

# Control and the Slugger

Week 1

**Key Verse:** The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.  
Job 1:21

Major league baseball player Tim Salmon is big, strong, and really, really good. He can hit long home runs. He can play gracefully in the outfield. He's a leader on his team.

When you hear about someone like that, it's easy to imagine that he's some big macho guy who doesn't care about people and who treats a kid seeking an autograph like he's a bad dream. Sounds kind of like some guy who goes around saying, "Nobody's going to tell *me* what to do."

This big slugger is not a control freak.

"The biggest thing I've learned," Salmon says, "is that I'm not in control. No matter how much I think I can control my life, it's not up to me."

Imagine a major league baseball player saying that!

"I need to take whatever situation the Lord has put me in and realize I'm there for a reason."

What kind of situation are you in right now that you don't quite understand? Some problem at school with kids who aren't a good influence? A difficulty at home because not everyone is getting along?

Maybe you or somebody in your family has just found out about a serious illness.

That situation can teach you several things.

First, it can help you understand what Tim was saying. "We are not in control. God is."

Second, it can help you believe that even when bad things happen, God has something good in mind for us (Romans 8:28).

Third, it can teach us to keep trusting God, no matter what happens.

Do you know anything about the Old Testament guy, Job? Here was a man who was almost as rich as a major league baseball player, yet he lost everything. His money. His family. Everything.

Well, not everything. He kept one thing. Know what it was?

His faith in God.

Job was the greatest man in the East, but he found out that he was pretty puny compared with God.

The earlier in life you decide that yes, God is in control, the better off you'll be.

Whether you're a slugging outfielder or the last person on the bench for your AYSO soccer team, it's all the same.

The best thing to do is to say to God, "Thanks for being in control."

***What we think is ours is God's.***

**Review:** *What part of my life am I having a hard time admitting belongs to God?*

**Assignment:** Read Job 1:1-3, 13-22

**Fast Fact:** Speaking of control (or lack of it), in 1938 Bob Feller walked 208 batters, the all-time record.

**Skills Tip:** Control is very important in baseball, whether you are a pitcher or a batter. To develop control as a pitcher takes practice. One way to do that is to make a target that you can pitch to over and over. For example, hang a tire from a tree limb and practice pitching through the hole in the tire. Or draw a strike zone on a wall (not the garage door or near a window) and pitch to that. For a batter, control comes from being prepared mentally. Train yourself to look for the spin of the ball

(so you know how it will break) and to make a split-second decision about whether or not to swing at it.