

Seek to Understand

Ready:

“Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another.” - 1 John 4:10-11

Set

As coaches and as athletes, I think it’s safe to say that we all have difficulty relating to at least one teammate or player each season. And when compared to those we have some type of affinity to, they are usually much more difficult to love.

In college, I had a teammate who was completely different from me in everything from personality to cultural background. We believed different things, had different ways of communicating, and approached most aspects of life with different perspectives. My initial hope was to convince her to adopt my way of thinking. I quickly found out though, that she wasn't very interested in changing her perspective on things, which was frustrating for me. I had to, instead, learn to love her without an agenda or timetable.

Then, as a coach, I realized something in a similar way last season. One of our players, who was arguably the most talented on the team, was also the most up and down in attitude and effort. I spent much of my time being angry and frustrated with her, wondering why she had to be so rude and show such blatant disregard for her teammates. So much of me wanted to write her attitude off as irrevocably selfish and stop trying to help her improve. Yet, the more I studied and learned from others about the life and teachings of Jesus, the more I saw that neither trying to convince people nor writing them off were in His Game Plan.

Jesus knew the love of the Father in its abundance (John 14:7) and was able to see others as being made in that love, which allowed Him to lead people into His redemption. They responded because He loved them. He didn’t cast them off.

Author Brennan Manning made a great statement about the process of loving others to Christ: “Being accepted, enamored, and loved by God comes first, motivating the disciple to live the law of love. We are to love, then, because he loved us first (1 John 4:19).”

There is always more to others than what we see. We need to remember that we haven’t walked in their shoes and have no idea where they’ve been or what they’ve endured. They may have experienced any number of things that have contributed to their behavior. When we realize that and try to understand their hearts, it will be easier to love them.

Think of that teammate or player you have trouble connecting with today. Pray for them and ask God to help you seek to understand them over seeking to be understood by them. Then let His Spirit fill you with the patience and grace you need as you love them for Him.

Go

1. Who is the person on your team you need to start loving and seeking to understand through God's eyes?
2. How can you lean on other Christians to live out this kind of love?
3. How can your understanding of the power of the Holy Spirit help you to persevere in relating to this teammate or player?

Workout

John 14:7-11
James 1:19-22
1 John 4:11-21

Bible Reference:

1 John 4:10-11
John 14:7-11
James 1:19-22



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