

## **A WORD WITH YOU - By Ron Hutchcraft**

### **# 10229 – “The Trouble With Winning”**

#### **1 Peter 5:8**

March 26, 2026

No one could have ever guessed the outcome. It was the first round of the playoffs for Illinois' high school football championship. There was this one team, we'll call them Goliath. They were ranked sixth in the nation; first in the state of course. When they beat teams they didn't just defeat them, they buried them. In the first round they were matched up with the team most likely to be eliminated in the state playoffs. This team had lost three games; they had just squeaked into the playoffs. We'll call them David. Final score: 14 to 13. Yeah, you guessed it! The number sixth team in the nation was defeated that day by a team few people had ever heard of. The sports writers seemed to agree that the problem with the champions had been overconfidence. Well, that's happened to number one ranked teams in college football and many other sports. It really can be dangerous to be a winner.

I'm Ron Hutchcraft and I want to have **A WORD WITH YOU** today about **“The Trouble With Winning.”**

Now, our word for today from the Word of God comes from 1 Peter chapter 5, verse 8. God says, “Be self-controlled and alert...” In other words, stay awake! “...your enemy, the Devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” Now, we need to find out how he attacks and what his opening is so we're not the one he devours. When you want to do that, you've got to go back to chapter 5, verse 5. Here's what it says, “All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand that He may lift you up in due time.”

So God is talking about pride and humility in the same passage where He talks about the Devil being able to bring you down. See, I think you're never more vulnerable than you are after a major victory. The sports world has plenty of evidence of that; the spiritual world proves it to us. God is warning against the pride that sets you up to be a lion lunch. When it's in sports, you win, you think you're good, you lower your guard, you under-prepare, you lose. There were pictures in the papers of defeated players of that Goliath high school football team, and the young players were in a state of shock and depression. In the wreckage of their championship hopes they're asking, “How could this happen to us?”

That's happened to a lot of men and women who could have been spiritual champions. We start out very dependent on God when we start doing things for Him. We know how much we need Him. We're scared to death. And then He trusts us with some success,

and we begin to think that the success is achievement. It's not achievement. It's a gift from God. We begin to think, "Aren't I something?" Instead of, "Isn't He something?" And we begin to get spiritually careless. That's all the Devil needs to bring you down.

You see, as long as you're trusting Jesus, he can't get to you. The Devil can't beat Jesus. But as soon as you start trusting in you, he can beat you. You're ready for a fall. Often when we're facing a spiritual challenge we draw very close to the Lord don't we? But as soon as it's over, there's a tendency to let down. I've experienced it. Then you let your time with Jesus start to slide, and you let proud thoughts begin to creep in, and you compromise a little since you sacrificed so much before, right?

So we are never more vulnerable than after major victories. That's when we really, really need to keep our guard up. We need to pray much. We need to get others praying for us. If you understand this simple principle of post-victory danger, you can build a wall against it. God sees in you a champion for the cause of Jesus. The question is can He trust you with some victories? Defeat will drive you to the Lord. Just make sure that victory drives you to Him as well.

And if you'll guard against the dangers of victory, then it won't be you sitting in the pain of a sudden and stunning defeat saying, "How could this happen to me?" See, if you can handle winning, you're really championship material.

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