

## **Bringing the Church to My Team**

n/a

### **Ready:**

“Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.” -Acts 11:25-26 (NIV)

**Set** If you have played sports at any level, you’ve probably noted that certain “levels” are established quickly on teams. We’ve all been part of teams where there were good players and not-so-good players. Inevitably, we all know what happens when these levels are realized: The good players start to interact negatively with the bad players. Some of the interactions even come in the form of picking on or even bullying. I am embarrassed to say that I know all about these situations based on firsthand experience. I wish I could say I was the target, but I am guilty of dishing out the abuse to those I thought of as less talented. When we read the above verse, we see that the title of Christian was first given to the disciples at a place called Antioch. These believers did not label themselves as Christians; they were called Christians by the world around them. Now, here comes my guilt. Would people have labeled me a Christian based on my actions when I was a player? The answer to that is a profound no. Would people have called me a Christian based on my actions when I was a coach?

Perhaps, but they probably would definitely have said no on certain occasions. When we treat others as actual creations of the Creator, we bring praise to God. In Isaiah 61:1-2 we read that Christ came to, among other things, preach the good news to the poor. As imitators of Him, we are to do the same thing. Now, this can mean the literal poor—those without money or resources—or it can mean the spiritual or socially poor. You know, those not-so-good players on your team. Doing this, according to verse 2, proclaims the year of the Lord’s favor. I don’t know about you, but proclaiming the Lord’s favor sounds far more Christ-like to me than proclaiming someone’s poor athletic ability. Today, recognize your role as a Christian competitor and accept your calling to unite rather than divide based on skill. Choose, instead, to bring the love of Christ to your team and set yourself apart as a recognizable Christian.

**Go** 1. Based on your actions, would someone call you a Christian? 2. Do you see any divisions on your team that are based on skills? 3. What are you doing to show God’s love to all creations of the Creator?

**Workout** Psalm 68:5 Isaiah 61:1-4 Matthew 25:35-36

**Overtime** “Father God, today we ask You to let us see our teammates with Your eyes. Let us be the church on our team.”

### **Bible Reference:**

Acts 11



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