

Compete

Story: On March 24, 1975, a journeyman boxer named Chuck Wepner, from the slums of New York City, found himself in a 15-round title fight with 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." This fight and the movie "Rocky" are not about winning the title, but about having the courage to compete to the very end.

Questions to consider:

How do you define a win?

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

How do you prepare?

Context: 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. He ran them out, because the temple was a place to worship God. Jesus knew the 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.

Scripture: 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:

- Judge your performance based on your effort not the scoreboard
- Compete don't compare