

The Hustle Contract

Ready:

“And fathers, don’t stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” - Ephesians 6:4

Set

My daughter likely receives more scrutiny playing sports than some other children do. As a parent, I tried to motivate her to be more aggressive and to play harder and use many tactics to do so. I tried having heart-to-heart conversations and even tried bribing her with a steak and shrimp dinner. I thought I had tried everything, but then I came up with another great idea. I would put her on a “Hustle Contract.”

The purpose of the Hustle Contract was to set some expectations for her effort. In my heart, I knew God was saying that He had a different, better way to do this. But I didn’t listen. I went ahead with the Hustle Contract anyway. I read through it with her in its entirety and had her sign it. At first she thought it was a joke, but when she discovered that I was serious, she just dropped her head. A look of sadness came over her face. She looked defeated. Before I went to bed that evening, I prayed about it. That was when I realized that I was putting unreasonable pressure on my daughter. Despite my attempt at clever wording, the message in the contract was that my love for her was somehow tied to her performance on the soccer field.

The next morning I immediately went into her room carrying the signed Hustle Contract. I sat down on her bed and confessed. “I was wrong,” I said. “I thought the Hustle Contract was a great idea, but it was a dumb idea. It was my idea, not God’s. I try to be the best parent I can, but I still make mistakes all the time. The good news is that God still loves me, and He loves you too. He loves us even when we make mistakes. You don’t need to focus on anything other than your relationship with Jesus. If you do that, He will help you with the rest of it.”

After our talk, I handed the Hustle Contract to her and told her to tear it up. When I said this, the biggest grin grew and stretched across her face. Her eyes twinkled with joy. I could see the weight lifting off her shoulders. It was such a privilege to have this conversation with my daughter. I thank God for teaching me about grace, and I’m humbled that He chose me to be her dad.

Today, may we all understand that God loves us no matter what we do or don’t accomplish on the field. Yes, we should compete with excellence, but we must always remember that our performance doesn’t earn His love. He already loves us simply because He created us.

Go

1. If you are a parent, how can you encourage your child's relationship with the Lord? Coaches, how can you encourage your athletes' faith? Athletes, how can you encourage the faith of your teammates?

2. How can you view your role as parent, coach or teammate through God's eyes?

3. How can we best deliver the message of high expectations for performance with the underlying theme of grace?

Workout

- Deuteronomy 6:5
- Isaiah 55:8-9
- Matthew 11:28-30
- Colossians 2:6-7
- Philippians 1:6
- 1 John 1:9

Bible Reference:

1 John 1



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