

## **Glorifying God in Sport**

### **Ready:**

*“The one who loves his life will lose it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” –John 12:25*

### **Set**

One of my all-time favorite movies is *Chariots of Fire*. The movie is based on the true story of two British athletes who won gold medals in the 1924 Olympics. The motivation to run and compete for both star athletes, however, was different.

I think Eric Liddell’s why captures it simply and profoundly:

“I believe God made me for a purpose, but He also made me fast and when I run, I feel His pleasure.”

When we do everything motivated by our love for God and feel the pleasure of what we are born to do, whether we are playing a sport, coaching players or ministering to athletes, we bring God glory.

“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.” –1 Corinthians 10:31

If we learn in the small things and daily moments to keep God at the center, then in the big moments of sporting success, it will be about God and not about us.

How do we apply this concept of glorifying God to competing?

Here are three simple truths to ensure the glory goes to God.

### **Keep It Centered—always put God at the center.**

If we pause to consider where our athletic skills come from, we know it is from God. He has given us our ability, talent and opportunity to shine or be an influencer for Him. When we are tempted to take all the glory in success or deflect the blame in failure, we have shifted the center from God to us. God wants us to shine, to do things with excellence, to win even when we lose because it is not about us.

### **Keep It 100—no faking or pretense.**

In the quest for glory and fame, many athletes have compromised values and standards and thrown away great talent, while sometimes even destroying their careers and families. It is

never worth it to fake it. Facing the facts helps us ground the realities around us and shift the focus to God. The facts may not always appear positive or helpful, but God's promise and His presence always will. When an injury threatens to cut short a promising career or when you sit out on the bench for the entire season, you can still bring God glory by speaking and acting through your circumstances in ways that will honor Him.

### **Keep It Clear—focus.**

When we allow the gift of sport to become our all-consuming passion, we derive our identity from it. The danger is that when we begin to idolize the very gift God gave us to bring glory to Him and own it as if we earned it, we become enslaved to it. We must seek to shine the spotlight on God and His greatness, not our own. While it's important to give our best effort for every game, it's more important to be a representative of God every time we step onto the field.

Our identity is first and foremost who we are in Christ. This frees us to play our best and leave the outcome of winning or losing to Him. The real and lasting result is not reflected on the scoreboard but in how well our thoughts, words and actions showcase the Father.

### **Go**

? What is your motivation to play your sport? Is it approval driven?

? How can you play with passion and also play with purpose?

? Think of a few ways you can give glory to God when things go your way on the field, and when they don't.

### **Workout**

Romans 4:19

Romans 11:36

1 Corinthians 4:7

### **Overtime**

“Father, thank You that You have given me the ability to play the sport I love. I also understand that You gave me the talent to play to bring glory to You and to show the people around me Your love. Help me to find ways to glorify You in the wins and losses, and remember that I am Your child and my identity is in You. In Jesus' name, amen.”



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