

NFL Player Reveals Angelic Encounter That Changed His Life

Sometimes life's most pivotal turns come in the midst of routine. You know the scene: an open practice field, the steady thud of a football meeting cleats and an athlete locked in on perfecting one more kick. Nothing about that afternoon hinted at a life-altering encounter, until every goalpost faded away, and something deeper broke through.

It was on Sports Spectrum with hosts Matt Forte and Jason Romano that Atlanta Falcons punter Bradley Pinion unfolded the rest of the story. He spoke candidly about how a random visit to his high school field became the backdrop for his spiritual awakening, tracing it all back to a journey that began long before that afternoon.

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Pinion grew up “going because my family was going, but it wasn’t because of my choice,” he said of his church-filled childhood. When his parents divorced, he found refuge in football, confessing, “At that point in my life, my god was football. It was my escape.”

As recruitment offers rolled in, he reached a crossroads not just about where to play college ball, but whether to test this “God guy” he’d only heard about in Sunday school. “I remember thinking in my head, let me test this God guy and see what He’s about,” he recalled, even praying aloud during a solo drive in his ’94 Sonoma.



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That test led him to the practice field instead of the weight room, just another decision, until a stranger in a Clemson-orange shirt approached and asked, "Are you the kicker at Northwest Parish High School?" What felt like a two-hour conversation instead lasted minutes, yet it cut to the core. The man shared Proverbs 23:7, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," then slipped away.

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Pinion tried to resume kicking but "shanked everything left and right," finally retreating to his truck in tears. "I cried the whole way home," he said, and it was in that moment of brokenness that he believed "God sent an angel to me because I said that prayer."

His heart may have flipped in an instant, but his life aligned more gradually. "I felt my heart transforming before my actions did," Pinion admits, noting it took until college's junior year to fully unite belief and behavior. Since then, he's leaned into vulnerability, leading mission trips with Compassion International, opening his locker room to honest conversations, and living out the very freedom he found that day on the field.

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We may never predict where or when God will send someone our way to redirect our steps. But when He does, through a stranger's timely word, an inner nudge in a lonely moment or an unplanned meeting on an otherwise ordinary day, the impact can echo through every choice that follows.

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