

## Fair Play is Reasonable

### **Ready:**

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing, you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."Romans 12:1-2

### **Set**

A soccer player falls in the penalty box after being tackled. She gets back up, walks to the referee who is pointing to the penalty spot, and explains that she just dove to avoid the tackle and there should not be any foul called on the play.

After signing his scorecard, a golfer notices an error, reports it to the officials and gets automatically disqualified after winning the tournament.

Even though her first serve was called inbound, a tennis player, knowing that her ball was out, overrules the line judge's call and gets ready to second serve.

A baseball centerfielder admits that he caught the ball just after it touched the ground and tells the umpire that the batter should now be on first base, not out.

It is regrettable to point out that these examples of integrity in sports are very rare to witness. Our culture has developed a win-at-all-cost mentality that is present in every sports venue and at any level of competition. Athletes cheat without thinking of the consequences and constantly complain about the officiating. Players react immaturely or improperly and do not take responsibility for their actions. Coaches make excuses by blaming others or unfavorable conditions for their team's loss.

This is now what we are accustomed to see in sports and what the world has accepted. In today's society, it is now so unusual to witness honest behaviors in sports that high praises and awards are being given for the sportsmanship displayed by the players. However, the types of plays given as examples earlier are not referred to as "High Level of Integrity Play" or "Morally Excellent Play" but are simply called "Fair Play".

The definition of fair is "that is acceptable or reasonable, in accordance with the rules". There should not be anything extraordinary about any type of play or action that is defined as being "acceptable or reasonable". And so it should be also, in the way we live our lives. As followers of Christ, we too often tend to think that offering our bodies as a living sacrifice is an exceptional act while Romans 12:1-2 clearly defines it as our reasonable service. This scripture also reminds us to not be conformed to what the world has accepted but to be

transformed by the renewing of our mind so that we may discern what the will of God is, what is good and acceptable to Him.

As Christians, we do live, compete and coach in this world but, when we received Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we made the decision to not be of this world. We need to embrace what is reasonable unto God and rise above what has been accepted in the world. Jesus died for us so we can live for Him: this is our reasonable service; this is our “Fair Play”.

## Go

1. Sports and competition have a way to both build and reveal character. The best and the worst come out when one is under pressure. Have you ever rationalized poor sportsmanship as just being competitive?
2. We can easily be caught in the trap of over emphasizing sports and undervaluing other facets of life. And when we get sports out of proportion, our responses can be equally disproportionate. In regards to sports, is your walk with God in good proportion?
3. God wrote and gave us the ultimate Playbook. It is not our skills but our faithfulness to Him that will bring us success, on and off the field. Ask God to receive His revelation on what is reasonable to accomplish in His eyes.

## Workout

1. Colossians 3:23
2. 1 Corinthians 3:19-20
3. Philippians 2:5



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