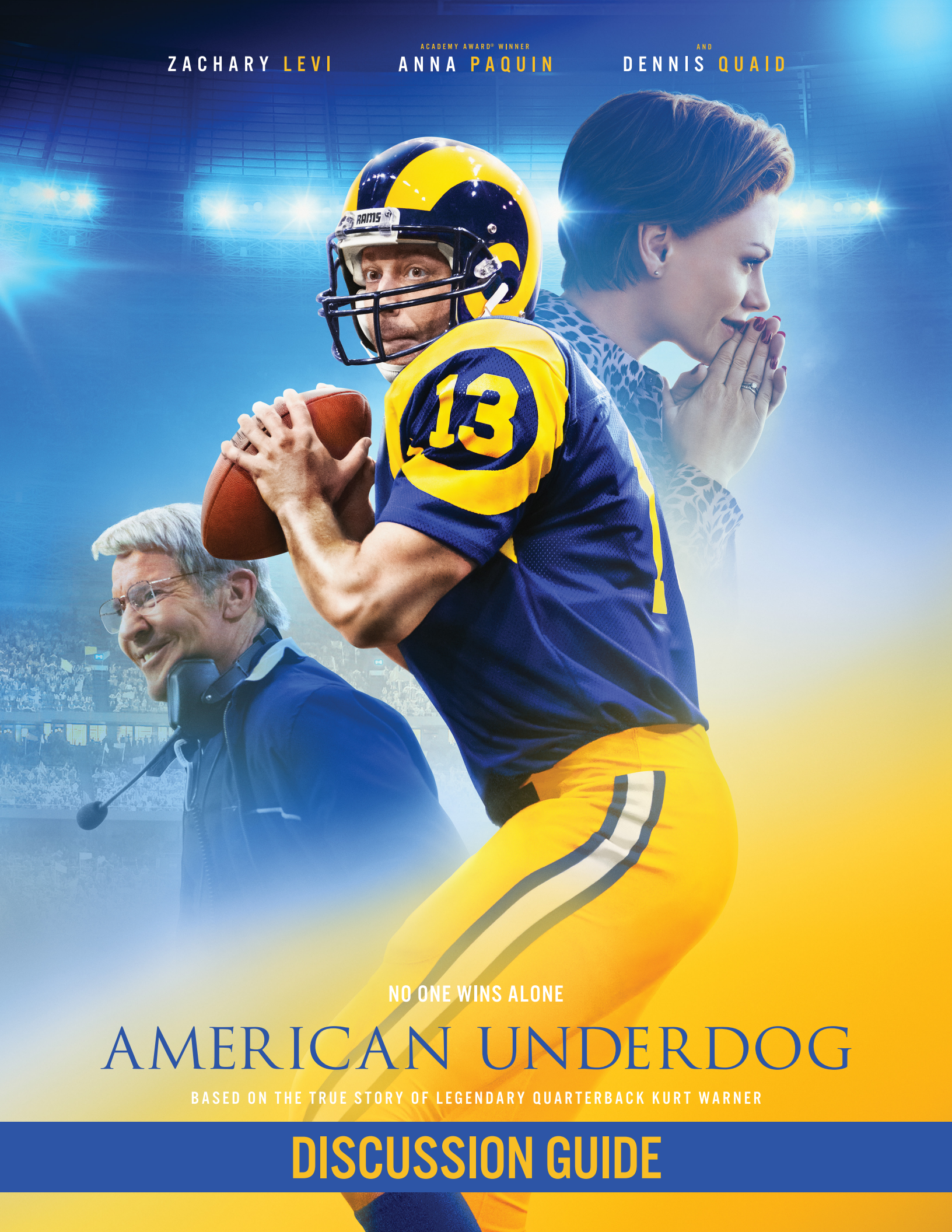


ZACHARY LEVI

ACADEMY AWARD® WINNER
ANNA PAQUIN

AND
DENNIS QUAID



NO ONE WINS ALONE

AMERICAN UNDERDOG

BASED ON THE TRUE STORY OF LEGENDARY QUARTERBACK KURT WARNER

DISCUSSION GUIDE

AMERICAN UNDERDOG DISCUSSION GUIDE

By: Dr. Scott Silverii

Anchor Verse – Isaiah 40:31 (ESV)

*But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary;*

AMERICAN UNDERDOG

AMERICAN UNDERDOG chronicles the inspirational true story of Kurt Warner (Zachary Levi), who went from a stock boy at a grocery store to become one of the most celebrated athletes of all time. The film centers on Warner's unique story and years of challenges and setbacks that could have derailed his aspirations—but just when his dreams seemed all but out of reach, it is only with the support of his wife, Brenda (Anna Paquin) and the encouragement of his family, coaches, and teammates that Warner perseveres and finds the strength to show the world the champion that he already is. American Underdog is an uplifting story that proves anything is possible when you have hope, family, and determination.

