

## **How Do Sports Shape Your Identity?**

### **Ready:**

“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’” -- John 14:6

### **Set**

In today’s world of double standards, it is crucial to have a source we can come back to when we are confused or overwhelmed by the voices all around us. Sports is a common place for coaches and athletes to hear many opinions about whom they should become and what they should do. People have opinions about everything coaches and athletes do: how they lead, how they play, how they spend their time and money, and what they do in the off-season. But the only opinion that matters is Jesus’. That’s what it means to put your identity in Christ.

### **A Greater Way**

The Lord offers us a solid source and solutions we would not think of ourselves. The thing that always amazes me is the “keys” He uses to open certain doors in my life. Sometimes, I find I am trying the wrong key or even jimmying the lock, stubbornly trying to break the door down. But once I finally humble myself and agree to utilize the keys in His hands, He shows me which key will unlock a new understanding of who I am in Him.

The keys of the world look like things of the flesh: jealousy, revenge, greed and unbelief. But the keys in God’s hands are the fruit of the spirit, and they bring things like love, joy and peace.

Remember the story of Joseph in Genesis, the one whose brothers sold him into Egyptian slavery? Years after they sold him, they became vulnerable to famine and dependent on Joseph’s decisions. Joseph had been put in charge by the all-powerful Pharaoh. But He was still faithful to God.

Although Joseph knew where He came from, imagine his fight with his feelings when he saw those who betrayed him—his flesh and blood, his own siblings! What thoughts do you think might have run through his head? Revenge would have been natural. He was in a high position, and he could have turned his back on them since they turned their backs on him.

But Joseph knew his identity in God. We know Joseph helped his father's family survive. But I wonder how many tears Joseph cried during the three days he imprisoned his brothers and how passionate his dialogues with the Lord were. Was it a severe battle for compassion and justice within him until he concurred to accept God's perspective? Or did it come easy? This type of forgiveness comes only from a strong walk with God.

Sports, culture and other people will offer opinions of who we should be and what we should do. Our own sense of justice and truth can also try to guide us, but this too can lead us astray. Putting our identity in Jesus means we become synchronized with God's way, God's Word and what God is leading us to do through it.

## Go

- How has forgiveness been hard for you? What might God want to say to you about it?
- Which of the fruits of the Spirit would you like more of in your life?
- Ask God to increase that specific fruit of the Spirit and look for opportunities to exercise it during the day.

## Workout

[Genesis 50:20](#); [Galatians 5:22-23](#); [1 Peter 2:9](#)

## Overtime

"Father, thank You that my identity is set in You. Thank You that I am Your child, and nothing can change that. Help me to live this out in my life and grant me patience as I grow in the fruit of the Spirit and learn to forgive when it is difficult. Lead me in the truth You want to show me each day. In Jesus' name, Amen."



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