when persecution happens. For others, it's when life is hard. For some, the temptation is greatest when they are feeling successful. Satan is a master strategist who leverages your temptations to stumble.

He knows yours, and he knows mine. And I hate to disappoint you; I still struggle with being faithful to God. I love God. I want to follow Him, and I struggle. I miss the shot. But God says, "It's okay, champ. I love you. I'm here for you. Let's learn and try again. I'm here each step of the way."

What makes Christianity so scandalous is that God is faithful even when we are not. God is faithful. He provides us strength in our weaknesses and protection when exposed. Yesterday is done. Thanks to God, today is won.

So here's my challenge for you today: drop the shame and embrace today. God's second chances seem to never end. He gives grace upon grace. His mercies are new every morning. Satan wants you to feel like you are a failure and a disappointment to God. God says, "You are my masterpiece. I've got this. Let's do this together."

So drop any shame and embrace God's gift of today. When we live in God's loving faithfulness, we will win the day!