

## **Defending the Title**

### **Ready:**

"He said to him, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments." - Matthew 22:37-40

### **Set**

Last year, the youth football team I coach won the championship in double overtime, and this Saturday, as the new season starts, we will begin the quest of defending our title. We have essentially the same players we had last year, only this year, we have the confidence behind us to believe that anything is possible if we do three things: think we are talented, athletic, smart and victorious; give 100 percent of our effort in everything we do; and believe in our hearts that God will be with us.

As we gear up to defend the title, I'm reminded that my job as a coach is not to be satisfied with producing a winning record, but with producing winning athletes. To accomplish that goal this season, I will be asking my players six questions:

1. Do you believe in God?
2. Do you love God?
3. Do you believe in yourself?
4. Do you love yourself?
5. Do you believe in your teammates?
6. Do you love your teammates?

The second commandment that Jesus mentions in Matthew 22:37-40 is to love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus wants us to love others, but, as He says, we must first love ourselves. I have found that many kids, teenagers and even adults really don't believe in or love themselves. They feel so unworthy and have a low self-esteem. They continue to speak words of defeat in their lives, and I've learned that you can't speak defeat and expect victory.

When these thoughts come to us, we have to tell ourselves what God has said about us—the truth of His Word, which says we are loved, forgiven, valuable and capable through Christ. Once we begin to believe His Words and love both Him and ourselves, we are free to believe in and love others.

This season for our team is not about defending our championship title; it's about defending our title as Christians. It's about believing in and loving God, ourselves and our teammates. If we do that, we will be guaranteed a victory regardless of our title.

### **Go**

1. Do you believe in God?
2. Do you love God?
3. Do you believe in yourself?
4. Do you love yourself?
5. Do you believe in your teammates?
6. Do you love your teammates?

### **Workout**

Romans 8:38-39

Philippians 1:6

Philippians 4:13

2 Timothy 1:7

### **Bible Reference:**

2 Timothy 1



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