

Faith guides CFL legend John Chick on and off the field

At only 37, John Chick has accomplished tremendous achievements.

He played professional football for 12 years in the CFL and NFL, winning two Grey Cups and being named the league's Most Outstanding Defensive Player before retiring in 2018. He and his wife Catherine have nine children, and more souls in heaven due to miscarriage.

Chick gives thanks to God for the gift of his body, mind and soul, which have allowed him to strive for excellence. He believes the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and the pathway to glorify God.

"I see the physical world as God created it – all good and meant to point us back to Him. We were all created in His image and likeness," said the former player for the Edmonton Eskimos, Saskatchewan Roughriders and Hamilton Tiger-Cats.

"I've always loved the physical world," said Chick. "I've always loved the pursuit of: how can I get this better. Every off-season for 12 years, I would not rest on how good the last season was, but how I can do better at what I wasn't doing well."

Chick provided a video presentation on faith to the God Squad men's conference in Calgary in March.



John Chick and his family have survived miscarriages, moves, trades, cuts and injuries. Courtesy of John Chick

Chick has counted setbacks as blessings in his life, which have further motivated him and reminded him that where he is weak, God is strong.

“How many look at the glass half empty and woe is me. Regardless of what we have been ‘blessed’ with, we are all called to glorify God with our bodies,” he said. “For me, you don’t have to look too far to see a lot of us are victims of something broken. In us or around us and we are victims of maybe our vices.”

Chick’s body has experienced several setbacks in his pursuit of his dreams. At 14, he was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. At the time, this news devastated his family. In college he experienced Bell’s Palsy and later in his professional career he had the onset of alopecia – a hair loss condition – and vitiligo, a skin discolouration condition, not to mention countless sports injuries throughout his life.

“Miscarriages, moves, trades, cuts, injuries, God always found a way (into my life). I attribute it to my family and experiences of the Holy Spirit,” said Chick.

Growing up in Wyoming as the eldest of three, faith was central in Chick’s life. His father modelled a devout faith life working as a Catholic youth

minister.

So when a healing priest came to town after Chick's diabetes diagnosis the family went to see him, and everyone had a powerful conversion experience through prayer to the Holy Spirit.

"It doesn't mean we lived a perfect faith life, but we were always dependent on the sacraments," said Chick.

Today, he lives in Florida where he is devoted to raising his own family in the Catholic faith. He incorporates faith and fitness into the running of his own life-coaching business called Ironwill Fitness.

Self-care has been central to his success, and he is trying to share his wisdom with his clients.

"We are supposed to love our neighbour as ourselves. But how can I love my neighbour if I'm not loving myself?" said Chick. "How can I improve my capacity to be that servant leader? It's taking care of myself first."

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