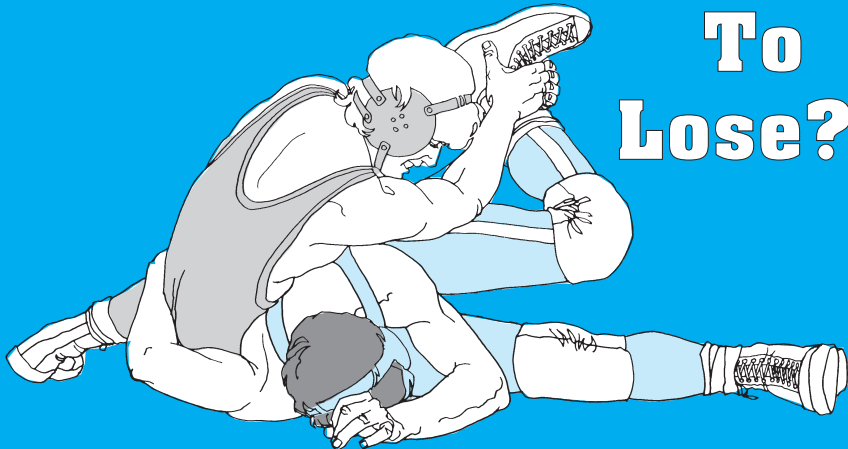


**What Did He Have
To Lose?**



Jay was an athlete everybody liked—friendly, gentle and easy going. But on the mat, this lightweight wrestler delivered a different message. He was strong, quick and determined. These active ingredients made him a state championship contender, until one night ...

In the last period of a match that he dominated, he seemed to lose his grip, then his speed, then his strength. With a minute to go he was winning 15-5. A few seconds later he was pinned. Disgusted with himself, he headed straight for the locker room. I followed him, hoping to console him.

I had gotten to know Jay because my son was on the wrestling team and because Jay had once visited our teen Bible study. He had the attitude that he could do it all by himself—whether it was going to the state finals or to heaven. He didn't see the need for any help.

Some of the wrestlers had talked to him about the way of salvation, that he couldn't get to heaven without accepting Jesus Christ as his Savior. His coach told him he would never win the spiritual wrestling match, no matter how good he was or how hard he worked, because "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against

the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).

Did he hear the message of the Bible? His team mates were sure he did. They told him what 1 Corinthians 15:54-57 says about Christ as his Savior and heaven-sent Victor in the battle over sin and death: "Death is swallowed up in victory ... The sting of death is sin ... But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Did he listen and act on what he heard? We don't know. You see, that evening when I followed Jay into the locker room to console him, he collapsed in my arms without saying a word, and went into a coma caused by a brain hemorrhage. He died the next day.

Are you wrestling life's battles all by yourself? Do you think you can conquer sin and death without God's help? Jay couldn't, and you can't either. His teammates loved him enough to show him the only move that would beat the enemy—the move to Christ. His coach showed him how to "win the match" of eternity. Did Jay listen? I hope so, but I don't know. He died without telling anyone whether or not he had accepted Christ as his Savior.

How about you? You've just heard the message. You are still alive. Do you recognize that you are losing the "wrestling match" against sin? Do you know that the inevitable result of sin is eternal separation from God? Do you realize that you cannot win without divine help? Will you accept Jesus as your Savior before it is too late?

The choice is yours. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). Choose Christ now, then tell a friend about your decision. Write to us and we'll send you our "New Believer's Packet" to help you win your spiritual "wrestling match."
— L. J. O.

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