

Compete

Challenge: On March 24, 1975, a journeyman boxer named Chuck Wepner, from the slums of NYC, found himself in a 15-round title fight vs the Heavyweight Champion of the World, Muhammad Ali. Wepner was totally outmatched. However, in the 9th round Wepner delivered a body blow to a stumbling Ali and knocked him down. It was only the third time, up to that point, that Ali had ever been knocked down in a fight. Ali was now out for blood! He mercilessly punished Wepner for the next 5 rounds but was unable to get a KO. After the 14th and leading into the 15th and final round the crowd gave a standing ovation to a swollen faced Wepner. Ali continued his barrage! As Wepner absorbed punch after punch the crowd began to roar! Not to see an Ali knockout, but to see if the bloodied and bruised Wepner could last 15 rounds with the Champ! He did not. With 19 seconds left in the final round the ref stopped the fight, TKO. Shortly after this date a young and aspiring writer and actor named Sylvester Stallone wrote the movie "Rocky." Wepner's story and the original movie "Rocky" are not about winning the title belt. They are about having the courage to compete and fight to the very end against the very best.

All too often in life much of our inability to scratch our potential or play hard is down to the fact that we compare ourselves to others rather than giving our best (competing).

Questions to consider:

How do you define success?

Do you typically compare yourself to others or give your best effort no matter if you are winning or losing?

How do you prepare?

What's going on: One week before Jesus would give His life on the cross, He went to the temple in Jerusalem. He saw the money changers and animal traders selling things in the temple taking advantage and cheating the people out of their money and ran them out, because the temple was a place to worship God. Jesus knew their hearts and thoughts of these religious leaders. He knew that while they looked good on the outside they were filled with wickedness on the inside. The widow in the following story was a person with a pure heart. Jesus wanted the disciples to follow her example, not the example set by the religious leaders.

Game Time: Mark 12:41-44

1. In this story, what does God value the most?
2. Do you put your heart and soul into what you do?
3. What is your commitment level to the team?

Key Verse: "...this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned..." Mark 12:43-44

Anchor to remember:

- Give your best