

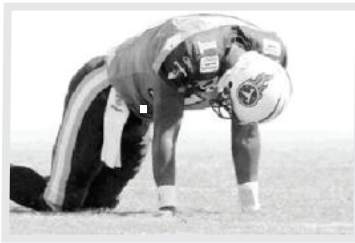
Setbacks

Vince Young deals with Depression

Questions about the Titans' star quarterback have surfaced after he was booed heavily by fans upset at his second interception. It appeared that he didn't want to return to the game. Finally, after his coach visited with him on the sidelines, he returned to the offense. Four plays later, he sprained his knee when Jaguars linebacker Daryl Smith crashed into it. Following the game, Young didn't go to the Titan's headquarters on Monday which led his coach to pay him a visit at home. The team eventually sent a psychologist and another team official to talk with him. He was described as being emotionally down.

While many Titan fans may believe Vince Young is "Superman" on a football field, he is every bit as human as the rest of us when faced with a serious setback on or off the field.

I wonder what Young was thinking or telling himself as he was booed by fans. It's not uncommon to see an athlete talking to themselves. While many of us might not be caught in public talking to ourselves, most of us are greatly influenced by listening or talking to ourselves – especially when we are discouraged or depressed.



Author Paul Tripp describes this most influential voice:

"What do you regularly tell yourself about yourself, God, and your circumstances? Do your words to you encourage faith, hope, and courage? Or do they stimulate doubt, discouragement, and fear? Do you remind yourself that God is near, or do you reason within yourself, given your circumstances, that he must be distant? Do you encourage yourself to run to God even when you don't understand what he's doing? Or do you give yourself permission to back away from him when you are confused by the seeming distance between what he's promised and what you're experiencing?...When others talk to you, is your internal conversation so loud that it's hard to concentrate on what they're saying? Here's the question. How wholesome, faith-driven, and Christ-centered is the conversation that you have with you every day?"

In Psalm 42, the psalmist reflects on his troubled soul which is depressed and discouraged in verses 5 and 11. David Powlison has said, "The Psalms have always been favorites of God's people because they express honest human experience and emotion in the context of faith. In the Psalms you meet God where you are."

Whenever you are discouraged or depressed, take a lesson from Psalm 42. First, talk to yourself and then talk to God. Most athletes are unhappy because they only listen to themselves. We need to preach the gospel to ourselves and address our troubled soul with Scripture and ultimately the gospel. By God's grace stop listening to your soul and begin speaking to your soul with the promises of God. His promises will transform your attitude from troubled to hopeful.

WARMUP

1. Watch the internet video with Vince Young and his teammates. Go to www.youtube.com and search for "Tennessee Titans-Hurt"

WORKOUT

1. How do the words to the song in the WARMUP video, "...everyone I know, goes away in the end," relate to Vince Young's struggle? How do they relate to sports?
2. What should we say to our souls based upon Psalm 42: 5 and verse 11?
3. What do you think the famous preacher Charles Spurgeon meant by, "When you cannot trace God's hand, you must trust God's heart"? How does this apply to sports?
4. How can searching the Scriptures for promises that address our trials help us? Give an example.

WRAPUP

This week, memorize . . .

"Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God." Psalm 42:11 (ESV)

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for the promises in Scripture that speak to my soul . . .

GOSPEL FOCUS

The psalmist felt forsaken by God (Psalm 42). The Savior was forsaken by God. The psalmist was troubled in soul because he felt the absence of God. The Savior was troubled in soul as he contemplated being crushed by the righteous wrath of God and truly abandoned by God. The psalmist's soul was downcast. But the Savior's soul would be crushed with the full, furious, righteous wrath of God against our sin. The psalmist's soul was temporarily and, one might argue, superficially downcast. The Savior's soul was uniquely troubled and tormented so that the souls of sinners like us would know freedom from the fear of eternal torment of soul in hell... – CJ Mahaney

Gordon Thiessen is the founder of Cross Training Publishing and serves as the Director of Training and Resources for the Nebraska Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He is author of 12 books for Christian athletes and coaches that can be found at www.crosstrainingpublishing.com.

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