

## **When Losing is Winning**

### **Ready:**

"So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up." - Galatians 6:9

### **Set**

Some years ago, the high school basketball team that I was coaching was fourth in the standings. We had one more game before the semifinals. If we win this game, we would be pitted against the strongest, top-ranked team in the semifinals.

We had another option: we could throw this game, slide to fifth place in the standings and face a weaker team. In fact, another team in the same league had just done it—their coach coached his players to lose.

But at what cost? We would disrespect our sport, dishonor each other, and disregard our training for excellence. Worse, taking a shortcut just because the right way was harder would grieve God. Our team served an excellent God who had not cut corners when He created the world.

So, we played our hearts out because that's what warriors do. We won the game, maintained fourth place, played our hearts out against the toughest team, and lost.

It was hard to suffer the loss, but it was liberating to achieve the real victory: to work hard with honor and fair play in the eyes of the Lord. Integrity trumps winning.

### **Go**

1. Why do I play? Whom do I play for?
2. Do I maintain God's standard for excellence in my sport?
3. Win at all costs—is this a good mindset?

### **Workout**

James 4:17; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Proverbs 11:3; Titus 2:7; Colossians 3:23–24

### **Overtime**

Lord, help me discern right from evil and not to give in to the pressures of this world. Please open my eyes to see and do what is right in every game. I serve You and You alone, Jesus. Amen.

### **Bible Reference:**

James 4:17  
1 Corinthians 10:13  
Proverbs 11:3  
Titus 2:7



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