

MATTIAS MAINES

2018 Courage Award Winner

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." (John 16:33 ESV)

These are words of courage that I grew up hearing in church. And, I always thought I understood this verse until I had to opportunity to really put my faith into action.

My story of courage begins at the 2017 Arnold Classic in Columbus Ohio, but first I will give you some background. I was a successful power lifter for years accumulating pro totals in several competitions. In October of 2016 I totaled 1,862lbs at 230 body weight (650 squat, 485 bench, 727 dead lift) qualifying me to compete at the 2017 Arnold Classic. This was going to be my big moment, my opportunity to show my best!

After months of training the day arrived in March of 2017. I planned to squat 700+, bench 500+, and dead lift 750. My opening squat attempt of 630 was fast and easy. My next planned attempt of 700 was mentally complete, I just needed to knock it out to move on to the next. When I stepped back with the weight, the bar moved down my shoulder on one side due to my shoulders sweating. And, with confidence I said to myself... It's just 700lbs, get it done. On my decent, my left quad tore causing me to drop without tension. The fall ruptured both quads, tearing them completely from the bone.

As I laid on the ground with the crowd in dead silence, the first words to come to my mind was thank you God for the opportunity. (Followed up with feelings of anger, disappointment, and disbelief.) I knew that I was about to have the most difficult battle of my life.

I was immediately rushed to the trauma unit in Columbus for emergency surgery. After wiring my quads back to the bone, I made my way back to Georgia. I regrouped for 10 days before returning to the gym. I decided to set a new goal, and work to develop each muscle for my first bodybuilding show in 1 year



(NPC Battle at the River). I remained in my wheelchair training for nearly 3 months. With the help of God, my wife, friends, and family I was able to come back better than before.

It was a long road of recovery, wrapped in strong emotion, changed perspective, and continuous prayer. But, the character building months of learning to walk again to the joy of holding my sword up at my first bodybuilding show was something I would never take back.

In one year, I went from being in a wheelchair to winning the True Novice Heavyweight, Novice Heavyweight, Novice Overall, and 4th place in the Open Division at my first show. But, greatest of all, I gained an understanding of real strength and courage. I learned to trust the Lord with all my heart, and recognize that HE knows what is best.

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