

## Unity

### **Ready:**

"I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one - I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." -- John 17:22-23

### **Set**

It's such an exciting time when the Olympics Games arrive! Energy fills the air as the whole world watches athletes who have trained relentlessly in their sport for years come together to compete. They give it their absolute best, representing their country, hoping to bring home gold.

The Olympic Games have a long and rich history, as does the iconic Olympic Rings. The five interlocking rings of the Olympic flag were created by Pierre de Coubertin, the co-founder of the modern Olympic games, in 1913. He was quoted as saying, "This design is symbolic; it represents the five continents of the world, united by Olympism." Countries from around the world come together and are united by the universal platform of sports. In a world full of tension and conflict, the Olympic Games allow us to take a time out and come together for a single purpose, SPORT.

Just like the Olympics unites countries from around the world for competition in various sports, our faith in Jesus Christ brings us to complete unity in God's family. We are all one in Christ Jesus! Romans 6:5 says, "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his." Just like each athlete that competes in the Games, as Christ-followers, each of us has a very important role to play.

In Philippians 2:1-2, Paul writes, "Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind." We are to "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3).

The 5 Olympic rings and what they stand for also relates to what unites us as Christians in the 5 Solas of the Reformation—Scripture alone, Christ alone, Faith alone, Grace alone and Glory to God alone. Our faith in Jesus Christ unites us and gives our lives meaning and purpose. We are to give our absolute best in everything we do, representing our Savior, giving glory to God. We are one in Christ! That's even better than a gold medal.

Another interesting note: Coubertin's Olympic ideals are expressed in the Olympic creed: "The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most

important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well.” Coubertin got this text from a sermon by the Bishop of Central Pennsylvania, Ethelbert Talbot, during the 1908 London Games. Sound familiar? The apostle Paul said, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing” (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

United with Christ is our mission and our mindset!

## Go

- What steps can you take today to be in complete unity with your brothers and sisters in Christ?
- What are some practical ways that you can coach or compete for Christ?
- Think about the difference between unity and uniformity and what God calls us to do and be.

## Workout

Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 4:3; 11-13; 2 Timothy 4:7-8

## Overtime

“Father, thank You for making it possible for us to be united with you through Your Son, Jesus Christ. It is by your grace alone and through His shed blood that this is possible. With the help of Your Holy Spirit in us, may we live and act as one body in Christ so that the world may see Jesus.”

## Bible Reference:

John 17:22-23

Galatians 3:26-28

Ephesians 4:3

2 Timothy 4:7-8



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