

Playing Happy

Ready:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs." - Matthew 5:3

Set

The 2025 College Baseball World Series reminded me why we play—not just for stats or streaks, but for the love of the game. Willie Mays, one of the greatest to ever step on the diamond, understood this. With 3,283 hits, 660 home runs, and a .302 career average, he earned 24 All-Star invitations and a spot in Baseball's Hall of Fame. When asked how he handled disappointment over the 70% of at-bats that didn't end in hits, Willie simply said, "I like to play happy."

Willie knew that failure didn't define him. Likewise, we don't have to fake it or "pretend happy"—we play happy because God's Spirit walks with us in every inning, every play, every moment. When we're flat, exhausted, or discouraged, His presence fuels our fire. Win or lose, the joy of competing—hitting, running, catching, and throwing—is God's gift.

When we stop striving and start trusting, joy becomes our second wind. Here's how I've come to see it—my Baseball Beatitudes (paraphrased from Matthew 5:3–10):

- (v3) I play happy when I see God refuel my tank when I'm empty.
- (v4) I play happy when I realize streaks end, but I play for an audience of One.
- (v5) I play happy when I understand that growing character outlasts win/loss records.
- (v6) I play happy when my drive reflects the heart of Christ in me.
- (v7) I play happy when kind words and encouragement matter more than a walk-off win.
- (v8) I play happy when integrity on the field leads to impact beyond it.
- (v9) I play happy when I mend fences, not burn bridges.
- (v10) I play happy when I hustle, even through setbacks and opposition.

Athleticism and self-confidence only go so far.

Pursue your gift. Play hard. Practice perspective.

That's how you win—in baseball, and in life

Go

- When you're slumping or tired, how can remembering God's presence help you "play happy"?
- Which Baseball Beatitude, above, hits home for you? Try rewriting the Beatitudes for your sport.

- What's one area of your game—or your life—where you've been relying on your own strength? What would it look like to trust God more fully there?

Workout

Matthew 5:3-10

Colossians 3:23-24

Isaiah 40:31

Overtime

"My God and my Coach, build an attitude of joy in me when I compete. Let me "play happy" so I relish each moment you give me. Holy Spirit, you are the "second wind" that constantly guides me. Amen."



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