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Tough Love

Ready:

“Don’t just pretend to love others really love them. Hate is wrong.”

-Romans 12:9

Set

When you are playing a sport, teammates are the most important people with you on the court or field. Sometimes it’s hard to love them, and it can be even harder to stand up for what you believe in when you are around them. The devil is always around, wearing a disguise, making it harder for you to stand up for your beliefs. He can even be wearing the same jersey as you.

I learned this lesson during my basketball season. I was the newbie, the one no one knew. On the day of tryouts I only knew one other girl. Yes, I saw the others in the hall, but I didn’t talk to them. It was hard to start a new season with only a couple real friends.

Halfway through the season, things got shaky. One of my closest friends on the team was talking with another teammate who didn’t seem to like me and had a reputation for enjoying gossip. My friend heard her as she started talking about how I shouldn’t be playing with the “A” girls because I wasn’t good enough. My friend told me what they said, and it hurt to hear that my own team would do that.

Later at practice I was guarding this teammate, and she began to purposely push and scratch me. It bugged me, but I tried to love her like the Bible says we are to love others. That was really hard. And it was even harder when I knew she was talking to other girls about our teammates. She made it really difficult to be a loving, Christian teammate.

When I found Romans 12:9, I thought it was really ironic. It was such a God thing. I knew that there were places in the Bible that talked about loving your enemy, but when I found this verse I realized that I needed to really love her and not just pretend like I did. Up until that point, I knew I was just pretending to be her friend, and really I felt hatred toward her. As the

season continued I prayed that God would help me show love to her, and I did my best to do it with Christ's help.

Today and this month, as you go through your seasons and encounter teammates like the one I had, just remember what God commands us to do: love our enemies. Pray and ask Him to show you how to love them. He will help you overcome.

Go

1. Is there a person you need to start really loving?
2. What makes it so hard for us to love our enemies?
3. What are some ways you can show love toward teammates who are hard to love?

Workout

Matthew 5:43-44, 47
Romans 5:5
1 Corinthians 13:7

Bible Reference:
1 Corinthians 13

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