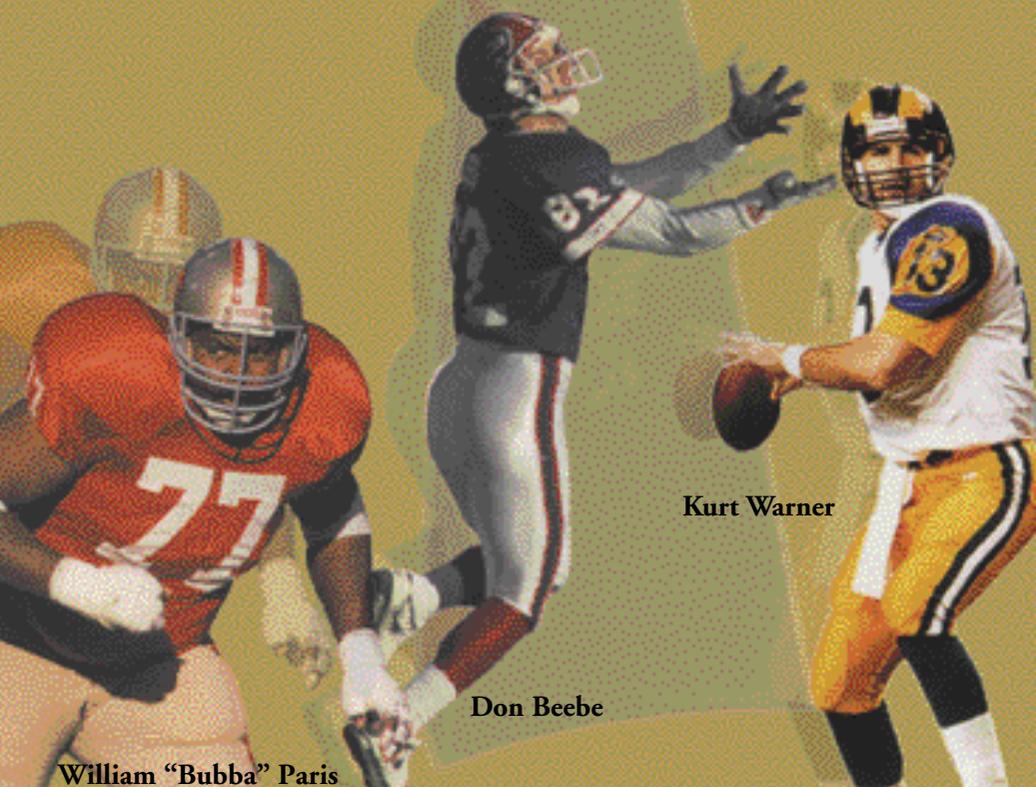


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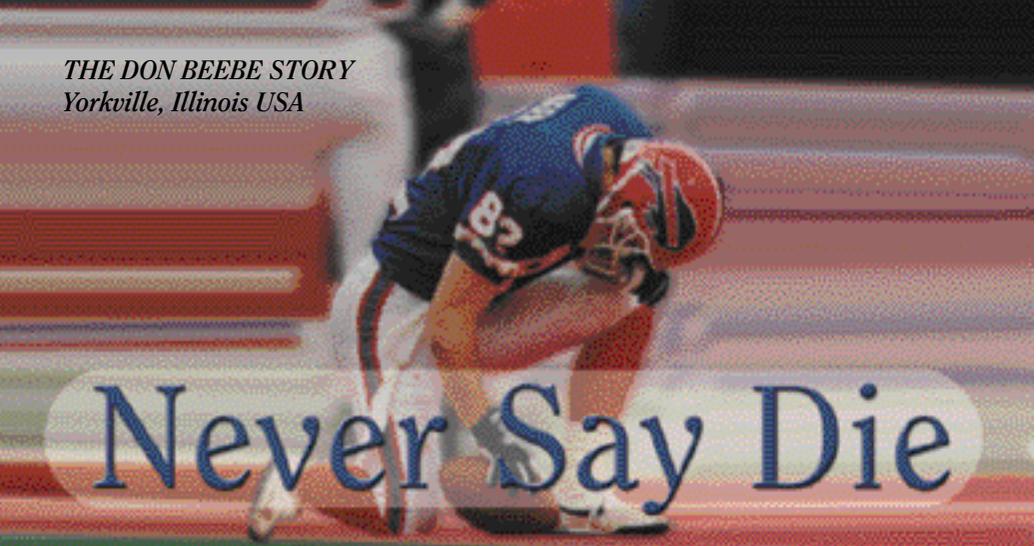
- **Do you feel like giving up?** P.2
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Kurt Warner

Don Beebe

William "Bubba" Paris



Never Say Die

I know the thrill of Super Bowl victory. I still have the game ball from Green Bay's 35-21 victory over New England in 1997.

