



## The Long Snapper

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### Questions for Discussion

#### Chapter One

1. The author writes about Brian Kinchen's difficult transition from his 13-year NFL career into a new line of work. Have you ever gone through a similar transition in your career or other areas of your life? What emotions did you experience during that time?
2. As Brian contemplated whether or not to accept the tryout offer, he mentally processed a string of rejections that dotted his NFL career. Why do you think that caused him to second guess his decision? What are some rejections you've dealt with in your life? Have those rejections caused you to push forward and pull back?

3. Brian lived a dream by playing 13 years in the NFL yet often looked at his career as a failure. Why do you think it's sometimes easy to allow disappointments to overshadow blessings?
4. Brian's wife Lori encouraged him to take a leap of faith. What does that phrase "leap of faith" mean to you? Can you think of a time when you've been faced with a decision that would require a leap of faith? What factors impacted your decision?
5. Read Proverbs 19:20-21. Following this scripture's advice, Brian reached out to several people he trusted before making a decision. Who are some of the people you rely upon for wise counsel? Can you tell the difference between situations where you had help from others versus times you tried to go it alone?

Extra Point: Brian desperately wanted to submit to God's plan but asked himself, "What is it?" Read Proverbs 3:5-6. Think of some areas in your life where you need clarity. How can you apply Solomon's wisdom to your circumstance?

#### Chapter Two

1. Brian Kinchen has a rich football heritage that played a significant role in his life. What are some notable pieces of your heritage? How has your family's history shaped you?
2. In 1955, new LSU head football coach Paul Dietzel had a sign painted on the entrance of the stadium that said, "The Proving Grounds." In what ways have you, like the upstart Tigers team, had to prove yourself?
3. Gus Kinchen wasn't always the best athlete in high school and college but was one of the most dedicated. How can dedication and hard work make up for deficiencies in talent and ability? Read 1 Corinthians 15:58. How have you seen this principle displayed in your life or the life of someone close to you?
4. Prior to 2003, Brian had never experienced a college or professional championship. In some ways, he had spent much of his career living up to his own expectations to follow in his father's footsteps (who had won a national title at LSU). Have you ever had a similar need for validation?
5. How often do you think about the concept of legacy? What kind of legacy do you hope to leave behind for your family, friend, community, etc.? Read Psalm 61:5-8. Does that passage change or solidify your personal views on the importance of heritage and legacy?

Extra Point: As Brian left for his NFL tryout, he realized he wasn't just doing it for himself; he was representing the hopes and dreams of those who had paved the way before him. What higher purpose(s) drives your aspirations for earthly success?

#### Chapter Three

1. Harper LeBel's 10-year NFL career came to a "nightmarish end" when he botched multiple snaps in two games while playing for the Baltimore Ravens. Can you think of a situation where something in your past has haunted you? Read Philippians 3:13-14. Have you ever leaned on the promises found in that passage? If not, how do you think it might help you put the past behind?
2. When Brian Kinchen traveled to Foxboro, he was once again faced with the task of competing for a job. Think about a time that you competed for a job, position, or promotion. What kinds of emotions did you experience throughout the process? Is the concept of competition at the workplace something you welcome or avoid?
3. During his tryout, Brian made one bad snap and instantly felt like he'd blown his chances of making the team. What did Brian do to deal with the mistake? Can you recall a time when you thought you had ruined your chance at something good? How did you respond?

4. Brian was surprised when Bill Belichick told him he'd made the team. Has good news ever caught you off guard? If so, do you think your reaction was due to a lack of faith, a lack of confidence, or a lack of understanding? Read Matthew 17:20. In this story, Jesus rebukes the disciples when they were unable to cast out a demon. How does that passage speak to any doubts you've ever had about your life?

5. Brian says that his return to the NFL wasn't about the money. It was about the opportunity to walk away from football on his terms; in other words, he was playing with purpose. Can you think of a time when you were working strictly for the paycheck? Can you think of a time when you were motivated by a greater goal or purpose? How were the two situations different?

Extra Point: In less than 24 hours, Brian went from teaching a seventh-grade Bible class to playing for one of the best teams in the NFL. His life was a real-world example of how God can do miraculous things through the most unlikely circumstances. In the Bible, for example, He transformed David the shepherd boy into a giant-killer and a king, and changed Saul the persecutor of Christians into Paul the world evangelist. What scenario in your life might seem unlikely to result in a victory? How does Brian's story (and the stories of those Bible heroes) strengthen your faith to believe that God can work a miracle for you too?

