

Meet 5 Incredible Young Christian American Olympic Athletes

Simone Biles, 19, Team USA Gymnastics

The International Olympics Organization describes Simone Biles as “the new star of American gymnastics.” The 2016 Olympic Games is her first Olympic competition, but she has already broken world records.

Biles is the first female gymnast in history to win three consecutive world all-around titles. In 2015, Biles became the first woman to win three consecutive world all-around titles, surpassing legendary Russian gymnast Svetlana Korkhina who won *non-consecutively* three world all-around titles (in 1997, 2001 and 2003).

In only three appearances, Biles became “America’s most successful female gymnast (14 medals), and the first to win 10 World Championships titles.”

A Roman Catholic, Biles says she leans on her Catholic faith before big events. “Before a big event, I usually go to church and light a candle for St. Sebastian, who is the patron saint of athletes.”

David Boudia, 27, Team USA Diving

David Boudia is a member of the U.S. National Diving Team who became a Christian in 2010. While in London for the 2012 Olympics, he told BeliefNet about his conversion experience. He said:

“In 2008, diving was my god. It was a forced competition. I needed to do well there if I wanted to do well later in life. But for this Olympics, I’m enjoying every moment, day by day

because tomorrow's not guaranteed. It's more about what I'm doing to share my purpose but not forcing it on people. God is providing this platform so He can reveal Himself. Hopefully the sport will get more attention this year and hopefully God will get more attention out of the Olympics as well."

He explains that becoming a Christian was a freeing moment. And after he started reading the Bible, he began to understand "his purpose." He says

"Competition started to look a lot different. Competition is all about you. It's about feeding your selfish needs. It feeds the depravity of your heart. You start to worry about what happens if you don't win. You start to fear man because you want praise from man. You start thinking about how winning will lead to more money. There are a lot of sin issues inside of that. So now when I go into competition, I have to take my thoughts captive and use God's Word to fight that battle. It's totally freeing when I stay in tune with Scripture. I don't have to worry if I miss a dive. I go into competition and it's like, 'Praise God no matter what.' If I do well, that's awesome. I praise Him. If I don't do well, praise Him even more. Competition looks way different now."

Boudia won the gold in 2012.

Trayvon Bromell, 21, Team USA Track and Field

Bromell's Twitter account bio highlights John 3:30. ("He must become greater; I must become less.") And this perspective has carried him through many challenging situations. As a high school athlete Bromell suffered hip, knee and forearm injuries. But he recovered.

Then, before qualifying for the 2016 Olympics, Bromell tore his achilles tendon. Such a tear could have been a career

ender.

But he and his mother knew God had other plans. He told NBC News:

“I came in here banged up a little bit, but I knew God healed me, so I just had to run my race. I know God can make anything happen. So my mom told me that it was healed. She said, ‘God took care of it.’ And so He did.”

Gabby Douglas, 20, Team USA Gymnastics

Gabby Douglas was the first black woman in history to win an individual all-around Olympic Games competition. And she was only 16 years old. Even then, her athleticism, humility and wisdom surpassed her young age. She said she couldn’t take credit for the talent God gave her.

Douglas overcame being homeless and a life-threatening illness at a young age. Then she went on to the Olympics. For that, Douglas says, she cannot help but praise God. She told *The Christian Post*:

“It was definitely important for me to praise God because He’s given me this God-given talent to go out there and represent Him and share my faith with everyone. I mean I’m not going to hold it in because He’s blessed me so much throughout my gymnastics career. He’s woken me up every single morning and He’s just been so great to me, so I’m going to go and share it with everyone because it’s a part of me and it’s just who I am.”

Kevin Durant, 27, Team USA Basketball

In 2013, Kevin Durant was baptized at Hillsong Church, New York City by Pastor Carl Lentz, after professing faith in Jesus Christ. Baptist was a life-changing event he said.

“When I came out of the water, I just felt different.

Basketball is so important to me and I carry that emotion with me all of the time, and before that, I would be so mad at the smallest things. My coaches, my teammates, my fans. After that, I was just so positive. Showing God [and] His grace."

Before becoming a Christian, Durant told GQ, that "I felt like I had to follow the Ten Commandments." But after becoming a Christian, he says, "But we don't live by that no more. We live by the blood of Jesus."