Believe it or not, my favorite memory from the National Football League championship comes from a losing effort — in fact, a blowout.

Though it's been eight years ago, fans still talk about it. Buffalo was down 52-17. Late in the game our quarterback, Frank Reich, fumbled. Mammoth Dallas defensive end Leon Lett scooped up the ball and headed 64 yards towards paydirt.

The final 10 yards he held the ball out to his right side, almost

down to his knee. He looked like he was showboating.

I was running a pattern in the end zone when Reich fumbled. Seeing Lett lumber down the field, I started sprinting. Since he outweighed me by 105 pounds, I figured I could catch him.

But around the 20-yard line, I thought, "How am I going to do this? This guy is HUGE. Maybe I'll jump on his back."

As Lett neared the goal line, I caught up with him. Before he could dance into the end zone, I swatted the pigskin out of his hand. It rolled past the end line, giving us a touchback and the ball back.

Then I tore my helmet off and jogged to the sideline. We still lost by 35 points, so the play was no big deal to me. That is, until owner Ralph Wilson walked by my locker.

Shaking my hand and looking me in the eye, he said, “Son, you showed me a lot today. That meant a lot to me, that a guy like you can represent the Buffalo Bills like that. Thank you.”

Wow. Maybe this was something special.

It seemed everyone noticed. Other team officials raved about it. A columnist for the *Arizona Star* called me the game’s most valuable player. The most heart-warming thing was the stacks of letters that followed.

One father wrote to say he had never been able to reach his son. They didn’t have a good relationship.

“Then I see this play where you don’t give up,” he said. “I show my

son the play, and say this is how you act in sports, and in life. Our relationship has changed because of it. You’ll never understand how

much your action meant to a lot of people. Thank you.”

I could tell the guy was emotional when he wrote that letter. I cried while I read it. That’s why I played football. That’s why I work with young athletes today, teaching them to develop their full potential. The point is not becoming a star

or making money. It’s to touch lives.

When we follow Jesus Christ, we never know how God will use us to do that. We never know who’s watching.

But I know this. When I was just seven years old and accepted Christ as my Savior, the Lord saw me.

I didn’t have any major problems then. I knew my parents and two older sisters were Christians. I wanted the same

How am I going to do this?

relationship with Jesus and the peace they had.

An interesting thing happened that day. My aunt had walked to the front of the church with me. After I prayed, she asked, “Is there anything you want to ask God right now?”

“Yes,” I said. “I’d like to ask God if I could be something special in sports.”

I would follow a pretty crazy pattern getting to the NFL, quitting college and installing aluminum siding for a couple years.

Though I later returned to the same school, there was a quirk with my eligibility. I finished my last year at a small college in Nebraska.

A miracle happened there that let me know the Lord still had my prayer in mind. My senior year’s performance and gridiron speed had attracted attention from pro scouts. Rich Kotite, then an assistant with the New York Jets, flew out west to watch me.

However, our quarterback was in class and nobody else was around who could throw. Except my brother. Now you have to understand my brother can’t throw a ball straight. Any ball. His football tosses look like wounded

ducks.

But this day he threw perfect spirals as I ran routes. We worked out for almost half an hour and he threw between 75-100 passes. Plus, he was on target 95 percent of the time.

“I don’t know what got into you,” I grinned after we sat down to catch our breath, “but it wasn’t you throwing.”

While the Jets didn’t draft me, I still wound up in the state of New York. Some might think four Super Bowl losses ruined my time there. But I loved Buffalo. We had good teams and I made lifelong friends.

Looking back, I learned more from the down times in the NFL than the good. Take the year after the Bills released me, when I signed with the Carolina Panthers. Then I got injured and lost my starting job. Practices became a bore.

