

Play to Win

Ready:

“The Word?became flesh?and dwelt?among us. We observed his glory,?the glory as the one and only?Son?from the Father, full of grace and truth.” —[John 1:14](#)

Set

The pressure on coaches and athletes to win is immense. Oftentimes, contingent on our win is a coach’s job, an athlete’s scholarship or the approval of a parent. The excessive focus on winning at all costs has created a broken and distorted sports culture that compromises ethical play.

When the demands of the world clash with our faith, what do we do?

Remember for Whom we coach or play.

We have been redeemed by grace to glorify our Father. It is Him we please, not the world. God bought us with a high price, so we honor Him with our play with the help of the Holy Spirit. Because we are deeply loved by the Maker of heaven and earth, coaching and playing becomes our form of worship.

Our God of excellence asks us to work hard and to play well.

Our God of order asks us to follow the rules of the game.

Our God of justice asks us to play fair.

Remember Whose and who we are.

We are His—the beloved of the Most High. What joy there is in having been designed as His image bearers in sports! We become competitors who reveal God’s love to a world inclined to self-focus and self-preservation.

When we compete with integrity, we mirror the righteousness of our Creator.

When we honor our coaches, spectators and officials, we reflect His goodness.

When we respect and grant grace to those we play with or against, we show the relational heart of God.

We can compete exceptionally because in Christ we have first experienced the grace, forgiveness and love of God.

Remember what the real win is.

How we compete reflects what we value most. Competing for our own glory is also vanity—from the Latin root *vanitas*, meaning *empty*. For what will it profit us if we win a game but suffer the loss of our soul? As ambassadors for Christ, we place a higher premium on being obedient to God than on being merely successful at our sport. In Christ we have been given the wisdom to know what glorifies God, the power of the Holy Spirit to do what is right and the joy to live out our faith.

Go

- How does knowing Whose you are bring you joy?
- How can you compete with this joy?
- What would a Kingdom win look like for you today?

Workout

Proverbs 21:3

1 Corinthians 6:20

Colossians 3:23-24

Overtime

“Father, thank You that You love me so much. Thank You that You see me as Your child, and that You brought me into Your family through Jesus. Help me hold to this today: I am Yours, and my win is in You. In Jesus’ name, amen.”



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