#### **Chapter Four**

1. As a young football player, Brian Kinchen didn't aspire to be a long snapper. He wanted to be a tight end and catch first down passes and touchdowns. What were some of your dreams when you were younger? How does your life look now compared to how you hoped it would look? Most people never fulfill their wildest dreams. If that's the case for you, has it been a disappointment? Have you found any joy where you're at now?

2. For much of his life, Brian sought approval through achievement. He would later credit growing up as a middle child for his self-diagnosed addiction to praise and recognition. In what ways do you usually seek approval? How important is the approval of others to you? Why do you think that's the case?

3. When Brian arrived on the LSU campus, he already had a game plan for his future: have a stellar college career and waltz into the NFL. Many unexpected circumstances derailed that plan; he redshirted as a freshman, he was moved from defense to offense, he broke his leg as a senior, he was selected in the 12th round towards the bottom of the NFL draft. Have you ever had a plan for your future? What unexpected circumstances have forced you to change your plans? Read Jeremiah 29:11. Is that passage something you wholeheartedly embrace or struggle to believe? Is there anything in your past that might cause you to feel that way?

4. When Brian's coaches at LSU asked him to give long snapping a try, it was completely new, uncomfortable, and rather awkward. Can you think of a time when you were asked to try something different? What was the result? Were you glad you made the attempt or do you regret trying something new?

Extra Point: Brian didn't want to redshirt, but it ultimately gave him the opportunity to meet his future wife Lori. He didn't care much about being a long snapper, but it later helped him fulfill a lifelong dream. Can you think of how some disappointments or challenges have later turned out to be blessings? Read Psalm 37:23. Considering where your journey has brought you so far (and where you want to go in the future), what do you think this passage is saying to you?

#### **Chapter Five**

1. When Brian Kinchen was trying out for the Dolphins as a rookie, he learned that one of Coach Don Shula's favorite principles is the importance of versatility. For Brian, that meant being open to long snapping even though his real dream was to play tight end. Is versatility important to you at work, home, church, or in the community? In what ways do you think that you're versatile? In what areas could you use more versatility?

2. Even though Brian was in his second season as an NFL player, he wasn't satisfied with his limited contribution to the team. That dissatisfaction drove him to work even harder. Are there areas in your life where you often feel dissatisfied? What drives you to work harder at your professional craft, your marriage and family, and/or your relationship with God?

3. After just two seasons in the NFL, Brian found himself out of a job and facing financial pressures that were compounded by his growing family's needs. Have you ever lost a job? What kind of financial pressure did it bring? Read Matthew 6:31-33. According to this passage, we don't need to worry about our material and physical needs as long as we seek God's Kingdom first. Why does it seem to be so difficult to live according to that promise? In what ways do you need to trust God more and trust yourself less?

4. When Brian was dealing with some adversity, his father Gus wrote him an encouraging poem titled "Focus." Do you ever struggle with focus? How much of a difference does focus, or the lack thereof, have on your ability to reach goals? In what area of your life could you use more focus and a stronger work ethic?

5. After finally finding success as a tight end during his sixth NFL season, Brian once again experienced disappointment when the Baltimore Ravens brought in veteran Eric Green. Brian was unceremoniously demoted back to special teams. While it wasn't getting fired, the demotion was almost as painful. Have you ever experienced a similar setback in your profession or an area of competition? What was your initial reaction? As time passed, how did you respond to your demotion?

Extra Point: At the age of 35, Brian was faced with the daunting task of starting over. He wanted to be thankful for his 13 years in the NFL, but instead was bombarded with questions about he and his family's future. Read Proverbs 23:17-19. Solomon warns us not to be envious of sinners, even when they seem to be enjoying success. He shares the promise that those who seek righteousness have a future hope. Do you ever find yourself worried about your future while at the same time envying someone else's success? In what ways might the passage in Proverbs 23 encourage you during times of uncertainty?