Growing bitter, I struggled with envy, resentment and self-pity. But one day in prayer, the Lord asked me whose opinion mattered more, His or other people’s.

After thinking that over awhile, I prayed, “God, I’m tired of feeling like this. I’m tired of listening to everyone else but You. Even though this situation isn’t

good I know You'll turn this around."

I also realized that one reason I went to Carolina was to meet a couple who are still friends. He renewed his life with Christ and his wife accepted Him as her Savior. That's more important than any football trophies.

Still, God turned things around for me. The next year I signed with Green Bay. At long last, after a great year, I had that Super Bowl ring.

I wrote a book about it, titled *More Than A Ring*. That ring symbolized not a great worldly achievement, but the proof of my father's teaching and my faith.

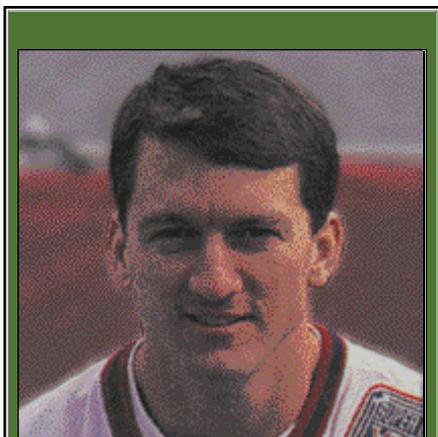
My father always taught me to never give up. So does the Bible. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:24, "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it."

Thus, a long time ago I decided that with anything I do, I'm going to do it as good as I possibly can. I believe God always wants us to give our best.

Giving my best now means, first of all, as a husband and father. But I also want to be a good influence to the young men and women I work

with in teaching sports clinics. Many don't have a father or are otherwise lacking the guidance they need.

Whenever an opportunity arises, I tell them about the heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus. With the Savior at your side, you will always be a champion.

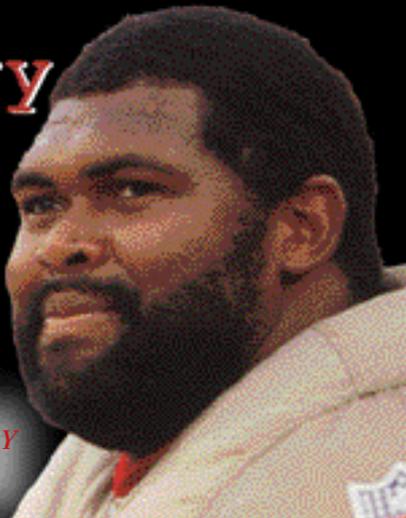


After nine years in the NFL, in 1998 Don Beebe founded the House of Speed (www.houseofspeed.com), which conducts sports clinics around the nation. He and his wife, Diana, have three children, ages 4 to 9. They attend First Assembly of God church in Aurora.

A Super Story



THE BUBBA PARIS STORY
Pittsburgh, California USA



I'll never forget my first Super Bowl my third season in San Francisco. It was played at Stanford University, which practically made it a home game for the 49ers.

It marked the first time the coin toss had ever been done from the White House. A Californian, President Ronald Reagan called "heads" for us. We won the toss. It was like the President wanted us to win. That's exciting!

I played in three National Football League championships during my career. A multitude of emotions rattled around inside each time we ran onto the field.

Fans see the thrills and daydream about the glamour. Yes, I

felt anticipation and excitement. It's the most important game in professional football.

But it's also nerve wracking. As the left tackle, I had to protect the skinny little quarterback (Joe Montana) everybody loved. Since I wasn't supposed to let him get hit, or hurt, I felt an awesome sense of responsibility.

Still, measure this game against the confines of life and it's a small matter. A memory that quickly passes. Compared to life, death and knowing Jesus Christ, it's nothing.

Jesus has been an integral part of my life since childhood. A lot of people talk about how they couldn't fit in at church, or someone there treated them bad. When I was

growing up, Christians were the only folks who accepted me.

I was a big kid, headed towards my eventual 6-foot-7 height and more than 300 pounds. Nobody invited me to their parties; they were afraid I would eat all the food. And they sure didn't want me sitting in their Mustang, since they figured I might flatten the tires.

