



God Works in Surprising Ways

By Holland McCoy, Guest Writer

Have you ever noticed how Jesus brings you to places you never would have dreamed of going? He opens and closes doors to lead you down a path that can result in the most beautiful fruit you have ever seen and tasted. He will do this for anyone, but we are often resistant to it. We serve a Creator who is beyond time. He sees things all at once, from beginning to end. Our Father God is inviting us to walk through life with him. As we go, he so delicately weaves our paths together, giving us the opportunity to step into a life built on the vision he has placed over us. The beautiful thing is that we all have a part to play with our own unique story. This is how track and field — and eventually, coaching — came to be in my life.

Guided by a Dream

It was my junior year of high school, and I was playing volleyball. The track and field coach approached me about trying out for track and field after watching me play volleyball. He said that competing in track and field would increase my potential as a volleyball player. I was new to the school and very hesitant about starting a new sport. I would have preferred to continue playing soccer during that season as it was something I knew, but the volleyball coach was persistent. The night before tryouts, I struggled with the decision of which sport to choose. As I slept, I dreamed of arriving at soccer tryouts with holes in my cleats, no shin guards, and no practice clothes. It was an uncomfortable and embarrassing experience in my dream. When I woke up, I did not even consider playing soccer anymore. Track and field became my new spring sport.

God continued to weave this sport throughout my life over the next few years. Another encounter with a track and field coach resulted in my competing as a dual sport athlete in college with volleyball and track and field. Eventually track and field would win out to become my main sport. The coaches I had during this time showed me what it was like to coach from a Christian perspective, and this experience changed my life in the most positive way. It was my hope to be able to influence others in the same way.

Coach at ONU

This journey eventually led me to coach at Olivet Nazarene University. As I enter my sixth year of coaching collegiate jumpers on the track and field team, I have learned that an excellent program is built on a firm foundation of leadership. Communication, organization, and discipline are critical to its success. While this is true, I have also learned that the true nature of my job is not winning a prize but the relationships that are built along the way. This has caused my perspective on coaching to shift from “this is my career” to “this is my ministry.”

I genuinely believe that when we allow the Holy Spirit to work through us in our professions, love leads and ministry is born. We get to be the bridge between God and humanity. Coaching allows me to teach about the sport I love while bringing a level of realness to our relationships: real hardship, real joys, real moments. There is a level of vulnerability that leads to connection. That connection builds trust, which allows me to know my athletes as people, calling them higher and walking alongside them as they figure out life. I get to help my athletes find confidence in themselves as they learn to work through challenges and defy odds that are set before them.

When your job becomes your ministry, the Lord begins to move you in a unique way.

I have experienced the opportunity to pour into others and set an example for them through consistency, hard work, kindness, and most importantly, my faith. God has called each of us to walk in relationship with one another and to lead in love. That is our greatest mission here on earth. Initially I didn't think track and field would be a part of my life, let alone my ministry. God opened the doors that led me here. God is faithful to walk with us as we continue in the vision he has placed over our lives.

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