#### **Chapter Six**

1. Brian Kinchen used to have an anxiety dream about walking into an NFL room where no one knew him. Much like the first day of elementary school, Brian relived that dream when he joined the Patriots late in the 2003 season. Can you think of a time when you experienced a similar feeling of insecurity in either the distant or recent past?

2. Read Philippians 4:6. According to this passage, what plan of action should we take when we're feeling anxious? What are some areas in your life where holding to the truth in Philippians 4:6 might be beneficial?

3. During the Patriots' late season run in 2003, Coach Bill Belichick preached about the importance of preparation and execution. How do those two elements work together? Can you have one without the other? From a spiritual perspective, why are preparation and execution so vital to a successful walk with Christ?

4. Unbeknownst to Brian at the time, two injuries paved the way for his opportunity to return to the NFL. His unusual circumstance underscores the importance of being prepared for anything that might come your way. Do you think it's humanly possible to live with that level of preparedness?

5. Read 2 Timothy 4:2. Paul is teaching his apprentice the principle of being ready to share the Gospel in any situation. What are some areas of your life in which it might be important to follow that same advice?

Extra Point: Brian describes his new teammates in New England as a "great group of guys." He is genuinely impressed with the camaraderie that exists inside the whole organization. In what ways do you think that type of bond might help a team's success? Read Psalm 133:1-3. David gives a very descriptive analogy for the principle of unity. In what ways have you seen unity bring life and success to a situation? What happens when there is a lack of unity? What are some ways that you can personally contribute to an atmosphere of unity in your home, at your job, at your church, and in your community?

## Chapter Seven

1. During his first week of practice, Brian got restless and wondered if he could find other ways to contribute. He asked if he could practice with the scout team as a tight end. Why do you think Brian felt like he needed to do more than what the coach expected from him? What made Brian come to his senses?

2. Have you ever been dissatisfied with your role on a team (at work, at church, in a sports league, etc)? Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-25. How can you apply this biblical principle to everyday situations in your life? What are some of the spiritual aspects of teamwork and individual responsibilities?

3. Brian made sacrifices to fulfill his dream. He was away from family. He missed his son's birthday. He didn't get to help LSU/his alma mater for which he'd been volunteering during the season/prepare for the National Championship game. What are some things you've sacrificed for a personal goal? Was the end result worth the sacrifice?

4. Brian's return to the NFL wasn't as glamorous as people might think. In fact, it was full of mundane realities that many might consider downright boring. What are some things that might attract people to the kind of lifestyle Brian enjoyed for 13 years? Do any of those things appeal to you? In general, why do you think people crave success? How important is material wealth and status to you?

5. Whether it was during practice or on game day, Brian found solace in his routine, and it helped him quickly readjust to the NFL mentality. To maintain a consistent regiment, it takes a good measure of discipline. How important is routine in your daily life? What happens when you break from that routine?

6. Read Proverbs 25:28. Any kind of success—physical, material, or spiritual—can only come from a life of discipline. This passage describes what happens to those who have no discipline. Have you ever experienced something similar in your life due to a lack of discipline? In which areas could you stand to improve on your discipline? What do you think a more disciplined life would look like for you?

Extra Point: One of Brian's pre-game rituals involved a bathroom stall prayer. He didn't ask God for a victory but simply prayed for the "ability to put forth his best efforts," "for protection," and "for the strength to be prepared." If you were about to play in a professional sports event, how do you think you would pray? Read James 5:15-17. What elements of this passage (faith, confession, righteousness, etc.) speak to your spirit and challenge you the most? What do you need to do to become more disciplined in your prayer life?

## Chapter Eight

1. At the end of his first game as a member of the Patriots, Brian was unsure of how much he should celebrate. He was new to the team and still felt like an outsider. Have you ever felt like an outsider? How long did it take you to adjust to your new surroundings?

2. Read Hebrews 13:1-2. Think about some times when someone new has been introduced to your workplace, your church, your family, etc. In the future, what are some ways that you could help someone in that situation feel welcome and less insecure?

3. Anonymity is golden for *The Long Snapper*. As Brian has seen with other long snappers, the only time people talk about you is when you make a costly mistake. What are some real world parallels to the precarious nature of Brian's old job? What are some responsibilities in your life that only get noticed when you mess them up? What role does consistency play when you approach those tasks?