My faith pulled me through adversity as a youngster. Being teased and mocked is nothing, next to your father dying before you go off to college.

That's why I'm so happy to have a Lord who delivers us from the pain and situations that trouble our soul. I'm glad I serve Jesus, who is as alive today as 2,000 years ago when He rose from the grave.

I never miss a chance to tell others about Him. Like the year He promised I would start in the Super Bowl, although I had been second string all season.

Our coach was upset with me for failing to lose weight. I tried. I spent thousands of dollars at a health resort and did everything I

could think of to slim down. But he finally penalized me by starting Steve Wallace in my place.

That hurt. Every kickoff that fall I sat on the bench. But we kept winning, going all the way to the final round. After the NFC title

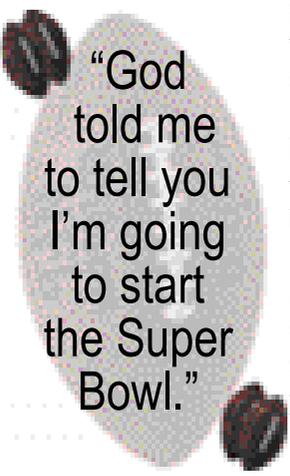
game, the Lord told me I would start in the championship.

Though I didn't see how that was possible, I was wise enough to believe God. So I prepared. Ran extra laps after practice, had the quarterback take more snaps so I could practice pass blocking, and got mentally fit.

I spoke it as though it had already happened, too. "God told me to tell you I'm going to start the Super Bowl," I told reporters. They didn't let me forget it, setting up the "Bubba Watch" to see if it would happen.

The Bowl approached. Wallace was still practicing with the first team. The night before the game, the Lord whispered, "You will start the second half."

I had to humble myself. Here I had gone out on a limb. It was afraid



"God told me to tell you I'm going to start the Super Bowl."

of looking like a fool. But I accepted His will and didn't say anything about this change of plans.

On the first play of the game, Wallace broke his leg. The coach quickly put me into the lineup. I played the rest of the game — and started the second half.

Steve and I are still friends. We prayed for him after he was injured, and he went on to play eight more years. This ultimately strengthened his faith, because he saw how God kept His promise to me.

You might think that would have made me shy about ever opening my mouth again. Not me. I serve a great God. He made the first man, Adam, out of dirt. So for His children, He can do anything He chooses.

My last year with the 49ers, we experienced tremendous heartache. One game shy of making our third straight Super Bowl, we fumbled with less than three minutes to play and a two-point lead.

The New York Giants

recovered and scored a touchdown. Our dream went up in smoke.

Afterwards, everyone in the locker room was crying. Especially me. Montana had promised me a cheeseburger if we won.

Suddenly, God said, "Stand up, dry your tears and tell your teammates that next year you're going back to the championship game and you're going to show them what you can do."

So I told my teammates, the press, and the public.

Except I misinterpreted it a bit. I told them the team was going back to the championship. But the Lord said I was going. Imagine the media's reaction after I got cut the next summer. I moved on to Indianapolis, which is only two hours from my hometown in Kentucky.

The Colts are championship contenders now, but then they were going through the doldrums. The year I joined them I kept telling them the Lord said we were going to the

*My faith
pulled me
through
adversity
as a
youngster.*

championship.

When our record dropped to 1-12, the quarterback said, “We aren’t going anywhere, so quit telling the team that mess.”

A week later Indianapolis cut me. The press started laughing again. But a day later the Detroit Lions called offering to sign me. They wanted me to help inspire their young team.

After flying to Detroit, I walked into the locker room wearing all three Super Bowl rings. I told the players, “God told me to tell you that we’re going to the championship.”

It was like pouring gasoline on a fire. The whole room erupted, “God said it!” Guys went wild. We went out that week and beat Green Bay. After winning two more, we made it to the NFC Championship.

Now, the Lions didn’t reach the Super Bowl. But God didn’t say we would. He told me I was going to a championship game and I did.

He had to disrupt my whole world to fulfill His promise. Well, He can do that. When we follow Christ, the Father writes a victorious story for each one of our lives. We have to leave the circumstances up to Him.

