

**Youth Culture Lesson**  
**Finding Teachable Moments in Culture**  
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**True Gold**

Teens Impress at Olympics

By Paul Asay

**What Happened:**

They call her “The Flying Squirrel,” and on Aug. 2, 2012, 16-year-old Gabby Douglas flew to an individual gold medal at the Olympic Games in London.

Gabby is a Christian who talks openly about her faith and often tweets Bible verses. After her win, she said, “I give all the glory to God. It’s kind of a win-win situation. The glory goes up to Him, and the blessings fall down on me.”

While God may have had a hand in her victory, all the hard work she put in didn’t hurt either. Two years ago, she left home to move to Des Moines and train with Liang Chow, one of the best coaches in the country. She labored for years to get where she’s at, pushing aside questions about her mental toughness and her own doubts. “Life is not easy,” she says. “You have to fight and just refuse to quit.”

She’s one of several teens at the Olympics to show that fighting spirit. Her teammates, all between 15 and 17 years old, won the team gold medal, too. Jordyn Wieber, who had been the favorite to win the gold that went to Gabby, pushed aside her disappointment in not qualifying for the all-around to help her team to victory. At the Olympic pool, 17-year-old high schooler Missy Franklin has been winning medal after medal.

These teens worked incredibly hard to get to where they are. In so doing, they’re not just impressing the world for how they’re handling themselves inside the arena but their poise and maturity outside it.

“At an Olympics that has already been rocked by Twitter blunders and a badminton scandal, the youngest competitors are handling themselves with dignity and poise in a field dominated by more experienced athletes,” writes *Forbes*’ Alison Griswold. “They’ve maintained composure under tremendous pressure, stayed focused in competition and taken triumphs and disappointments in stride.”

**Talk About It**

Have you been watching the Olympics? If so, which athletes have impressed you the most? Do you cheer for folks solely on what they do in their sports? How important is it to you that they’re good people, not just good athletes?

Few of us will go to the Olympics, but we still can get better at something if we work hard enough. What sorts of things are you good at doing? What sorts of sacrifices do you make to get better? Are there things you should be working harder at?

Does God play a role in someone's success? Does He care who wins? Does He give the talent? Does He help through the training process—through all the sacrifices people have to make and work they have to do to reach a certain goal?

**What the Bible Says:**

“His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor His delights in the legs of a man; the Lord delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love” (Ps. 147:10-11).

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

“May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands” (Ps. 90:17).