

**Youth Culture Lesson**  
**Finding Teachable Moments in Culture**  
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**Crushed:** How Do We Recover from Our Toughest Moments?  
By Paul Asay

**What Happened:**

The World Cup has been won, with Germany crowned the new champion after a 1-0 victory over Argentina. It marked the fourth time in history the country has won the World Cup.

In a way, the match was almost anticlimactic to the semifinals, when Germany humiliated the home team Brazil by a score of 7-1. Before the drubbing, Brazil hadn't lost a competitive game in its home country since 1975—before some of your parents were born.

For a sport in which three goals can feel like an offensive explosion (and the other semifinal was scoreless for 120 minutes of gameplay), Germany's dismantling of Brazil was outlandish. Four goals were scored in five minutes. "Historic Shame," read one headline of a prominent Brazilian website. Brazilian fans were crying by halftime. Coach Luiz Felipe Scolari said, "I think it was the worst day of my life."

Brazil, perhaps still demoralized, lost 3-0 to the Netherlands in the consolation game. Now the conversation turns to what Brazil—a country that has won five World Cups in the sport's history—does next. Will the country's team sink into irrelevance? Or will it make necessary changes to return to prominence?

**Talk About It:**

Brazil is far from the only team to be eliminated on a big stage. Almost all of us have felt the sting of loss and embarrassment. Our teams lose games they shouldn't. Players make mistakes. Actors forget their lines. Students freeze on big tests. Sometimes people purposefully try to make us feel foolish or silly. We all can sympathize with Brazilian players, because we all know how it feels to be embarrassed. We understand what it means to lose.

It's not a question of *if* we'll feel ashamed or embarrassed in our lives, but *when*. Everyone does sooner or later. What matters is how we respond. Do we sink into a shell? Do we snap back? Do we make changes to try to prevent it from happening again?

Can you think of a time when you were really embarrassed? What happened? How did you handle it? How did you get over it? Would you do anything different now?

Do you remember a time when one of your friends or family members suffered a bad loss or embarrassment? Did you try to make him or her feel better? To ease his or her pain a little? What did you say? Did it help?

**What the Bible Says:**

No matter what losses we experience in our lives, and no matter how acute the embarrassment, the Bible reminds us God is in control.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8).

“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (James 1:2-4).

More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Rom. 5:3-5).

Paul Asay has written for *The Washington Post*, *Christianity Today*, [Beliefnet.com](http://Beliefnet.com) and *The (Colorado Springs) Gazette*. He writes about culture for *PluggedIn* and wrote the Batman book *God on the Streets of Gotham* (Tyndale). He recently collaborated with Jim Daly, president of Focus on the Family, on his book *The Good Dad*. He lives in Colorado Springs with wife, Wendy, and his two children. Follow him on Twitter @AsayPaul.