

“I’ve Got You”

Every year, the NFL presents a prestigious award that recognizes a player’s philanthropy and community impact. The award is named after Walter Payton, one of the best pro football players ever to play the game. The late Walter Payton and his wife, Connie, created a foundation to help “the less fortunate find stability while providing positive opportunities needed to live their lives with dignity and pride.” The foundation particularly helps children and veterans, including services for homeless veterans and even a homeless shelter. The 1971 movie *Brian’s Song* highlights Walter Payton's humanity, depicting the growing friendship between Payton and his Chicago Bears teammate, Brian Piccolo, who was stricken with terminal cancer. Payton and Piccolo were the first interracial roommates in NFL history. Both looked past their differences to form an inseparable bond and responded to each other's needs.

Because of our faith, isn’t that what we are called to do? Put aside any superficial differences and help people in their time of need? It is what Jesus wants us to do.

The Walter Payton Man of the Year award has been presented every year since 1970. This year’s recipient, linebacker Bobby Wagner, talked about what he says to the people he helps: “I’ve got you.” Wagner put his words into action, creating a “Fast54 Phenia Mae Fund” to support stroke patients and promote stroke education.

Secondly, Wagner created a “Tackle Everything Tech Tour,” an initiative that connects underserved youth with technology and entrepreneurship, fostering opportunities for young people.

When Wagner interacts with people who need encouragement, he tells them, “I’ve got you.” It is what his mother said to him when Wagner doubted his own abilities, and it motivated him to help others overcome their doubts.



Like Wagner, we can each encourage others and show our support as they face the challenges and uncertainties of life. We are God’s “hands and feet” to do His work. God empowers,

equips, and motivates us to serve others. And, He stands with us as we do it. When we focus on Jesus and seek His Will, in effect, He says to us, “I’ve got you.” Scripture tells us, *No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you (Joshua 1:5).*

The Good Samaritan story (Luke 10:37) is a great example of a man who showed God-inspired mercy and kindness towards someone else. The final verse in the story is intended for us: “Go and do likewise.”

When we seek to do His Will, it becomes “our calling.” Who are you helping to face the challenges in their lives? God is with you, too, as you seek to do His will. *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:9).*

God says to you, “I’ve Got You.” Now, go and do likewise.

The Bible Says: *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand (Isaiah 41:10)*

Closing Prayer: Dear Lord. You’ve got us. You stand by us during good times and bad, during times when we are strong and when we doubt ourselves. Empower us to be like Jesus and help others in need. Amen.