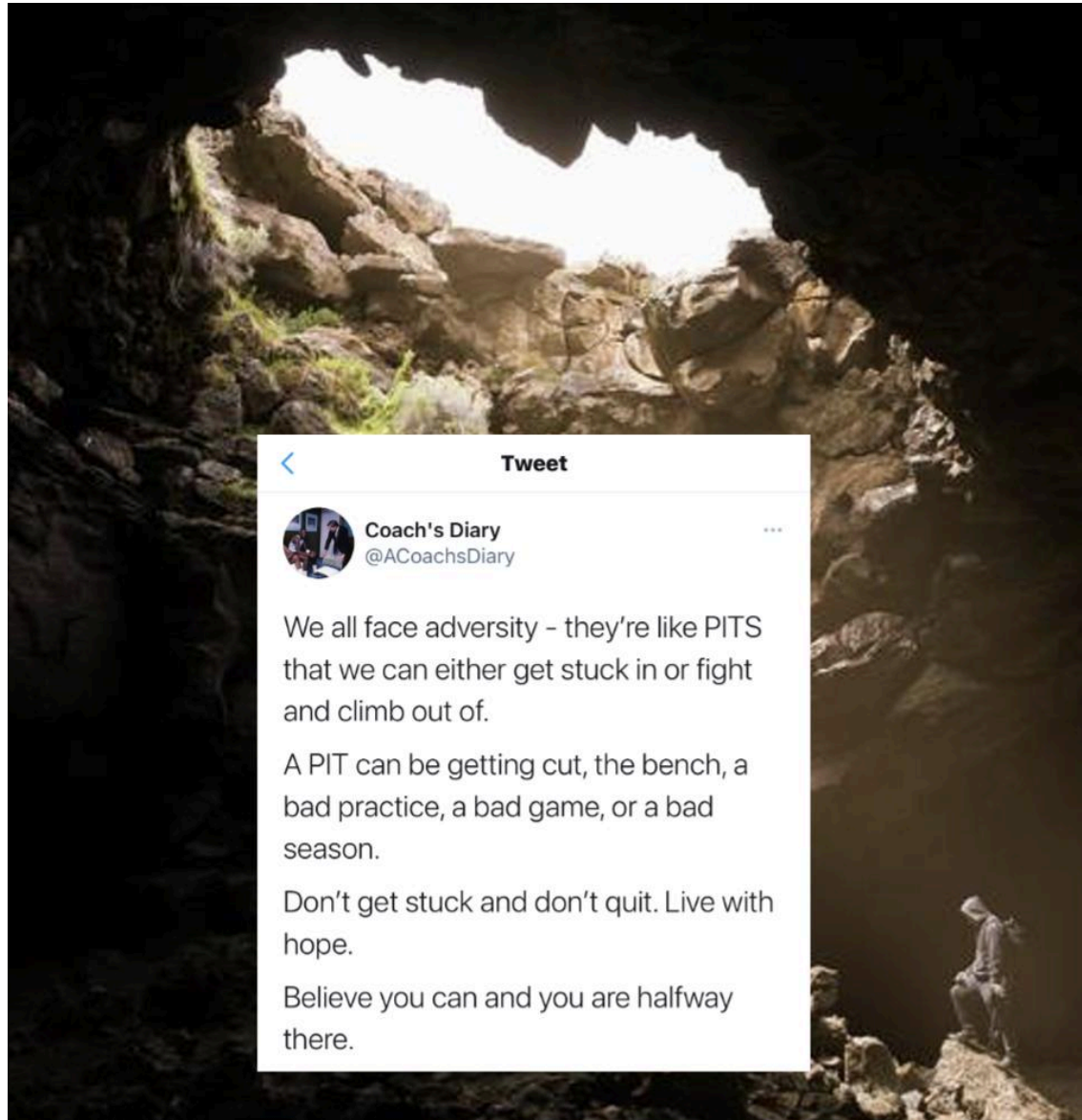


WEEK 33 | PITS

Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you (Zechariah 9:12).



The two parts about middle school and high school coaching that gives me the most anxiety are tryouts and playing time. I want everyone to play, and I want everyone to have success. It is hard on me when I have to cut someone, and it is hard on me when I don't play someone as much as they would like, especially when they are good people who work hard.

But spots on the team and playing time are earned, not given, and it is a coach's job to play the players that he/she feels are going to give the team the best chance to win.

One of my coaches used to say that the bench is like a PIT and it is our job to work ourselves out of the PIT and onto the court.

One of my favorite stories in the Bible is the story of Joseph. Joseph was one of Jacob's 12 sons, and his father loved him more than any of his other sons. When Joseph was 17 years old, he shared with his brothers two dreams that he had: in one dream, Joseph's brothers bowed to him, and in the second dream, the sun (father), the moon (mother), and eleven stars (his brothers) bowed to him. These dreams made his brothers upset and they plotted to kill him.

Instead of killing Joseph, they threw him into a PIT, but that is not where he ended up. Joseph was sold by his brother to a group of traveling merchants going to Egypt and his brothers told his dad that he was killed. When he got to Egypt, he was sold as a slave to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guards. While there, he was accused of doing something that he didn't do and he was thrown into another PIT, a jail in Egypt. When in jail, Joseph gained the favor and respect of the Pharaoh because he could interpret dreams and, and he was again pulled out of the PIT and he became one of the most important people in Egypt and helped control and manage their food supply.

A huge famine came, and all of the surrounding nations came to Egypt to buy food because Joseph had done such a good job managing their food supply that they had more than enough. Because of the famine, Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy food and found out that their brother, the one whom they threw into the PIT and then sold into slavery, was now one of the top people in all of Egypt.

Joseph went from the PIT to the palace where he was second in charge of a great nation. It started with a dream, but how did his dreams come true? We all have dreams, and we all have PITs that we have to climb out of; what made Joseph different? Joseph went from the PIT to the palace because he had a dream and he never quit.

The people who refuse to quit, the people who won't give up, make it to the finish line.

The devil is real and he digs PITS for all of us to fall into, but it is our job, with the help of God to climb out of them. Whatever you go through, put your trust and confidence in God. He can take all of the bad stuff and use it for good. If Joseph's brother never threw him into the PIT and never sold him into slavery, Joseph wouldn't have saved Egypt during the famine and he wouldn't have been able to provide food for his brothers and his family.

Remember that in this world, you will fall into PITS and you will have trouble, but the beauty of the Bible is that it is filled with story after story of people just like you who have climbed out of many PITS with the help of God. God has plans for us all to prosper. He has plans to give us all hope and a future. When we call upon him and come and pray to Him, He will listen. When we seek Him with all our hearts, we will find Him. Be a prisoner of hope. If you are a prisoner of hope and if we build and maintain trust in God, He will always be there for us and deliver us from all evil and out of all PITS.

This Week

1 - What is one PIT that you are needing to climb out of?

2 - What is one thing that you can do to help you climb out of it?

3 - What is one thing that you can do for someone that can help them climb out of a PIT that they have fallen into?

Prayer

Our Father, I know that trials, troubles, and PITS are a part of life, but I also know that I don't have to be stuck in any PIT. I know that you can use the PITS that I fall in for good if I keep my hope, trust, and faith in you. Please show me how to climb out of the PITS in my life, and show me how I can love and serve others so that I can help them climb out of their own PITS.