Remember, God is more than capable of dealing with whatever you face. He wants to free you from the things that bind you. He created the universe and everything in it. I think of Him as the Ultimate Champion.

Although retired from pro football, William “Bubba” Paris is a talk show host and sideline reporter for the San Francisco 49ers and Oakland Raiders. He operates Paris Enterprises, doing educational seminars, workshops, motivational speaking and promotional appearances. He is also the founder of Champions With Christ, an evangelistic crusade ministry. He and his wife, Evelyn, have 11 children, four of them adopted.



THE KURT WARNER STORY
St. Louis, Missouri USA

All Things Possible

The 2000 Super Bowl picture: the Tennessee Titans had just tied us, wiping out what had been a 16-point lead.

Dick Vermeil, our amazing and emotional head coach, was darting up and down the sidelines, keeping the mood upbeat and positive.

“This is how it ought to be,” he said repeatedly. “The world championship game, tied 16-16, with two minutes to go. This is great! Let’s go win it right now.”

*The world
championship
game, tied
16-16. with 2
minutes to
go.*

When he got to me, he put his hands on my shoulders and sized me up.

“Hey,” he said, eyes shining, “you couldn’t ask for a better script.

Now go out and give it that perfect ending.”

“You’ve got it, coach,” I said.

Moments earlier, as I stood on the sidelines, waiting for the final act of this sensational drama, I looked up to the top of the Georgia Dome.

During our 1999 miracle season, when the St. Louis Rams

From the book *All Things Possible: My Story of Faith, Football, and the Miracle Season* by Kurt Warner with Michael Silver, which is published by HarperSanFrancisco and Zondervan Publishing House. Copyright 2000 by Kurt Warner and Michael Silver.

went from worst to first, I told myself, *God is faithful; He finishes what He starts.* Now I said it again: *He's gonna finish what He started. It's time for me to win this game.*

As I ran onto the field and called the play in the huddle, I looked into the eyes of our All-Pro wideout, Isaac Bruce. Ike and I hadn't talked much during the game, which wasn't unusual. What he wants is the ball. With our season on the line, I was determined to get it to him.

All four wideouts were going long, with Ike ready to do his thing on the outside. But a couple of seconds after the snap, as I was getting ready to throw long, "The Freak" appeared in my line of vision.

That's the nickname for Jevon Kearse, the Titans' defensive end, a 260-pound terror who wreaked havoc on the National Football League his rookie season.

He was the last person on earth I wanted to see bearing down on me and my aching ribs. I knew as I released the ball I was going to get smacked. It's part of being a quarterback; it's why we make the big bucks.

Fortunately, he didn't thrash

me that badly. I was off balance as I released the ball, and he came down with his arm on top of me and knocked me down. I looked up in time to see Ike come back and catch the pass in front of an off-balance defender.

Then there were bodies in front of me, but with fans screaming I knew something good had happened. Ike made a beautiful move and that was it. I got to my feet just as he charged into the end zone. Then I sprinted down to join the celebration.

When I got there, I also looked up at the gorgeous woman I had met seven years earlier in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Brenda saw me pointing right at her. She pointed back. We acknowledged the end of an incredible climb no one else in the stadium could truly appreciate. Moments later, the Rams withstood a last-second rally to win.

By now, most football fans know my story. A guy who was stocking groceries for minimum wage not too long ago, with only one prior year of pro experience, went from nobody to the NFL's Most Valuable Player.

But not as many know the

story of me accepting Jesus as my Savior, and Brenda's role in it.

During my struggles to make it in pro ball, I had been searching for God. I knew I needed a closer relationship with Him. As we dated, I watched the difference Brenda's faith made in her life. She was strong and determined despite raising two children herself.

Before I accepted Christ, though, we went through some battles over spiritual matters. One time she argued, "You aren't saved because of the good things you do! The only way to be 'saved' is through God's grace."

She was saying I wouldn't be going to heaven unless I changed my thinking. That really bugged me. But I finally reached the point where I knew what I needed to do. I asked Jesus into my heart.

However, I didn't feel any big, emotional experience. There was no overnight metamorphosis.

But when Brenda's parents were killed in a tornado, I realized for certain something had begun to take place in my heart and life.

