

What Turned This Pro Athlete Into a Sports Evangelist?

Kristi Overton Johnson was only 4 years old when her parents taught her how to water ski. She turned professional at the age of 13 and became the world record holder in women's slalom for an impressive 18 years.

But a series of medical complications that kept her from competing were the instigator to Johnson's realization that her identity wasn't rooted in Christ. In fact, perfectionism was her idol, and water skiing was her lord.

"All of a sudden, with the series of medical complications, I couldn't be Kristi the skier anymore," she says. "I realized everything I had placed my worth in could be gone in an instant."

Eventually, Johnson was able to get back on the water, but she was forever changed. God had given her an incredible platform, and Johnson realized her mission field was the world of water skiing. "Fear had kept me from sharing the gospel," she says. "God showed me I wasn't a true friend if I failed to share the gospel. Love should compel me to tell them the truth."

Johnson started her ministry by writing a 24-page tract called "Making the Cut." In the first two years, she distributed 50,000 copies at various water sports events.

"I had this hunger to use what God had given me for His glory," she says.

In 2003, Johnson started an international ministry called In His Wakes to help at-risk youth overcome their fears, hurts and disappointments through water sports.

"I was terrified what God would do with my life if I turned it

over to Him,” Johnson says. “Now I realize all He wanted to do is use what I love to touch the world for Him.” –*Sarah Breed*