

## **Choose Love**

### **Ready:**

"But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us!"  
–Romans 5:8

### **Set**

Have you ever disagreed with your coach's game strategy or played with a teammate with whom you didn't see eye to eye? Have you ever competed against an opponent who made you really angry? As athletes, we come into contact with a lot of people: coaches, teammates, opponents, referees, and fans; and we're not always going to agree with them.

Jesus came in contact with a lot of unpleasant people. His teaching was so radical for the time that the high priests and city rulers publicly beat Him and nailed Him to a cross. If that wasn't enough, they mocked and taunted Him in the process. As He hung on the cross they called, "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross" (Matthew 27:40). Jesus heard their ridicule and could have called thousands of angels to His aid, but instead willingly chose to die because He loved us.

Because Jesus set the example by choosing to love, He gave us the freedom to love those who treat us poorly. By dying on the cross for our sin, He demonstrated that love is an action, not just an emotion. In John 15:18 Jesus said, "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first" (NIV). Next time you run into someone you'd rather punch than hug, just remember how Jesus responded. Choose love.

### **Go**

1. Have you ever encountered a teammate or a coach who has said something that made you angry? How did you respond?
2. Think back to a time when you responded in anger. How could you have chosen to show love instead?

### **Workout**

Mark 12:33; Luke 6:27-28; 10:27; John 3:16; 13:34; Galatians 5:13

### **Overtime**

God, forgive me for not loving unconditionally. I realize I won't always get along with everyone, but I can choose to love them. When things unfold in an unpleasant manner, help my response be Your response. Amen.



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