This **AMERICAN UNDERDOG Discussion Guide** leads you through 5 discussions that highlight Biblical examples of experiences and lessons learned through Kurt and Brenda Warner's journey in life.

To view the trailer and find out how you can watch AMERICAN UNDERDOG, visit AmericanUnderdog.movie/Inspires.

**THIS GUIDE CONTAINS SPOILERS, AND IS
INTENDED TO USE AFTER A GROUP HAS SEEN THE FILM.**



DISCUSSION 1

SUMMARY:

Did you know God gives you the gift of authority to proclaim blessings over others? Yes, there are keys to unlock the power of heaven in your spoken word. The words other people speak over you hold the power of life and death (Proverbs 18:21). In the movie, Kurt asked Brenda about her relationship with God and desired to know more about the positive words spoken over her years before by a woman at the church.

Like Kurt, before he knew Jesus, people can see the light of God shining in believers by the way they live their lives. It's often said the gospel is more caught than taught. Kurt saw that light in Brenda and asked about her faith. She explained how important her faith was and that it was her identity.

Brenda also shared with Kurt that the woman at church had told her she would do something special with her life. Although Brenda's life at that point didn't seem special because of the hard times she experienced as a divorced wife and single mom, she clung to the positive words of affirmation the woman had spoken over her life. Just like Jacob wrestling the angel in Genesis 32:22-31, Brenda refused to let go of God's promise, no matter how hard she struggled. Eventually, Brenda receives that foretold blessing for her life and, along with Kurt, enjoys a special life of living for God.

CALL TO ACTION:

Think about ways and opportunities to share Jesus Christ with other people. Even if you're not comfortable sharing or explaining Scripture, examine how others might see the light of God shining in the way you live. Meditate on the key scriptures from this discussion and pray for God to empower you to share His love through affirming encouragement with other people.

SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 32:24-28 (NIV)

So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome."

Proverbs 18:21 (NIV)

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

Ezekiel 37:4 (ESV)

Then he said to me, "Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord."

TALK IT OVER:

1. Kurt recognized something different and special in Brenda because of the way she lived. Is your identity grounded in Christ? If so, does the mirror of your life reflect Jesus? Would the people closest to you agree? What do you think strangers see when they look at your life?

2. The woman from church spoke positive and affirming words about Brenda doing something special with her life. Those words held God's promises and stayed with Brenda as hope through difficult times. Do you share words of encouragement from Scripture with others? What are positive words people have spoken over your life?



DISCUSSION 2

SUMMARY:

Kurt Warner persevered his entire life and allowed little to get in the way of his passion for sports. Pressing into his athletic ability to feel worthy, Kurt leaned on football to help him make sense of his world. Although he wasn't recruited by a major college football program and didn't play much until his senior year, he refused to quit.

His tenacity remained focused on playing professionally in the National Football League. Even when he failed to get selected in the NFL draft, Kurt never gave up on his dream of becoming a professional quarterback. Unfortunately, he often relied solely on himself. Exercising your God-given talents separate from and not for the glory of God can leave those gifts incomplete or leave us unprepared to use them to the fullest extent intended.

This was illustrated when Kurt was signed by the Green Bay Packers. He thought his lifelong dream of playing quarterback had been answered, but he wasn't ready ... yet. God was still working in his life to prepare him for something bigger—a Super Bowl Championship.

Isaiah 6:8 shares a view of being called into action and, although Isaiah knew he wasn't ready on his own, his faith allowed him to step up and say, "Here am I. Send me!" Kurt learned from his experience with Green Bay and pressed into his passion by never hesitating to step into the callings God placed on his life.

CALL TO ACTION:

Allow the example of this discussion to show you where you have relied only on yourself instead of God in certain situations. Too often we make inner vows against something or someone who has wronged us. It sets us on a path of revenge to “show them,” instead of a journey to forgive them as you have been forgiven.

Also, pray God shows you where you’re being called into action. Submit to His will and direction in your life and seek the courage and humility to answer the call. When God calls you into the huddle to run the play for Jesus, are you ready to throw the ball?

SCRIPTURE:

Isaiah 6:8 (NIV)

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Joshua 1:9 (NIV)

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.





TALK IT OVER:

1. Although Kurt Warner eventually achieved great success as a NFL quarterback, his path wasn't traditional or quick. Sometimes it was a lack of opportunity and other times it was by his own doings. Still, he persevered and refused to let go of his dream until his dream became a reality.

When you start to see your hopes slipping away, do you press in and refuse to quit? Is there a time when you should accept that a dream or desire of your heart has passed by? Have you remained locked into a goal or achievement so tightly that it affected your life in good or bad ways?