4. While enjoying a brief post-season break, Brian was tempted to attend LSU's national championship game. Ultimately, there was too much risk involved, and he gave his tickets away. Can you think of a personal desire you've sacrificed in order to obtain a greater goal? What are some other areas in your life where some sacrifice might quicken your personal, financial, physical, and/or spiritual progress?

5. From his hotel room in Foxboro, Brian watched LSU defeat Oklahoma for the national title. He especially enjoyed seeing reserve long snapper Gant Petty, an athlete he had been mentoring, do well in place of the suspended starter. Have you ever mentored someone? Can you relate to Brian's feeling of fulfillment that came with his "student's" success?

Extra Point: Read 1 Corinthians 11:1. Paul instructs fellow believers to take up the practice of spiritual mentoring. Have you ever been on either side of such a relationship? What are some of the benefits you experienced? If you haven't experienced the benefits of mentoring or being mentored, what are some ways you put this biblical principle into action?

## Chapter Nine

1. Several of Brian's students sent letters and cards wishing him well in the playoffs. One student, Sean O'Neal, paraphrased Psalm 16:3: "The godly people in our land are my true heroes!" In what ways does today's society seem to contradict the sentiment of that Bible verse? Who are some "godly people" that you consider "true heroes"? Why do you think it's important for us to have trustworthy role models?
2. One of the more touching letters Brian received was from a girl named Jennie Garland who thanked him for the impact he'd made on her life. Jennie's thoughtful note caught Brian off guard and reminded him of his important role as a teacher. Can you recall a time when you received unexpected fulfillment from something you do on a regular basis? What are some ways that you can impact others in your sphere of influence?
3. In the playoff game against the Tennessee Titans, Brian inexplicably struggled with his accuracy and began to feel the heat from his coaches. Two bad snaps caused him to question his ability. Has anything ever caused you to lose confidence in your talents and gifts? Like Brian, did you try to make any adjustments to rectify the problem?
4. As he continued to struggle, Brian was only concerned about "survival." If he could just get through the game without any major mistakes, he would be okay. Have you ever felt like you just needed to survive the day or survive a situation? When you're in "survival mode," whom or what do you lean upon for strength and guidance?

Extra Point: After the game against Tennessee, Brian said his "prayer now is for peace of mind." How do you personally define "peace of mind?" Can you think of a time when you had "peace of mind?" Can you remember a time when you didn't enjoy that luxury? Read Romans 8:5-6. This passage describes two ways of thinking with two very different results. Towards which one do you tend to gravitate? How does that impact your ability to have peace of mind?

## Chapter Ten

1. After a month away from home, Brian described himself as being "kind of lonely." Can you recall a time when you experienced loneliness or isolation? Did anything positive emerge from that circumstance? Brian did his best to capitalize on the seclusion through reading and prayer. How do you utilize your time alone? What can you do to ensure that these activities are beneficial and not just for the purpose of passing the time?
2. Brian's extensive down time led him into a period of "heavy introspection." While reading Patrick M. Morley's book *The Man in the Mirror*, he dove into a chapter called "Purpose: Why Do I Exist?" What is your personal definition of the word "purpose"? Brian had been measuring his self-worth based on performance. Have you ever lived that way? Did it help you achieve a satisfactory result?
3. Brian used Morley's book to develop a "life purpose statement." Do you think it's important to have a written record of what you believe to be your purpose in life? What are some key points that might be found in your "life purpose statement?" What steps do you need to take in order to begin living out that statement?
4. Brian "had long felt that being a dad was his greatest purpose in the world." Being away from family for an extended period of time caused him to realize the depth of that belief. This held especially true when he had to tell his son Logan that he wouldn't be home in time for this birthday. Have you ever felt like you were sacrificing your family for a personal goal? How do you find balance between your role in the family (i.e. spouse, parent, child, etc.) and your need to fulfill a purpose?
5. Up until the AFC Championship game, Brian had "never felt the need to give himself a daily report-card." That all changed when the stakes were raised and his confidence was shaken. Are you ever required to administer a self-assessment of your job performance? Read 2 Corinthians 13:5. How do you think the concept of self-examination might be beneficial for your career or your family? In your spiritual life, what are some ways that you can test your faith? What benefits might come from such an exercise?

