



## **Moon Miracle in the Valley**

Adapted from "The Basics" series by Bob Brock.

The following article was published in *Newsweek* October 2015 edition:

During his basketball career, Michael Jordan scored 32,292 points, earned six NBA championships, five NBA MVP titles, and made 14 All-Star Game appearances. He is, by acclamation, the greatest basketball player to ever grace the court. In a salute to the NBA star's legacy, *Newsweek* examined every facet of his career, from his days as a 5'10" JV high school sophomore without a dunk, to his 72-win season. This article, and others about Michael Jordan's life, are included in a new *Newsweek Special Edition*.

In 1978, Michael Jordan was just another kid in the gym, along with 50 or so of his classmates, trying out for the Emsley A. Laney High School varsity basketball team. There were 15 roster spots. Jordan—then a 15-year-old sophomore who was only 5'10" and could not dunk a basketball—did not get one of the roster spots. His close friend, 6'7" sophomore Leroy Smith, did. The team needed his length. "It was embarrassing not making the team," Jordan later said. He went home, locked himself in his room and cried.

Then he picked himself up and turned the cut into motivation. "Whenever I was working out and got tired and figured I ought to stop, I'd close my eyes and see that list in the locker room without my name on it," Jordan would explain. "That usually got me going again." Jordan, using that sizable chip on his shoulder to his advantage, spent his sophomore year as the star of the junior varsity team. He put up multiple 40-point games and attracted crowds that were unprecedented for a JV affair.

The summer leading into his junior year, Jordan began to morph. In 1979, he grew 4 inches and worked out constantly. That year he made the varsity squad and instantly became Laney High's best player, averaging more than 20 points a game. Despite having secured his spot on the team, Jordan's work ethic didn't drop off. His senior year he averaged a triple-double and led Laney High to a 19-4 record. Jordan capped off his high school career in style, being named a



McDonald's All-American. He wasn't yet His Airness, but he was well on his way.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Newsweek Special Edition "Michael Jordan Didn't Make Varsity—at First," *Newsweek*, October 17, 2015, <http://www.newsweek.com/missing-cut-382954> (accessed July 6, 2017).

## COURAGE

**C1:** After hearing the Michael Jordan story, has there ever been a time in your life when you felt as if you were not good enough? Write down the story. How did you feel?

**C2:** You may think or feel you are not good enough, but the God of Heaven sends you a special invitation. Read **Hebrews 4:16 (NLT)**. What thoughts come to your mind as you process your inadequacies through the lens of this verse?

**C3:** As a group, are there some men you could decide to actively target to build relationships with to help them walk through their valley? List those men and ask God to direct you or your group to a plan to connect with them and fill the vacuum in their life.

## STRENGTH

**S1:** We often hear or read stories so often, we can overlook the details. Read the following verses and answer the questions.

### Joshua 10:12-13 (NLT)

- Have you ever noticed that the moon stood still in the valley?
- Have you ever been in a valley and felt like God was nowhere around?
- What emotions did you experience?

**S2:** Too often we have left God out of the valley experiences from our lives. Read the following verses and answer the questions.

### 1 Kings 20:28 (NLT)

### Psalm 23:4 (NLT)

- What do these verses speak to you regarding walking into a valley?
- Think about a valley experience you walked through in your life. How did you sense God walking with you in the valley?

## ENDURANCE

**E1:** Look at the following declarations:

- I declare that Jesus Christ is the one and only Son of the Most High God and is my Savior and Lord.
- I declare that the Holy Spirit empowers me for effective ministry.
- I declare that I serve a God that is unchangeable, unshakeable, and unstoppable.
- I declare the Sovereignty of God will prevail in all matters pertaining to carrying out His purpose here on earth.
- I declare God is working progressively, silently, successfully, and powerfully for me right now.
- I declare that God has heard my prayers and that answers to prayer are on their way.
- I declare that I am blessed by our Heavenly Father not lucky.
- I declare that where God guides He will provide.
- I declare faith gives me the courage to face today with confidence and the future with high hopes.
- I declare that God is faithful and I fear I am futile.
- I declare the Bible is my compass, and if I follow it; I cannot go wrong.
- I declare God's promises are true and will not fail.
- I declare the absolute authority of God that cannot be successfully challenged or changed.
- I make this declaration today in the precious, powerful name of Jesus. Amen. Be it so Lord.

For the next thirty (30) days, commit to speak these declarations daily.

- What emotion do you feel on the first day; the fifteenth day; the thirtieth day of making these faith declarations?

**E2:** To the chagrin of many who have chosen to follow Jesus, being a Christ follower does not automatically immunize us from a valley experience or times of doubt. Read the following verse and answer the questions.

**Mark 9:24 (NLT)**

- What does this verse speak to you regarding doubt?
  
- What two things does he ask Jesus to do to help overcome unbelief?
  
- What do you do to help you overcome your unbelief?