

Sharing Christ By Encouraging Others

Ready:

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Set

Growing up, I went to church but didn't have a relationship with God. It was in high school when I made the U20 Women's National Team that I started to seek the Lord. The entire team consisted of Christians, including the head coach, and he was excited about the Lord. I remember praying one night, *"God, I want what he has."* He was so passionate about his faith, and I wanted that too.

My college years at UCLA were more challenging. Thankfully I had older teammates that were stronger Christians who encouraged me in my faith. As those girls graduated, I was challenged to step up and be an example and a light on my team.

Being on the national team has brought me even further out of my comfort zone and helped me to be more comfortable around people that don't believe the same way I do. I have learned to love people unconditionally, and let Christ and His love shine through my actions and attitude.

In the 2008 Olympics, I was new to the national team and still in college. I knew that I might only get a few minutes to play, and wanted to make the most of the experience. I think that was actually easier because I knew my role was more to encourage everybody else. It was fun to build up teammates. I really embraced that challenge and learned a great deal from it. In the 2011 Women's World Cup and the 2012 Olympics, a lot more was expected from me and there was more pressure. But I realized that I needed to rely on others and let them build me up.

Encouraging others has been a great way to share my love for Christ. I have found that building others up brings me great joy and allows me to see God at work.

Barnabas, a leader in the early church was well known for his kindness and generosity—earning him the nickname, *"Son of Encouragement."* As one of the first believers to befriend the newly converted Paul, Barnabas took him to the apostles and vouched for his character when others were still fearful of him. Barnabas' support helped enable Paul and other church leaders to spread God's Word with confidence.

Go

- In what ways have you needed encouragement from your team and teammates?

- How have others provided the encouragement you need in your sport and in your walk with Christ?
- How have you been an encourager to your team and teammates?

Workout

- Acts 9:1-31
- Galatians 6:2
- Ephesians 4:29

Overtime

Father, Thank You for being the ultimate encourager in my life and for lifting me up whenever I've been down because of my sport or circumstances in life. Help me to be an encourager to those around me and to express Your unconditional love by how I help lift others up. Amen.

Bible Reference:

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