Extra Point: Despite experiencing some serious doubts, Brian tells his wife Lori that, "God will provide me with whatever I need to get the job done." Read 1 Samuel 17:32-50. In this story, David tells King Saul of his desire to challenge the Philistine warrior Goliath. How does Saul try to help David prepare for the battle? Why do you think David rejected his assistance? How do Brian's words to his wife mimic David's actions in this story? In what ways can you better trust God for your provisions?

## Chapter Eleven

1. Heading into the AFC Championship game, Brian had more confidence in his teammates than at any other time in his career. Surrounded by incredibly talented athletes, he was even more encouraged by the fact that these guys were proven winners. How does the talent level of the people with whom you work impact your ability to succeed? Does being around successful people challenge you, intimidate you, make you complacent, or make no difference?
2. At a crucial time in the game, Colts long snapper Justin Snow snapped the ball over punter Hunter Smith's head. The play cost the Colts two points and gave the Patriots a 15-0 lead. Instead of celebrating, however, Brian felt empathy. Was it surprising to read that in the story? What are some things you've experienced that might allow you to empathize with someone else? Is it easy or difficult for you to have empathy for others?
3. After the game, one of the first things Brian did was to console Snow for the mistake he made during the game. How do Brian's actions contrast with what today's society might expect? Read 1 Peter 3:8. Peter encourages us to live peacefully with each other. What are some of the attributes that he writes can help make that a reality? What are some ways that you can show compassion and humility on the job, at home, and even throughout the course of competition?
4. Even though Brian made several appearances on national television, he was never mentioned, and most viewers most likely had no idea of his identity or his story. His students at Parkview, however, were constantly on the lookout for their teacher. Who are some of the people that look up to you? How much of an impact do you feel like you have on them? Within your sphere of influence, what kind of role model do you aspire to be?

Extra Point: At the end of the game's national broadcast, cameras caught a shot of Brian celebrating with fellow LSU alum Jarvis Green. Being so used to his anonymity as a long snapper, he had no idea that his image would be captured and seen so prominently by millions. What are some situations in your life where you might be unknowingly observed? How often do you think about how your actions might be viewed by onlookers? What lessons about character and integrity can be learned from Brian's brief on-screen moment?

## Chapter Twelve

1. It took weeks at a time away from his family for Brian to truly appreciate the simple pleasures of fatherhood. Even though his boys were already asleep when he arrived home for a short break from the team, he gave them kisses, prayed for them, and tucked them into their beds. What are some of the simple pleasures you enjoy as a father? If you're not a father, what are some simple pleasures of life?
2. Read 1 Timothy 6:17. This scripture reminds us that God gives us things in this world to enjoy—relationships, nature, etc. What are some things that you have taken for granted? What are some ways that you can begin getting more enjoyment out of life?
3. His first night back from Foxboro, Brian took time to pray for his sons. He prayed for protection, peaceful sleep, their immediate future, and their relationship with God. What things do you pray for on behalf of your children? Your spouse? Your family? Your friends? Do you believe that blessing others through prayer can make a difference? Read Numbers 6:24-26. What are some specific ways that the elements of this prayer might show up in the lives of the people you love?
4. The day following New England's AFC Championship victory, there was a stark contrast between Brian's non-descript schedule and starting quarterback Tom Brady's impressive itinerary. Although both are on the same team and both can potentially hold the outcome of a game in their hands, one is deemed much more valuable and important by the average onlooker. Can you think of a similar situation that exists at your job, at your church, etc.? Read Romans 12:4-8. In what ways is the body of Christ like a sports team? What can you do to begin valuing all parts of your various teams (church, work, family, etc.) equally?
5. At the Parkview school assembly, Sonya Pruitt prays for Brian, but she doesn't pray for a Super Bowl victory. Instead, she prays that he will be used for God's glory—win or lose. Do you think athletes and fans should pray for sports victories? What is different, if anything, about Pruitt's prayer compared to the way you usually pray? Are you more likely to ask God for material needs or for His will to be done in your life? Is it possible for you to find balance between the two?

Extra Point: Retired kicker Al Del Greco gave Brian some interesting advice heading into the Super Bowl: "Soak it all in and enjoy every second of it." Do you have trouble taking time to smell the proverbial roses or are you someone who has no problem slowing down to enjoy life? Read John 10:10. Many non-believers think that following Christ means being sentenced to a boring and dull life. What does this verse have to say about that? What would an abundant life look like for you? Are you living that way? Why or why not?