You would think that would have been the lowest point imaginable. Yet I got closer to God and my future wife than ever. I had a sense of peace within me that actually enabled *me* to give *her* spiritual strength and guidance.

It has been an upward climb ever since. Yet there have been challenges along the way. When you go from being a fringe player to a celebrity, there are times when your view of reality becomes a bit skewed.

If you're not careful, you can lose touch with the values that helped propel you to great heights. The universe becomes the *you*-niverse, and you forget what were striving for in the first place.

That's why my faith is so important to me. Lord knows, I'm not perfect. Selfishness is a huge root of all evil, whether it's greed or getting caught up in your own little world.

*A guy who
was stocking
groceries . . .
went from
nobody to
the NFL's
MVP.*

I'm not immune to such struggles. But I believe the closer I get to God the easier it is for me to avoid those temptations and establish a comfort zone where the focus isn't always on me.

Having people tell you how great you are is part of it. But the fight against self-absorption began while I was still anonymous. To overcome the long odds against me, I had to maintain an incredible degree of faith in myself.

It's great to believe in yourself, but in my opinion you have to believe in something more as well. For me, becoming a Christian wasn't just a transition that made me a better person. It also made me feel better as a person, and specifically, it made feel less isolated.

Before, it was me against the world, or my family and I versus everyone. But once I accepted Jesus and committed my life to Him, I had a community of brothers and sisters who believed in a common cause.

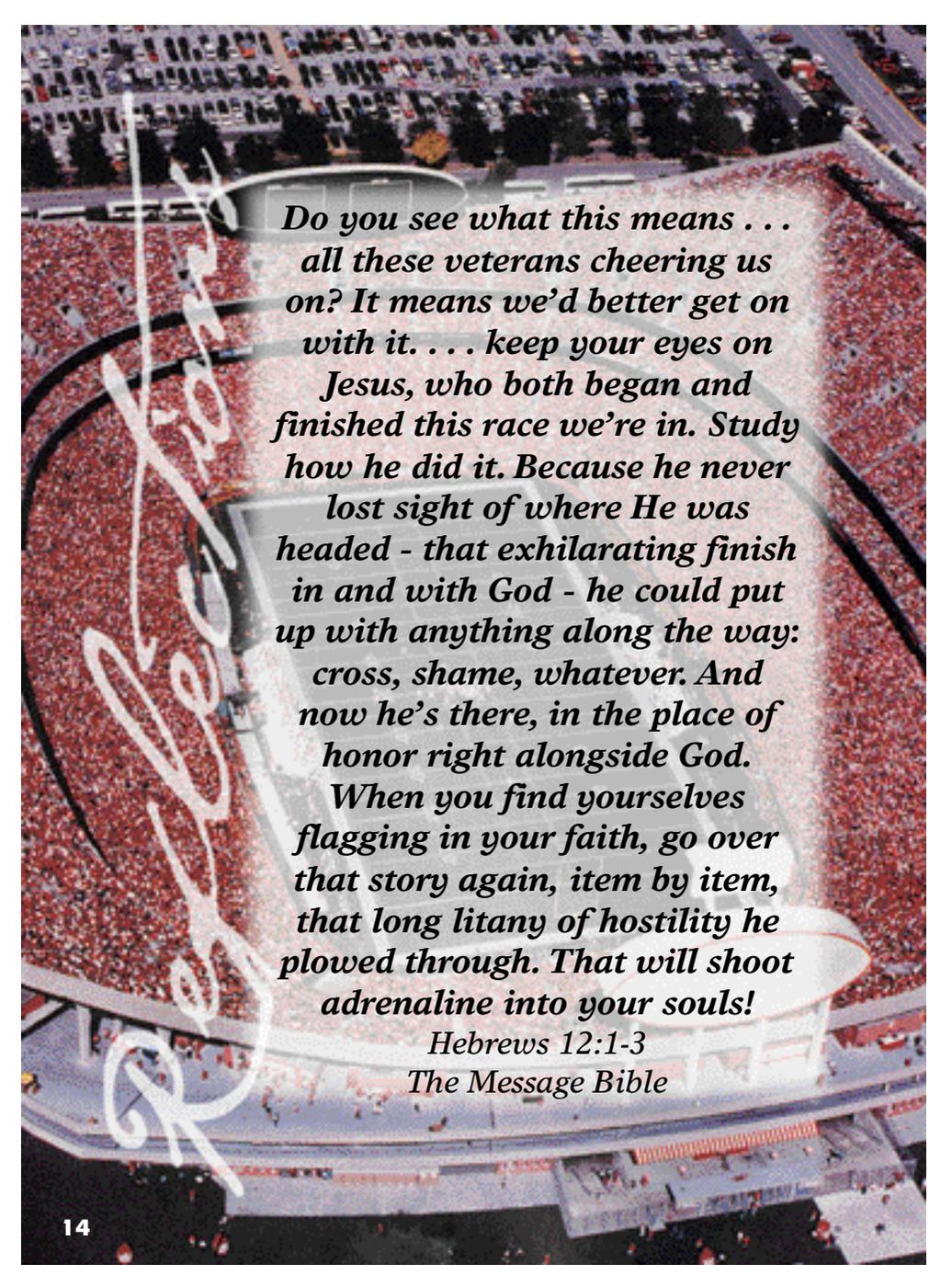
It was an extended family, like a football team. Only the goal wasn't to defeat an opponent, but to share in a love and ecstasy. That, in my mind, dwarfed everything else in importance.

