

## ***Michael Jordan's Comeback***

In 1996, Michael Jordan took home two MVP trophies – one for the regular season and one from the championship series – and led the Chicago Bulls through a record-setting season of 72 wins and only 10 losses, plus a championship against Seattle.

It was the crowning jewel of Jordan's comeback after an 18-month stint in the minor leagues of baseball. Most sports fans will remember that Jordan gave up on baseball and rejoined the Chicago Bulls during the last portion of the 1995 season. He was confident that his game would quickly return to the caliber with which everyone was acquainted, but it didn't.

He struggled and wasn't the dominant force he once was. He even took his old number 23 jersey out of retirement, but that didn't make much difference.

His – and the Chicago Bulls' – return to glory was routed by the Orlando Magic in the semifinals. Frustration ruled the day for Jordan while the rest of the world wondered if he had become just another sensational has-been.

Of the sad and humiliating experience, Jordan said, "The disappointment of last year motivated me to bounce back. I thank Orlando for giving me that incentive."

Jordan used the adversity of defeat as a catalyst to train harder, spend more time in the gym, and relearn the necessary skills of the game.

The strategy worked. He got back on top of his game and stayed there until he retired after the 1998 season. In addition to the 1996 championship, he led the Bulls to consecutive championships in 1997 and 1998.

And for his successful comeback, he gives full credit to those earlier defeats.

When adversity strikes, we can crawl in a corner and quit, or we can recommit ourselves to return to the top of our game – in our personal lives and in the mission of service to our customers in Life Care and Century Park.

Jordan's experience has a spiritual application. The Apostle Paul wrote about it in his letter to the church at Philippi: *I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me* (Philippians 4:12-13 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter