

## **Finding contentment**

The lockdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has led many people to reassess their situations. The length of the lockdown and continuing uncertainty about the future have had a significant impact on people's jobs and young people's plans for employment training and university courses. Many people are experiencing mental health problems. The "new normal" will be very different from the past. The impact of lockdown on many people's lives has been negative.

During lockdown Billy Vunipola, who plays international rugby for England, has engaged in serious self-reflection. He has suffered injuries and experienced the disappointment of losing the Rugby World Cup 2019 final to South Africa. He says that during the Rugby World Cup "his head was in the clouds" and feels he has to grow up and set a better example to others. He feels that during the tournament he personally let England down and failed to support his brother Mako, who also plays for England. He has apologised to his team-mates and his brother and now wants to make up for lost time.

Billy, and his brother Mako, were born in Tonga. Their parents were Christians and from an early age they taught their children the priorities of life – God, school and rugby. Billy recognised that in recent years his priorities had changed and spoke to his parents. He said, "I always looked to blame someone else or something else and I finally realised, when I spoke to my parents, that I need to take ownership. Those guys never lie to me. It was hard to look at myself and I didn't want to take ownership for things that I did. It's hard to admit it sometimes and tell people around you that you are wrong."

Billy has spoken about how he has rediscovered his faith in Jesus Christ. Despite being prevented from playing rugby, he has found contentment because of his faith in God. He said, "I went back to what I had been

taught all my life about Jesus: whatever we do, whether we are playing rugby, or we've just woken up, we say thank you to God. Everything is a gift. Everything I have has been given to me; even my talent is a gift from God. I'm thankful for this gift. Knowing that Jesus is with me makes me a stronger person. I know that whatever I try to do, even if it doesn't work out, I'll always have Jesus to lean back on. I know there is more to life than winning and losing rugby games. Everything I do must be backed up by the love of Christ"

The acceptance that God is a reality in your life is the key to contentment, not the superficial buzz you get from a short lived achievement, but the deep rooted faith that God loves you and will always love you.