2. What difference did you see in the Kurt Warner who stumbled when called to run practice plays for the Packers versus the Kurt Warner who stepped right up as a St. Louis Rams quarterback in practice and games? Our tests and trials by God are not meant to break our faith. They are meant to forge that faith by the very fire of those trials. Kurt had made mistakes, but he had become humbled and coachable through the journey.

It was his change of heart and head that gave him the courage as a quarterback for the Rams to step up and finally say, "Here am I. Send me!" Meditate on areas of your life where you can ask God to humble you. We should always be teachable and correctable through the Holy Spirit. To become teachable through humility, you will have to face trials but do not be afraid for God is with you.



DISCUSSION 3

SUMMARY:

Have you ever experienced the wilderness? Almost everyone has gone through or will go through a transformational season of change. If you've accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then there really is no choice but to experience a change. But change in life doesn't just happen. Some people are unaware of what's happening as they find themselves in a season of obscurity and are left feeling like God has abandoned them.

Kurt Warner had been in a period of wilderness where God was doing work IN him, so He could work THROUGH him. It wasn't about throwing touchdown passes; it was about remaking the man on the inside to handle God's assignment on the outside. The scene where Kurt and Head Coach Dick Vermeil talked on the night Warner learned he'd made the team was a powerful illustration of how both men had gone through their respective wilderness seasons.

If you find yourself answering God's calling, but then experiencing a season where you're no longer hearing His voice, don't panic. The valley you are moving through is simply filled with shadow. Rest assured that like so many people from the Bible's history who also went through transformational changes, God has never been closer to you than in this time.

CALL TO ACTION:

Meditate on where you are in life at this moment. Almost everyone called by God will experience a season of change. Are you following a direct Word from God right now, or has the assignment given to you grown dim over time? The wilderness can feel like a punishment, but the reality is God can't promote you until He prepares you.

Are you moving into a new or deeper relationship with God? Now is a great time to reassess your understanding of how God tucks us away, while He prepares to launch us into a new anointing. God moves us from glory to glory, and the wilderness seasons help us prepare for the move.



SCRIPTURE:

2 Corinthians 3:18 (KJV)

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Matthew 4:1-11 (NIV)

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

*"He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."*

Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'" Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Exodus 4:18 (NIV)

Then Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Let me return to my own people in Egypt to see if any of them are still alive." Jethro said, "Go, and I wish you well."

Philippians 1:6 (ERV)

I am sure that the good work God began in you will continue until he completes it on the day when Jesus Christ comes again.

TALK IT OVER:

1. The scene where Dick Vermeil was encouraging Kurt Warner and affirming his faith in Kurt's ability to lead the St. Louis Rams was an important example of how we all need to see the real-life love of a father. God created the relationship between father and child to resemble the way He loves us. Even if that relationship is broken or absent, other Godly men can fill that role.

Review the interaction between Moses and his father-in-law Jethro in Exodus 4:18. How could that have affected Moses as he'd grown up without his biological father. How would it affect you to have fatherly affirmation before heading out to do a big task?

2. Are you ready for a change in your life? Kurt Warner's story is a unique tale that ends with incredible success as an athlete, but it's also an example of how trying to live life without God can complicate, delay, or even erase your potential for living a blessed life. Pray about situations where you've become impatient with waiting on God or because you might be unsure of His will for your life, you decide to activate your own desires. How has going alone worked out? How would life circumstances have resulted differently had God been the focus of your attention?



DISCUSSION 4

SUMMARY:

Have you ever allowed someone else to define your identity or calling? It's great to have people around you that will speak truth into your life, but it's not good when they overstep encouragement or correction and begin to dictate direction. Remember the scene where Kurt Warner is called into the offensive coordinator's office? The coach, Mike Martz, had been resistant to the idea of signing Kurt as a quarterback for the Rams. Now, he's faced with the decision of making him the starter after a serious injury sidelined the starting QB.

In this scene, Coach Martz pressed Kurt for an explanation of why he should trust Kurt to run the offense. He didn't hesitate to point out Kurt's shortcomings and lack of NFL experience. Kurt, after years of weathering tough times and disappointment, humbly responds to his coach by affirming his identity and his readiness to lead the team. He acknowledges having not been prepared in years prior but that he is ready for a time such as this.

We all face situations where other people might doubt us, reject us or just plain attack us for who they think we are. Too often we allow people to curse us with a false spirit based on their negative words. It might be a parent, a teacher, a spouse, or co-worker who, for whatever reason, targets you with spoken curses. That's why it's vital you understand what God says about who you are. You are His!

