



NFL LINEBACKER AND FAITH MOTIVATED FOUNDER
STEVEN JOHNSON JR.
WITH PAUL CARTWRIGHT

A WALK ^{IN} OUR CLEATS

25 ATHLETES WHO NEVER GAVE UP

INTRODUCTION

All the best athletes have stories behind their greatness. I don't use the word *greatness* lightly, because it's very hard to be great. Like most kids, I wanted to be great . . . at something. However, too often life's struggles get in the way. So, first off, I want to thank you for picking up a copy of this book! I appreciate you taking time to read my story and those of my friends, and for opening your hearts and minds to learn that there's more to us than our stats and the jerseys we wear.

A ton of athletes in the NFL have amazing testimonies, but the ones in these pages are from guys I have been fortunate enough to know personally. It is my hope that one of these true stories gives you the encouragement and direction you need to reach for your own greatness . . . whatever that may be!

When I first came up with the idea for a book, I had no idea how to put it into action. But I knew I had an important story to tell. There were challenges I had to overcome. So right now, I want to start with a challenge for you. I want you to think about your identity. Is it the clothes you wear? Is it the car you drive, the girlfriend you have, or the respect you get from being a good video gamer? Is it the sport you play? All of these are *things*—things we take pride in, things that bring us joy and entertainment. But there is only ONE *person* who can give us our true identity: Jesus Christ.

Serving God brings us an ultimate joy that isn't defined by wins or losses, clothes or cars, friends or girlfriends. The truth is, we are not

musicians, artists, gamers, or athletes who happen to be Christians. We are Christians who happen to be all those things.

Now ask yourself, “Why in the world am I good at what I do?”

When I ask myself that question, it makes me realize that, even though I may not be the strongest or the fastest athlete in the world, I have a resolve that’s second to none, matched by a burning desire to be one of the greatest linebackers to ever play the game. Did I give myself these desires? Did my parents give them to me? Did the world? The answer can be confusing. So let’s take the confusion out of it.

I’m here to tell you that you have a Creator in heaven. He made you perfectly. In fact, you are fearfully and wonderfully made. You possess qualities and abilities you can’t describe, gifts you may not have found yet! It is God’s craftsmanship that makes you able to conquer the unconquerable, climb the unclimbable, and reach the unreachable. And it is God’s desire for you to spread light to others and touch the untouchable. Through God, you can do ANYTHING you set your mind to accomplish. Now, I would be a complete liar if I sat here and told you that the guys in this book, myself included, have never made a mistake. We are human, just like you. We fall short and make mistakes every day, and are tempted and prodded all the time. And unfortunately, our mistakes are often magnified and shared with the public because of what we do for a living. However, we choose not to dwell on or relive our past mistakes—we work to do better. Always remember that your mistakes do not make you. It is what you learn from them and how you move forward. That is where your tests become testimonies.

As you read this book, take your time and pay attention to our stories. Personally, I’ve seen God show up when I needed him most. To be honest, I almost gave up on my dreams a few times, but God has always given me

enough strength to push through. Now, I'm not here to force religion on you or tell you right from wrong. But I am here to push you. I am here to give you the inspiration and motivation you need to believe that being mediocre is never an option. There will be storms in your life. You can count on that. But taking the easy road is a greater threat to your progress than dealing with the hardship head-on. This is why we grind and stay consistent. It's a lifestyle. I guarantee by the time you reach the end of this book, you will know what it's like to have an undying ambition to follow God as you follow your dreams.

Steven Johnson Jr.

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FIND OUT HOW YOUR FAVORITE NFL SUPERSTARS ... BECAME SUPERSTARS

This book goes where few books have gone before—under the pads and in the cleats of 25 outstanding NFL players. Featuring full-color, action-oriented photos of some of today's biggest stars—such as Ben Roethlisberger, Benjamin Watson, and more—*A Walk in Our Cleats* is an exciting, inside look at their journeys to the NFL and what it took to succeed.

From pursuing their dreams to overcoming injuries and working hard to play football at the highest level, each player has faced unique circumstances. But all have one thing in common: the power of Jesus Christ in their lives.

These short entries written by each player allow you to jump into the book whenever and wherever you choose. Browse the photos. Discover each NFL player's favorite Scripture passage. Pick up inspiration from their unique stories. Find elite-level motivation for your own faith journey.

Decorated and popular NFL players included in *A Walk in Our Cleats* are:

Steven Johnson Jr. • Ben Roethlisberger • Manny Ramirez
Miles Killebrew • Chris Harris Jr. • David Bass • Lorenzo Alexander
Tyson Alualu • Jordan Matthews • Shamarko Thomas • Matthew Slater
Chris Clark • Don Carey • Arthur Moats • Derrick Morgan
Benjamin Watson • Will Johnson • Alfred Morris • Wesley Woodyard
Ryan Shazier • Charles Johnson • Brandon Marshall
Tyler Patmon • Morgan Cox • Ben Garland

Steven Johnson Jr. is an American football linebacker who's played six seasons in the National Football League. He is also the CEO and founder of the Faith Motivated Foundation, a charity designed to empower youth by demonstrating how to set and achieve goals while also seeking to educate and model a healthy lifestyle by motivating good choices through Christ. Steven has overcome insurmountable odds his entire life. He is the definition of diligence, patience, and perseverance. Check out the Faith Motivated Foundation at www.faithmotivated.org

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