## Chapter Thirteen

1. After hearing countless encouraging words from friends like Al Del Greco, Brian was welcomed back to Foxboro with a rash of negative comments from the coaching staff. In a matter of hours, his frame of mind began spiraling out of control. Can you think of a time when people's words impacted your ability to maintain positive thoughts? Read Proverbs 18:21. What are some examples of how the tongue can bring "life and death"? What do you think Solomon means when he says, "those who love it will eat its fruit"? What are some ways that you can begin speaking life? How can you do a better job avoiding words that might speak death?
2. After a couple of bad practice days, Brian admitted to his longtime friend and former NFL tight end Mark Bavaro that he was contemplating quitting. The pressure was starting to get to him and he didn't want to be responsible for the team's failure. Brian's temptation was to quit. He didn't see any other way of escape. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. Have you ever thought about quitting a job, a relationship, or a team due to fear of failure? How did that situation unfold? What are some of the promises found in this passage that might help you resist the urge to give up?
3. It appeared that Brian was suffering from the yips—a physical manifestation of stress and anxiety that causes people (primarily athletes) to lose the ability to perform basic functions. For Brian, that meant his usually consistent snaps were getting more erratic. Has stress or anxiety ever hindered your physical ability or even caused an illness? What are some steps that you take when worry overcomes you?
4. Brian had a strong desire to honor God and honor the important people in his life. He wanted everyone to be proud of his performance in the Super Bowl. Do you have a similar desire to honor God and the people you love? How do you hope you might be able to honor God through your life? Read 1 Chronicles 16:26-30. What are some ways that this passage suggests you can honor God? What are some examples of "offerings" we can give Him?

Extra Point: Read Proverbs 2:6. Brian had his own interpretation of this passage. What is a personal translation for your life? What is your definition of the word "wisdom"? In what ways would knowledge and understanding from God help you deal with whatever challenges you might be facing?

## Chapter Fourteen

1. Sitting in his hotel room at night, Brian had too much time on his hands and too much time to think about the big game. As the old saying goes, his idle mind became "the devil's playground." Can you think of a time when too much free time got you into trouble? Read Ephesians 5:15-17. This passage talks about how "the days are evil." What do you think that means and what does it have to do with your idle time? Ephesians also talks about "making the most of your time." What are some productive things you can do in your spare time? How might those activities keep your mind from becoming "the devil's playground"?
2. After coming out of retirement, long snapper Trey Junkin made a costly mistake that kept the New York Giants from reaching the Super Bowl. He spent the next year suffering from a severe case of guilt. Have you ever made a mistake that stuck with you for a long time? Were you eventually able to shake the guilt, or is it something you still struggle with today? Guilt is a device that Satan, the enemy of our soul, uses to slow people down and distract them from their purpose. Have you ever dealt with the guilt that comes from disobedience to God or sin? Read Romans 8:1. How does this passage speak to that situation? What does Romans say are the key factors in living without a spirit of guilt or condemnation?

3. With the Super Bowl looming, Brian was feeling the pressure to perform. What emotions do you think Brian was feeling in the days leading up to the big game? What's the most pressure you've ever experienced in a performance situation (whether at your job, on a sports team, in a musical concert, etc.)? Read Ephesians 2:8-9. Why do you think God isn't interested in performance as much as He's interested in faith? What then, is the purpose of your "good works"?

4. Brian was reminded of another story about long snapper Tom Goode who came out of retirement and snapped the game winning field goal in the Baltimore Colts' Super Bowl V victory against the Dallas Cowboys. During a timeout just before the play, Goode simply thanked God for the opportunity to be there. What are some things for which you are thankful? How often do you thank God for the blessings in your life? Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18. This passage tells us to "give thanks in all circumstances." Can you describe a time when it was difficult to give thanks? Why do you think God wants you to thank Him even during difficult situations? What is the benefit in doing so?

Extra Point: Brian had two very different stories occupying his thoughts—one with a positive result, the other with a negative outcome. Read Philippians 4:8. What advice from this verse might have benefited Brian? Take each of the suggested items from Philippians and name something that fits the category (true, noble, etc.). What makes it so difficult to do as the passage suggests? How does thinking on positive things change your outcome? What about negative things? What are some ways that you can put Philippians 4:8 into action in your life?

