

NFL Quarterback Baker Mayfield Says Rock Bottom Led Him to Christ: 'It's Not About the Stats'

For Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback Baker Mayfield, faith wasn't always part of the playbook.

In a candid conversation on The Sports Spectrum Podcast, the former No. 1 NFL Draft pick opened up about how hitting "rock bottom" – both on and off the field – became the catalyst for a deeper walk with Jesus Christ.

"I was trying to make things happen on my own," Mayfield said. Raised with minimal church attendance, he admitted his early understanding of Christianity was simply that "you do good deeds" and "you're a good person."

But things began to shift during college at Oklahoma, where he met Pastor Adam Starling. "I didn't have to be perfect; I didn't have to have it all figured out," Mayfield recalled learning. The message that "we're all born sinners" and "we've been saved" stayed with him, though it would take a few more years before it truly changed him.

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It wasn't until he joined the NFL – and joined Professional Athletes Outreach with his wife Emily in 2020 – that Mayfield said things finally started to click. "There was a lot of emptiness that I had... I thought I could fulfill it in other ways and did not."

Then came the hard part: his career spiraled. After being cut

loose by the Browns and floating as a backup, Mayfield said, "God taught me a lesson. He had to take my career down to the studs and make me realize that I'm more than a football player."

It wasn't just football. Mayfield said his marriage was struggling too – especially as he and Emily faced difficulties trying to have children. "We weren't doing well at all," he shared.

To rebuild, he had to return to the foundation. "For me to climb back up, I had to dive into the word and accept the grace," he said. "That was something that was really, really hard for me."

Since then, things have changed. Mayfield found new life – and a new team – in Tampa. "God's timing is perfect," he said. "It's been such a special ride to let God take us through that."

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Now, he says it's about more than football. "It's not about the stats or anything on the field," Mayfield said. "It's about how I carry myself, how I inspire others and try to bring people together."

Mayfield wants to share those lessons with younger athletes, emphasizing that Jesus is "the only thing that made me feel whole."

He also gave credit to his wife's growing faith, saying, "God

had her back the whole time, kept her strong through a lot of trials and tribulations. I've seen her faith grow... I've fallen more in love with her."

For Mayfield, the comeback story isn't about football glory – it's about finding purpose beyond the game.

"It has to be part of the daily routine," he said. "And you have to make your priorities align with that."

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