CALL TO ACTION:

This is a powerful discussion because so many people are affected by the words spoken against them. Something as innocent as sibling teasing as a child can begin to adhere false labels to your identity. Parents who burden their child with harsh criticisms instead of loving correction can crush a spirit and mark them as a failure. Everyone has had curses of intentional lies or unwitting misinformation spoken against them. The seeds might not have even been noticed, but they were planted in your soul.

Pray over everything negative spoken against you and reject the lies of the enemy. It's not possible to recall everything once said to harm or hurt you, but pray a sweeping rejection of anything negative. Now, focus on Scripture that clearly affirms your identity as a child of God. Proclaim these life-giving words from God and walk into the power of that identity. Time does not heal all wounds. You must be intentional about releasing your spirit from the chains of a false identity.

SCRIPTURE:

Jeremiah 1:5 (NIV)

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV)

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.

TALK IT OVER:

1. Offensive coordinator Mike Martz confronts Kurt about his lack of credentials to start as an NFL quarterback. Kurt's response was offered with respect and humility. Proverbs 15 says, "a gentle answer turns away wrath." Kurt answered with the heart of Christ, while affirming his readiness and confidence.

Discuss a time where you wanted to respond to a criticism with a harsh reply, but God prompted you to offer "the other cheek." What was the resolution and how might it have gone otherwise?

2. Although Kurt's coach, Mike Martz, had justification to question his ability to start as quarterback, Kurt offered the truth about himself and his capabilities. This isn't bragging because he had experienced trial by fire and progressed through a wilderness season of God preparing him both athletically and spiritually to handle the new assignment.

Share a time when someone doubted you, and how you went about reassuring them that it was your time, because you were sincerely confident in God's calling, preparation, and anointing.





DISCUSSION 5

SUMMARY:

God loves us. We aren't minions doomed to struggle through this life, but instead we're created in His image to glorify Him. When you succeed, God rejoices, just as a loving parent does for their child. It's a beautiful experience to witness joy and this discussion focuses on an incredible story of success. Kurt Warner led the St. Louis Rams to a Super Bowl victory, while also earning NFL Most Valuable Player and Super Bowl MVP. Do you know who Kurt Warner gave the glory to? Yep, God!

While God doesn't need our promotion, He does love our praise as a cheerful giver. Giving God praise and honor is a great way of sharing your faith witness with other people. When Kurt thanked God during his post-game interview, millions of people around the globe were able to witness first-hand the glory of God and the gratitude of His children in their toughest times and the most glorious achievements. Make sure you count your blessings and never hesitate to share your testimony of God's loving goodness in your life.

CALL TO ACTION:

This is your final discussion for AMERICAN UNDERDOG, and we pray it's been a blessing for you. It's also a great opportunity for you to connect with other believers and people who have not asked Jesus Christ to be Lord of their life. We should carry a burden for the lost and seek every chance to share God's love with them. Sharing AMERICAN UNDERDOG and walking through this discussion guide with them will allow you to share your testimony with them while they get to watch the real-life witness of Hall of Fame quarterback, Kurt Warner.

If you ever wonder whether you'll have the courage to share the Gospel, just think about what Kurt did after winning the biggest sporting event of his life in front of a stadium packed with tens of thousands of fans and millions of viewers on television. His heart and his words were set squarely on Jesus Christ. He did it, and so can you.



SCRIPTURE:

Isaiah 40:31 (ESV) - (anchor verse)

but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary;

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NIV)

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Psalms 100:4-5 (NIV)

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

TALK IT OVER:

1. Big Stage/Big Praise. Kurt Warner gave God honor and glory during one of the greatest days of his professional career as a NFL quarterback. He was ready to do that because it wasn't the first or only time he praised God. Do you give thanks to God in all things both big and small? Too often a quick prayer is offered over a meal, but this is not only what praying and praising consistently is about.

Make it your heartfelt practice to thank God in all things. Other people might see and hear your praises and it will open the door for a witnessing opportunity that leads someone to Jesus Christ. That is a victory greater than any Super Bowl ever played.

2. It's easy to look at where Kurt's life is now and forget about where it started. He didn't get recruited by a major college football program or even get drafted into the NFL, but he refused to let that identify or limit him. He clung to God's promise until he received His blessings.

Are you happy with where your life is at this season? If not, turn to Jesus. We all started without Him, but He will always make you His number one draft pick. Are you playing for Team Jesus?

ABOUT DR. SCOTT SILVERII

Dr. Scott Silverii served in law enforcement for 25 years with a highly decorated career that spanned undercover work, SWAT team, and Chief of Police. He earned a Master of Public Administration, a Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology, and post-doctoral seminary hours. Scott and his wife Leah love the Lord and have a deep passion for ministering to people. An experienced speaker, mentor, and disciple maker, Scott is available to share at workshops, conferences, and churches. They operate a nonprofit Christian publishing house that helps people share their stories with the world. Contact him at Five Stones Press for more information.

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