Today, I embrace my status as a role model, but it has nothing to do with athletics. I want to be a role model for Christ in everything that I do. Living my life for Him, and showing people the beauty of that reality, is my mission in life. It's my agenda and why I feel it's important to share my story.

Whether I'm a Super Bowl champion or a regular guy stocking groceries, sharing my faith and glorifying Jesus is the central focus of my time on this earth.



After leading the St. Louis Rams to last year's Super Bowl title, Kurt Warner started the current season by throwing three touchdown passes in a 41-36 victory over Denver. He and his wife, Brenda, have three children: Zack, Jesse and Kade. They attend the St. Louis Family Church.



*Do you see what this means . . .
all these veterans cheering us
on? It means we'd better get on
with it. . . . keep your eyes on
Jesus, who both began and
finished this race we're in. Study
how he did it. Because he never
lost sight of where He was
headed - that exhilarating finish
in and with God - he could put
up with anything along the way:
cross, shame, whatever. And
now he's there, in the place of
honor right alongside God.
When you find yourselves
flagging in your faith, go over
that story again, item by item,
that long litany of hostility he
plowed through. That will shoot
adrenaline into your souls!*

*Hebrews 12:1-3
The Message Bible*

Christ is the ANSWER...He makes life worth living.

As you have been reading the stories of the lives of different people in this issue of *Answer Magazine*, you may have been thinking, "Is it possible for me to really know God and have peace in my heart?"

The answer to this question is "YES!" It is experienced by believing in God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and being born-again by His Spirit.

God loves you and He showed that love in sending His Son, Jesus, to die on the Cross to pay the penalty for your sins. He wants to bless your life and make it full and complete.

He not only offers you abundant life here and now, but a life which is eternal. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

Do you want to be born-again and receive the free gift of eternal life? If you do, then follow these steps:

1. ADMIT to God that you are a sinner and are separated from Him, and that only the Lord Jesus can save you. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)
2. REPENT by turning away from sin and submitting to God. "I tell you... except you repent, you shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:5)
3. BELIEVE that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the Cross and shed His blood to pay the price for your sins, that He was buried

and rose again. "If you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)

4. ASK God to save you. "For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13)

If you would like to accept Jesus into your life, and receive the free gift of eternal life, then pray this simple prayer out loud:—

"Dear God, I come to You in the Name of Jesus. I now realize that I have a choice to make about my life. I believe that Jesus died for me, shed His blood to wash away my sins, and that He rose from the dead, making a way for me to have fellowship with You. I turn my back on the life I have lived without You, and I choose to follow Jesus from this moment on. I ask Jesus to be Lord of my life and to live in my heart. I thank You, Almighty God, that You love me, have forgiven me, and have accepted me as Your child, and that right now I am a new creation, born of God. Thank You Heavenly Father."

When you have made this very important decision, please complete the form below and return it to the nearest National Service Center (listed on the back cover).

We will then send you further helpful information.

I wish to inform you of my decision to follow Jesus Christ

(Please print clearly)

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Issue #070100

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