

## **The Blessing and Responsibility of the Word**

### **Ready:**

"In the beginning was the word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. ...The Word became flesh" - John 1:1-2, 14

### **Set**

Recently I sat in on a home school history session with my wife and three kids. The subject was Europe's transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance period of history, and focused on the huge impact that Gutenberg's movable type printing press had on civilization. For those who are not aware of the history, Johannes Gutenberg created the first movable type printing press in 1456. Prior to that, all books were painstakingly written by hand - one by one - including Bibles.

It took several years to produce every single Bible, so needless to say there were very few Bibles and they were closely guarded within church walls and the only way people heard God's Word was to go to Church and have it read to them. That limited access to God's Word began to change after Gutenberg, as he proceeded to use his new invention to print multiple copies of the Bible at once. His first big run of Bibles totalled 450. A revolutionary change in the amount of Bibles that became available, but still not very many and no where near the access we have to God's Word in this day and age. What struck me as we read through this story is how blessed we are to have millions of Bibles available and online access to God's Word. It also struck me the magnitude of that responsibility we have been entrusted with...and that it is not mere chance that we are alive in this day and age with God's Word widely available to us!

So, what does this have to do with athletes and coaches? First off, many people involved in athletics don't realize the magnitude of the influence they have on the people around them. I know I didn't at the time I was in high school and college. It has been said that sometimes the only Bible some people read will be you. Never is that more true than with athletes and coaches because they are very visible not just to team mates but also schools, communities, cities, and sometimes the whole world. What a great priveledge and responsibility! But how can we live up to being living examples of God's Word given all the pressures and temptations we face?

The key is staying in God's Word, and investing time daily to read the Bible and meditate on God's Word. A great lesson comes from the parable of the Ten Virgins (Mathew 25: 1-13), where some of the virgins kept their lamps full and had extra oil, others let their oil run out without any supplies to refill their light. Those that ran out missed the bridegroom and were shut out of the wedding celebration. This provides a poignant example of what could happen if your lamp runs dry and the bridegroom (Jesus Christ) chooses to return at that moment. It is

also very instructive to read the next two parables in Mathew 25 to see what is expected of those blessed with "Talents" (verses 14-30) and what will happen to those who don't recognize Christ in the "least of my brothers".

Again, the key is staying in the Word to keep adding oil to the fire in your lamp. And then, your light can shine forth in service of God's Kingdom and you can embrace the awesome responsibility we have as athletes and coaches to not only read the Word and keep our lamps filled, but also the responsibility to be the living example of Christ's body on earth and using our "talents" for Him. Thankfully His Word is now widely available and accessible to those who seek it. For those who aren't seeking it yet, you may be the first glimpse of God's Word that they will see.

Don't miss that opportunity. Stay filled with the Word and share it with others. You will be prepared to impact the world for Jesus Christ, and you will also be blessed by God's promises in Joshua 1:7-9 where it encourages us to stay in the Word, be strong and courageous, and know that "the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go"

### **Go**

1. How much time are you spending in God's Word?
2. Have you looked around to see who you might be influencing in your community?
3. Are you using your talents fully for God's Kingdom?

### **Workout**

1. Joshua 1:7-9
2. Mathew 25:1-46
3. Ephesians 6:10-18
4. Listen to John Waller's song "The Blessing"

### **Overtime**

Lord please help us to recognize our opportunities to share your Word of Life to all you place in our midst.

### **Bible Reference:**

Ephesians 6



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