





A SPORTING GUIDE TO ETERNITY

*'Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right
band. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you
will take me into glory.'*

PSALM 73:23-24





Connor draws on experience in both Europe and America...A devotional I would recommend for every coach in the world. God truly used Steve in providing answers to many questions that face a coach and athlete.

Coach James Rexilius

Few writers have played top class sports. Steve's experience as an athlete and theologian gives him the experience to provide you with practical and helpful daily devotionals.

Eddie Waxer

This racy book packs a punch. It is not only readable and entertaining, but it is also thought provoking and profound.



Tim Mullins, Chaplain Eton College

Should be required reading, for the Christian athlete! It cuts to the heart of professional and amateur alike.

Rick McKinley, Director – Chicago Eagles Soccer

As a businessman and 'old athlete' I applaud Steve Connor on his unique ability to apply familiar, everyday language to Biblical concepts.... Fresh and Challenging.

Jack VanDiver, Businessman & Coach





A SPORTING GUIDE TO ETERNITY

A DEVOTIONAL FOR
COMPETITIVE PEOPLE

STEVE CONNOR

Christian Focus





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To Michelle

Acknowledgments

A Christian presence in the hectic and wonderful world of sport is emerging around the world. I owe much to the dogged commitment of the many ‘sports ministers’ who have chosen to serve Christ in this exciting, strategic and unconventional field. Much of this book has been spawned and generated from the ideas and influences of these coaches and ministers, for which I am grateful – bigtime!



Introduction

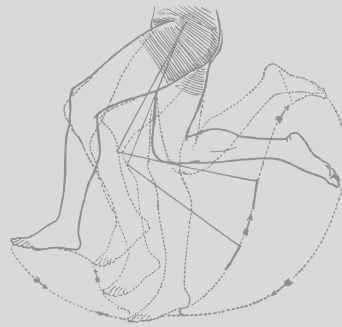
People at the top of the sports world have coaches. Good coaches are valuable. I have rarely met a competitor who did not have a few gripes about his coach. Qualities of a good coach include understanding the big picture, clearly communicating goals and objectives, teaching strategy and technique, and keeping both the team and the individual focused. A good coach can guide the athlete to reach and harness that most cherished product – human potential.

In the first four books of the New Testament we have Jesus Christ's life documented by four unique and accurate sources. A common theme throughout the text is Christ inviting others to 'follow' Him. Christ was a natural guide, or coach. We hear faint echoes of His desire to guide in Psalm 23, King David writes: *He guides me in the path of righteousness, for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil.*

This little book is for sports people (for athletes) who may be looking for a guide. Jesus guided many during His lifetime – many, but not all he invited, followed. In the past centuries many have called themselves followers of Christ. You may be surprised at how Jesus and the Bible can relate to your world. That is why I called it *A Sporting Guide*

to Eternity. He has invited you – will you follow?

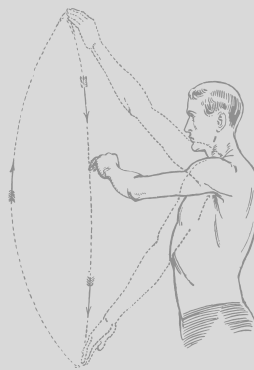
Most of these meditations stand by themselves as an inspirational thought for the day. There are no hard rules on how to read a book of ‘devotionals’, so go where you’re interested. But if you are new to spiritual things or you are just examining the Christian faith, may I suggest reading the first section in sequence. It should make more sense that way!



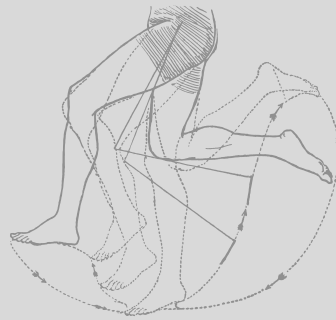
STARTING THE RACE

*'But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not
grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.'*

ISAIAH 40:31



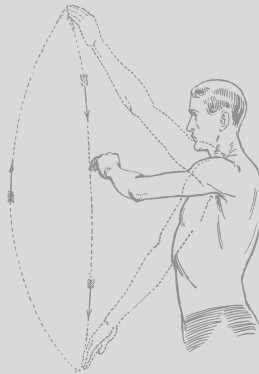




Stretching the Spiritual Muscles

*When I consider your heavens, the work of your
fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set
in place, what is man that you are mindful of him,
the son of man that you care for him?*

PSALM 8



Everyone on earth has ‘twenty-four’ hours a day – no more, no less; they are a gift from God. The way we rush around, you would think that someone had stolen a couple of those hours. We are all trying to make the best of the hours we are given. Let me encourage you to take a bit of that time and stop, open your mind and reflect on God’s power; try to understand what His glory means. I believe that you will never be able to read about, or understand God’s glory as much as you can experience it. Ask God to give you that insight, ask for a peek into His magnificence.

To exercise and challenge the ‘inner life’ is vital to your eternal destiny. Quite often, sports people are people of the outward life, people of action. You know how to learn a skill, assimilate it, and then employ the skill instinctively in the heat of competition. This is an exciting experience that can bring pleasure and personal value. Nourishing and cultivating the ‘inner life’ is similar. The habit of getting up in the morning and going for a run can be difficult to form, but once developed, will exert an influence over your physical health. The habit of cultivating your very real ‘inner life’ is also difficult but, once formed, will exert an influence over your spiritual health. When your spiritual health is in order, your physical, mental, social and

psychological well-being is consigned a healthier priority, your life will fall better into place. *(I must stop right here and give you a warning – life has many troubles, and putting your spiritual life in order is not a disinfectant to problems. Getting your spiritual life in order can give clarity and superior solutions to your problems, but probably won't result in fewer of them.)*

Training your inner life is challenging; you are busy, you may have few friends that are spiritually sympathetic and you will encounter a spiritual conflict that you may not even be aware of.

Climb the spiritual mountain and take a look towards eternity. You may not like everything you see. Take in the clean fresh air, it may hurt your spiritual lungs at first, but stretch, push and build your muscles. You may ache for a while, that is no bad thing; it means you are challenging yourself. That is life – life is eternal. You may find that many of the cravings that you like to feed on, on this earth, can be better satisfied in light of the eternal horizon.

Reflection

Nutrition is important for people in the world of sport. Have I given much attention to the 'inner man'?
Have I been feeding my soul?

Prayer

God in heaven help me to become aware
and attend to my inner life.

*'Our inconsistency can only be cured
by one constant.
Our infinite desire can be satisfied only by
an infinite being.'*
C.S. LEWIS