## Chapter Fifteen

1. Brian's improbable trip to the Super Bowl gave him a unique vantage point. He wasn't the average NFL player. He was "Everyman playing at the Super Bowl." When Jesus came to Earth, he also had a unique vantage point. Read Philippians 2:5-8. What do you think it means to have "no reputation"? Why do you think Jesus—the Son of God—presented Himself as a servant? What are some simple ways that you—without using any special skills or utilizing any sort of notoriety—can make a difference in the people around you? How can following Jesus' example help?

2. After a pre-Super Bowl practice with mixed results, Brian had an encounter with Coach Bill Belichick. This time, Belichick didn't yell, but instead calmly offered some practical advice. To which form of correction do you best respond? When you're the one giving instruction, do you usually employ a harsh, in-your-face method, or do you gently provide constructive criticism? Read Proverbs 15:1, 15:4, and 15:18. What are some of the ways that anger can negatively impact others? What do you think the opposite kind of communication, and its effect on others, looks like?

3. In order to restore his confidence, Brian did something he'd never done before. He practiced snapping the ball in his hotel room. The Bible also has many examples of people doing unusual things to produce a positive result. Namaan dipped in the Jordan River to rid himself of leprosy (2 Kings 5:1-14), Zacchaeus the tax collector climbed a tree to get a closer look at Jesus (Luke 19:1-10), and four men lowered their paralytic friend through a roof to gain access to Jesus' healing power (Mark 2:1-12). Even Jesus went to extreme measures by fasting 40 days in the wilderness to prepare for his ministry (Matthew 4:1-11). Have you ever done something out of the ordinary to get a better outcome? Why do you think it's important to sometimes make a change in the way you do things?

4. For Brian, the media hype at the Super Bowl was an opportunity to share his incredible story and, more importantly, the role of faith in his life. When have you had unique chances to talk about your relationship with Christ? Read Philemon 1:6. What do you think "effective" faith looks like? What does this passage suggest is the ultimate purpose behind sharing our faith with others?

Extra Point: On the surface, Brian seemed to be fine. Only a select few people knew there was anything wrong with his psyche. Covering up internal issues is a common practice. Are there any problems you're dealing with that no one else knows about? Why have you found it difficult to share them with others? Read Psalm 13:1-6. David wrote about many of his struggles throughout the Psalms. How can you relate to the words found in these verses? What will it take for you to find the same kind of peace and hope that David found towards the end of this passage?

## Chapter Sixteen

1. Patriots punter and field goal holder Ken Walter realized that he would have to make up for any of Brian's mistakes as a snapper. Have you ever utilized one of your strengths to help a friend or teammate overcome their weakness? Have you ever been in Brian's situation, where someone had to lift you up? Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. How does having good friends make you stronger? Why is the friendless someone to be pitied? What are some ways that you draw closer to someone who needs a friend?

2. Brian went to teammate (and the team's spiritual leader) Don Davis for help. Davis reminded Brian that he had been brought in "for a specific time and purpose." How often do you consider the purpose behind difficult situations in your life? Why do you think it's often so difficult to see beyond the present? Read Romans 8:28. Have you ever experienced the truth in this verse? What do you think is the key to unlocking the power found here?

3. Don Davis had been teaching a team Bible study called "Five Ways God Uses Problems." Which of those five things (direct, inspect, correct, protect, and perfect) have you experienced in your life? Read 1 Peter 1:6-7 and 1 Peter 4:12-13. Both of these passages deal with the reason behind tests in our lives. According to Peter, what is the underlying purpose for life's difficulties? What are some specific ways that you can take your trials and use them to glorify God?

4. In Don Davis' prayer with Brian, he spoke against any of the devil's nefarious plans. While Brian was admittedly not sure that the devil had anything to do with his struggles, the Bible does tell us that followers of Christ do have a mortal enemy. Read Ephesians 6:12. Can you rephrase this passage in your own words? How does the nature of this enemy make it difficult to combat? What efforts are you putting forth to win the battle against these "spiritual forces?"

