

## **Thankful in Opposition**

### **Ready:**

“Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable.” – Romans 12:17

### **Set**

Have you ever had an opponent trash talk you on the court, field, or arena? Have you felt someone stare you down as the game began, as if a battle was about to commence and your rival was confident you would be defeated? For most competitors, this is common—even human nature. When we’re put against someone else and only one victor can be named, we have a drive to complete that goal to win.

At times in the past, I shamefully looked at my opponents as enemies and as players I needed to defeat at all costs, especially when I got a cold look or a jesting snicker. When I became a Christian and began to follow Jesus and His teachings, I realized that viewing my opponent negatively was wrong, even when they treated me and my team poorly first.

Jesus teaches us to receive everyone with love and grace, even in opposition. We are created in His image and are meant to be Christ-like in our actions. When we think about how Jesus treated His enemies—the people who mocked Him, beat Him (physically), and eventually executed Him—we can understand that rising above any opponent that stares us down or taunts us after a play isn’t a difficult choice.

As you continue to compete, challenge yourself and your teammates to elevate the game of play; elevate the involvement of play to a higher level of competition—something that leaves everyone feeling honorable and respected.

Consider your actions for the Audience of One (Jesus) rather than who you play, play with, or play for. And most importantly, always be thankful for the standard Jesus has set before you!

### **Go**

- Are you playing for an Audience of One, or do you play for your peers, coaches, and teammates?
- At your next game, practice, or tournament, how can you elevate the atmosphere of play? What could you do or say to your opponent?

### **Workout**

Matthew 5:44; Acts 7:60

### **Overtime**

“Lord, please help me to compete for You and You only. Give me the grace and humility to treat my opponents and enemies with love and grace so that I may represent You well in my sport. Thank You for setting the perfect example for me. Amen.”

**Bible Reference:**

Romans 12:17

Matthew 5:44

Acts 7:60



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