

Thankful in Competition

Ready:

“And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—
Ephesians 5:20

Set

We love to play! If you are into games and sports, there is a thrill that comes with competing that little else brings to your life. In high school, tossing the discus with proper technique and distance was a real charge for me. When playing pick-up basketball as an adult, hitting a string of jumpers still makes my adrenaline go. Even when I am just doing a sudoku, the more blanks I fill in, the more I get drawn into beating the puzzle. Whether it is against another or against yourself, competition almost seems to give zest to life in that moment.

Are you thankful that you can compete? Maybe you like word or number puzzles, or track and field, or basketball, or equestrian; whatever it is, competition gives us so much, and we should be thankful to participate in it. But let's break it down further; here are some reasons to be thankful for the chance to compete:

- **Character revealed:** A quote attributed to John Wooden says, “Sports don’t produce character; They reveal it.” If we like competing, there is no greater mirror to reflect our character to ourselves. We can see things clearly like whether we play within the rules and with integrity, how we react when things go right or go wrong, or whether we finish despite how we began. How we respond in these situations will play out in other areas of life. We can be grateful for what we learn because we cannot grow more mature, in any area of life, unless we know how we need to grow.
- **Cultivated excellence:** According to Colossians 3:23, we are to do all things as if doing it for the Lord Himself. When we play our sport, it challenges us to play the best we can. But this should bring out the best in our opponents as well. There are times that the contest is so well played and so fun that it does not matter who wins. The participants walk away satisfied with what just occurred, no matter the outcome. Two opponents bringing out the best in one another is an excellent thing.
- **Creator glorified:** The third stanza of FCA’s Competitor’s Creed says, “I compete for the pleasure of my Heavenly Father, the honor of Christ, and the reputation of the Holy Spirit.” Our Creator, God, distributes talents, passions, and gifts as He chooses. Using whatever talent, passion, or gift He has given us, brings Him glory especially if we use it the best as we can. In fact, our best use of His given gifts is to use them for His glory first and foremost.

What a wonderful thing to be able to get some much out of something so fun! We can learn about ourselves. We can bring out something incredible in others. We can bring honor to God

and all of this through sports. How great is that?

The next time you get ready to play ball, ride, or even pull out that sudoku, give Him thanks for the chance to do it and for all the great things that can come from it.

Go

- What has competition shown you about yourself? Are you thankful for it?
- Describe a time when a contest brought out the best in your opponent and yourself.
- Do you think God is honored by the way to compete? Why or why not?

Workout

Colossians 3:15-17; Psalm 100

Overtime

“Father, I am so grateful that I get to play what I do. Help me to grow as a follower of You and to bring out the best in others. And may You get the glory. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Bible Reference:

Ephesians 5:20

Colossians 3:15-17

Psalms 100



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