

was disobedience to my parent, God has put honoring my mother.<sup>9</sup> Where there was racial prejudice, God has put love for my neighbor.<sup>10</sup> Where there was glorifying self through sports, God has put a compelling desire in my heart to honor Jesus.<sup>11</sup> God has given me meaning and purpose through my new life in Christ.

You can have this greatest of all experiences, too, by remembering if it's fourth down in your life, don't punt... RUN TO JESUS! If it's not fourth down in your life, please don't wait. Now is the time to RUN TO CHRIST, for the Holy Spirit says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed!"<sup>12</sup>

*Greg Brezina*  
MATT. 6:33

1)John 3:16, 2)John 10:10, 3)Rom. 3:23, 4)1 John 5:13; Acts 20:21; Rom. 10:9-10, 5)Gal. 5:16, 6)Eph. 5:18, 7)Eph. 4:29, 8)1 Peter 3:7, 9)Eph. 6:1-3, 10)Mark 12:31, 11)Col. 3:23, 12)Isaiah 28:16.

Presently, Greg Brezina is a biblical marriage and family counselor, and a speaker at marriage and family conferences. He is the founder and executive director of Christian Families Today, a Christian Counseling and Training Ministry.

  
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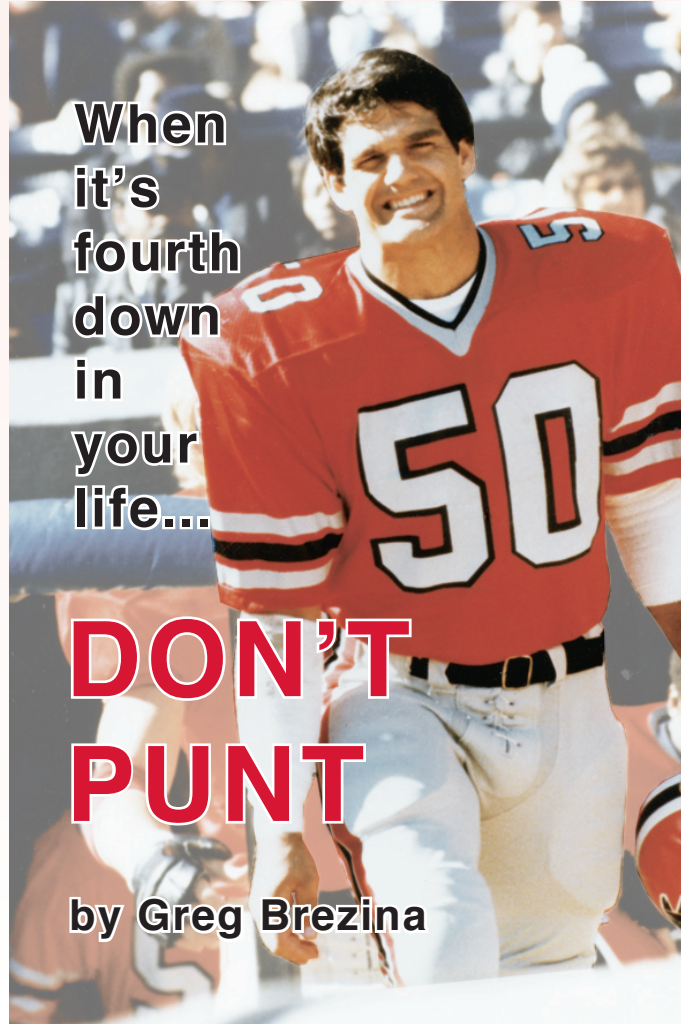
For more information please contact:  
Christian Families Today, Inc.  
[www.ChristianFamiliesToday.org](http://www.ChristianFamiliesToday.org)  
(770) 461-6053



When  
it's  
fourth  
down  
in  
your  
life...

**DON'T  
PUNT**

by Greg Brezina



As far back as I can remember, scoring touchdowns and later preventing them have been high among the most important aspects of my life. Having spent 22 years in football, including 12 with the Atlanta Falcons, I have had many first downs in my career. Two of them were playing in the Pro Bowl and being voted MVP by my teammates. However, it took a fourth down situation to lead me into the greatest experience of my life.

The road to that experience began in my hometown of Louise, Texas. The schools I attended taught me that man determines his own destiny. Thus, I thought with an education I could get a good job, earn money, and make my own happiness.

Upon graduation from high school, I received a football scholarship to the University of Houston. With my three older brothers, Bob, Gus, and Bernie, having played for the U of H, it was something I wanted to do, just as my younger brothers, Mark and Steve, did after me.

One educational goal was reached when I graduated from college. The gathering of wealth began by playing professional football. I felt that achievement and accumulation were the only obstacles hindering me from enjoying a satisfying life.

However, the more I succeeded, the less I enjoyed. Meaning to my life was missing. Reasoning that having a family was the missing link, I married a beautiful woman. Within two years, my wife was expecting our first child, yet we were very unhappy in our marriage. I was confused and frustrated.

To suppress my growing frustrations, I began to drink more and more alcohol. But my drinking only led to more problems when my wife said she was going to leave me if I didn't stop.

Those were dark, depressing days for me. Little did I know that the brightest days of my life were just ahead.

The Falcons were on the West Coast to play the Rams, and a teammate asked me to attend chapel to hear an Olympic weightlifter speak. (All NFL teams have chapel before their Sunday games.) I agreed to go.

In chapel, the speaker seemed to be speaking directly to me. He shared how his search for fulfillment ended when he entered Christ's life. He said that God loved me<sup>1</sup> and wanted me to experience His abundant life.<sup>2</sup> He explained that the reason I was not satisfied was because my sin had separated me from God and left a void in me that only Christ could fill.<sup>3</sup> He said that God, in order to give me His life, became man in the person of Jesus Christ, was crucified, shed His blood, and rose from the dead so that I could have forgiveness for my sins and a new life in Him. He shared that for me to enter Christ's life, I must turn away from my sin and believe in Jesus.<sup>4</sup>

Although I was raised in a church and thought of myself as a Christian, I had never known God. For 25 years, I had had a head knowledge of God but no heart knowledge. After the chapel meeting, I confessed to God my sin of living my life, my way, for my sake, and I believed in Jesus. At that moment, the Holy Spirit entered my spirit and birthed me into Christ's life.

Over the years, God has gradually changed and continues to change my behavior to match my new life in Christ. As I have yielded my will to the Holy Spirit, He has empowered me to obey His word and image Christ in my behavior.<sup>5</sup> Where there was drinking of alcohol, God has put consumption of His word.<sup>6</sup> Where there was profanity, God has put wholesome talk.<sup>7</sup> Where there was arguing with my wife, God has put living in an understanding way.<sup>8</sup> Where there