



Michael “Pinball” Clemons

Growing up in the projects of Dunedin, Florida was tough. Mike lived right down from the railroad tracks, across from a sewage treatment plant-every negative stereotype you can imagine. But throughout his childhood he never realized he was poor, because there was always so much love.

His mother was only 18 when she had Mike, and he grew up without a father. There were times when his dad promised to come by and bring over things for Christmas and for my birthday, and then he would never come. But Mike always tried to make sure he didn't show any disappointment, because he didn't want to hurt my mom. He never wanted her to think that she was insufficient. She was more than he needed. His mom gave all that she had to Mike, and she supported him in anything that he did. She also gave Mike a foundation in the church, a belief system so that when he left home he had something to hold on to.

In the South, they say you go from the hospital straight to the front of the church. There was a time when Mike went to church because he had to. But he accepted Jesus into his heart when he was nine years old. Then it became more of a personal decision.

Mike has had my share of tough times. When he got older, he was told he wasn't smart enough to go to college and was too small to play football. But after four scholarship years at the College of William and Mary, Clemons signed with the Toronto Argonauts. He has been with the CFL ever since.

There have been personal struggles as well. His great-great grandmother, whom he loved deeply, passed away before she could see Mike succeed as a football player. His wife's father was shot and killed when they were in university, and her sister died of cancer only three weeks after discovering she was ill, leaving behind three small children.

There are a lot of things we could complain about, but God uses the hard times to help Mike touch the lives of others. He learned early in life that God is the only way to complete happiness. By giving his life over to Him, he has learned the true purpose and meaning of life. God is in control, and he is comfortable with that.

Everyone has trials. No one is exempt from that. The difference is that Mike has hope in Jesus Christ. Belief in God is really the only thing that lasts. Everyone has trials. No one is exempt from that. The difference is that Mike has hope in Jesus Christ.