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## Crear's "In the zone" (Book Review)

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Crear, M. (2014). *In the zone*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. 128 pp. \$16.99. ISBN 9781426772023

It comes as no surprise that two-time Olympic medalist, life coach, and certified counselor Mark Crear would be writing a book aimed at helping others achieve their goals. He writes that some components in an athlete's training regimen may be used by non-athletes to achieve their personal and spiritual goals. Simplified, these components are purpose, preparation, passion, permission, prayer, and practice. Crear intersperses the practical elements of goal achievement with stories of his successes and failures. Yes, failures. *In the Zone* is not likely to give anyone false hope that achieving his or her goals will be easy, but the author includes plenty of encouragement that despite those obstacles, one will succeed.

What is most impressive about *In the Zone* is Crear's clear focus on the goal achievement process, always reiterating that serving God should be foremost in any person's mind. This is no prosperity gospel, and many of Crear's suggestions strongly resemble classic spiritual disciplines. This book may be appropriate for institutions with a leisure nonfiction collection, or for those interested in a faith-based motivational book that has a less formulaic feel than many that can be found in the nearest Christian bookstore.

### Reviewer

Amy C. Rice, Northwest Nazarene University

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Ytreeide, A. (2015). *Ishtar's odyssey: A family story for advent*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications. 176 pp. \$15.99. ISBN 9780825443930

Christmas is a season of faith and family, but in the busyness of contemporary American life, parents often find it challenging to incorporate faith-based activities into a home life that is also filled with school and church events. In *Ishtar's Odyssey*, Arnold Ytreeide provides an engaging story for parents to read to children as they introduce the concept and practices of observing Advent.

Children will find it easy to identify with the story's central character, 10-year-old Ishtar. Although he is a prince from an ancient culture, he is a typical boy who longs to escape his studies and plots for ways to extend his bedtime. At the beginning of the story, Ishtar relishes his position as a prince whose days are filled with the luxuries of palace life. The idea of leaving his surroundings and being around commoners frightens him. However, when Ishtar discovers a new star during his