Extra Point: When reading "The Man in the Mirror," Brian had an epiphany: He was afraid because he didn't fully trust God. What are some things that you fear? How do those fears reflect your trust (or lack of trust) in God? Read Psalm 56:11. What do you think it means to fully trust God? What are some practical ways that you can apply this simple passage to your life?

## Chapter Seventeen

1. On the morning of the Super Bowl, Brian went into his routine "conservation mode." He didn't want to burn any energy he would need

for the game that night. What are some instances in your life when you need to conserve your physical strength? Have you ever paid the price for poorly dispensing your energy reserves? Read Mark 6:30-31. In this passage, Jesus' disciples had just concluded a busy day of ministry. What advice did He give them? In what ways might physical rest (or the lack thereof) impact your spiritual well being? What are some things you can do to observe physical and/or spiritual rest?

2. When Brian cut his finger with the steak knife, his teammates found humor in the situation. Brian, however, wasn't amused. The inconveniently timed blunder added more pressure to his already stressful week. Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. What are some minor problems (or "light afflictions") that can sometimes get the best of you? How often do you think about life beyond this world? What do you think it means to have an eternal perspective? How can that mindset keep you from sweating the small stuff in this life?

3. Brian began preparing for the worst. He knew there was a chance that his trouble snapping the ball might cost the team a championship. Brian asked for the strength to get through whatever was about to happen good or bad. We find many similar instances in the Bible. David asked for protection in battle (Psalm 31:15). Jesus prepared for death through prayer. (Matthew 26:39-42). Can you think of time when you asked God for the grace to make it through a tough situation? Read 2 Corinthians 9:8. Sometimes God's destiny for your life can include trying circumstances. What are some ways you can prepare for anything that might come your way en route to fulfilling the "good work"?

4. Even after praying for strength, Brian still found himself struggling with the pressure. He tried to cut a deal with God by requesting a blowout and saying he'd "never ask for anything again." Have you ever tried to bargain with God? Did you get what you wanted? Did you hold up your end of the bargain? Read 1 John 5:14-15. This passage indicates that God will answer those who believe in His ability to hear their prayers. What do you think "according to His will" means? Do you think that supports or debunks the theory that you can bargain with God? How does that passage change, if at all, your view of prayer?

Extra Point: During the game, teammate Anthony Pleasant prophetically told Brian, "The game is on you! It's gonna be on you." Brian took the stern message as a challenge to get his act together for the greater cause. Have you ever felt like the success of a game, contest, event, or other challenge weighed solely on your shoulders? Read Hebrews 12:1-2. What are some weights or sins that are taking you off your spiritual game? How can keeping your eyes on Jesus and remembering his plight on the cross help inspire your quest for endurance?

## **Chapter Eighteen**

1. Watching from his home in Georgia, Harper LeBel envied Brian's position but didn't the mental anguish he was suffering. It was the classic case of "the grass is always greener on the other side." Have you ever wished you could trade places with someone? Can you think of someone who supposedly "had it all," but later was revealed to be unhappy despite his or her success?

2. Read Hebrews 13:5. What are some other things besides money that people might covet? In what ways do you think God wants to satisfy your needs and your desires? Have you ever experienced that kind of satisfaction? If not, what steps can you take to trust God to fulfill your life?

3. As Mark Bavaro watched the game (fully aware of Brian's struggles), he said to himself "sometimes God is just cruel." In the previous chapter, Brian likewise asked God, "Why are you doing this to me?" Have you ever felt like God was the cause of your troubles? Read James 1:13. If God is not responsible, who or what do you think might be the culprits? Why is it important to identify the source of your problems?

4. As the team broke from the huddle right before Adam Vinatieri's game-winning field goal attempt, the players shouted, "Field goal on Kinch!" At that moment, Brian became keenly aware of the fact that the success of the play rested on his shoulders. Read 2 Timothy 1:7-9. How could this passage have helped put Brian's mind at ease? Can you think of a situation where the spirit of "power, love, and sound judgment" might have come in handy? What do you think the difference is between "our works" and "His own purpose"? How does living for God's purpose make it easier to handle difficult tasks?

Extra Point: After Vinatieri's successful kick, the winning field goal was played over and over again. The broadcasters mentioned the perfect hold and the perfect kick, but there was no mention of the perfect snap. Strangely, Brian was hoping he wouldn't be mentioned during the game at all since long snappers are