

CHANGING THE GAME

Maya Moore is showing the world that she's a game changer in more ways than one. Moore, one of the WNBA's brightest stars, helped prove the innocence of 40-year-old Jonathan Irons, a man whom she believes was wrongfully convicted of burglary and assault and a case she put her career on hold to champion.

A Missouri judge overturned Irons' initial conviction and ordered him to be released, but there's still more work to be done to fight for his freedom.

"It is so sweet to see the redemption that came from stepping away and giving what I had to this case," Moore told *The New York Times*. "It feels like we are holding up that Final Four trophy, but there are still a couple of steps."

Irons spent 22 years of a 50-year sentence in prison after being convicted of burglary and assault of a St. Louis homeowner. His lawyers say no evidence connects Irons to the crime.

Moore stepped away from basketball last season and announced her plans to sit out for the upcoming WNBA season and the Tokyo Olympics to fight for Irons' release, providing support and creating a petition for a fair trial.

"She saved my life and I cannot say it better than that," Irons told the *Times*.

MICAH 6:8

HE HAS TOLD YOU, O MAN, WHAT IS GOOD; AND WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE OF YOU BUT TO DO JUSTICE, AND TO LOVE KINDNESS, AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD?

Maya, who has been vocal about her Christian faith and how it informs her life and advocacy work, is doing what she can to address the world's brokenness through trying to change a criminal legal system that Equal Justice Initiative Director Bryan Stevenson says "treats you much better if you're rich and guilty than if you're poor and innocent."

Her pursuit of justice gets her mentioned with names like Muhammad Ali, Tommy Smith, John Carlos and others who have taken culture-shifting stands, willingly and unwillingly sacrificing their careers in their athletic primes.

Maybe you're an athlete who wants to affect change. Keep these things in mind as you consider what your impact off the field will be.

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ASK YOURSELF WHAT YOU'RE WILLING TO SACRIFICE FOR YOUR CONVICTIONS
Putting your career on hold may or may not be an option for you, but you can ask yourself what you're willing to sacrifice to be faithful to your convictions.

Sometimes doing what is right takes courage and will require more of you than you initially think. You may experience isolation from friends or condemnation from peers who may discourage you from speaking up for deciding to take action based on your beliefs. Standing up for something you believe in may cost you time, money, access, energy, relationships and popularity.

Ask yourself what you're willing to fight for, how your faith in Christ informs your convictions, and how God is leading you to respond.

HOW WILL YOU CHANGE THE GAME?

LIVE OUT MICAH 6:8

Maya is modeling an embodied faith that drives her to act on what the Word says. Micah 6:8 says, *"and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"*

What does it look like for you to right wrongs, to be compassionate and to live a surrendered life to Christ in your context?

USE YOUR PLATFORM FOR SOMETHING GREATER

Whether it's criminal justice reform, education, mental health, poverty, reproductive care, equal pay, civil and human rights or a host of other issues that affect your communities and people across the globe, you can make a difference.

The proclamation of the gospel doesn't always have to happen in press conferences or postgame interviews. Tell the truth of Jesus Christ and who He is, not only in speech, but through action.

Take James 2:16-17 to heart. Do what you can where you are with the tools you have. Educate yourself on the issues you care about. Volunteer. Donate. Show up. Speak up. Pray. Use your privilege in ways that benefit others.

You have a part in God's redemptive plan not only for His people, but for the world.

You are a change agent. See yourself not only having influence on your team or in your sport, but having the potential to impact our culture because of the power God has placed in you.

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If you are moved to make a difference, refuse to sit on the sidelines, stay in your lane, or “shut up and dribble.”

Athlete, how will you change the game?