Very Good at Being *Told* What to Do?

Retired at age 16? Yes, she did. Born in 2005, Alysa Liu, an American figure skater from Clovis, California, was fantastic. *"At the junior level, Liu was the 2020 World Junior bronze medalist, the 2019–20 Junior Grand Prix Final silver medalist, a two-time Junior Grand Prix champion, and the 2018 U.S. junior national champion. In 2019, Liu, then 13, became the youngest-ever U.S. women's national champion. The following year, she became the youngest skater to win two senior national titles,"* (Wikipedia). *Alysa was one of the best ever!*

But she burned out. In 2022, at the age 16 Alysa literally retired from skating altogether! One newscaster at the Olympics said this week, ***"She was very good at doing what she was told."*** Two years, later Alysa decided *on her own, she would skate again, and very quickly she began to win again.* Alysa "decided on her own!" In an interview after winning Olympic gold this week, she said she had to come back on her own (even after others tried to talk her out of it). She went on to say it was her decision and now she absolutely loved competing on ice. She was doing what she decided to really love!

Obviously, she was the happiest, most effervescent, least stressed competitor in the women's finals. The crowd saw it, the TV audience saw it, the TV commentators saw it, and the judges saw it… and she shined like the gold medal she won. It is being hailed, by those who know, as the greatest comeback in figure skating history. ***She became very good at doing what she, herself, decided to love!***

That makes me think of the apostle Peter. He was a winner, in the "inner circle," brave, brash, impetuous - ready to roll, ready to fight for his Lord. When the Romans came to arrest Jesus, Peter, true to form, pulled his sword and went to work with it. But Jesus stopped him and Peter became confused. When Peter understood (or thought he did) he fought! He did not "lose" when he was sure of his goal. But when Jesus told him **not** to fight, he didn't know what was happening. Before dawn he denied he even knew Jesus, three times! When the cock crowed, he, "wept bitterly," (Matt. 26:75, NASB).

Peter thought it was all over, that his actions had retired him from ever being an apostle again.

He did not chicken out, he *confused out!* He ran, he denied, he hid… he failed. But that is not the *rest of the story!* **When Peter realized that Jesus had forgiven him for the *worst failure of his life, he made a most incredible comeback. God even inspired him to write two books of the Bible!***

What about you? Have you been a *"good Christian" by being good at being told what to do?* I'm not talking about following scripture but following human advice. Sometimes we burn out because we are *doing what we are told, rather than loving Jesus and loving His book, personally, individually, confidently and yet humbly.* Alysa Liu came back because something deep inside her decided, on her own, to really love skating. Peter came back because he decided, on his own, to really love the Savior who forgave him and will give him the "gold," streets of gold for all eternity, where he will be with the Lord he learned to love more than ever!

Ray Wallace