

## (I) The Coach's Prayer

### READY

Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." – [Luke 11:1](#)

### SET

While playing professional lacrosse for the Baltimore Thunder, I was asked by my teammates to pray in the locker room before each game. Before a crucial playoff game, one of my teammates leaned into the huddle right before I was about to pray and said, "Make this a good one. We need this win!"

Over the years, I have reflected many times on his comment. I understand why he said it; he wanted us to win, and he wanted to make sure the "Big Guy" upstairs was on our side. He saw prayer as a rabbit's foot...just a lucky charm. For him, the prayer formula was: good prayer = win; bad prayer = lose.

What he didn't understand is prayer isn't about winning and losing, rather transformation and surrender. It's about becoming more like Jesus, dying to the flesh, and being filled with the Holy Spirit. Coaches and athletes need to understand that prayer isn't for the battle, it is the battle. It is the key to discovering the heart of God.

***Prayer isn't for the battle.***

***Prayer is the battle.***

As a coach, God has entrusted you with the responsibility to shape lives. You need to be a good steward of the gifts God have given to you to influence others. Remember, coaching is a gift from God that brings blessing, joy, and character. It is a temporary role, and you are held accountable. Therefore, you need prayer to help you maximize your coaching by allowing God to turn you into a transformational, praying coach.

I wrote *The Coach's Prayer* so that coaches have a practical way to pray. It's not about praying for a win, but winning God's way. It's not telling God what He already knows, but God revealing to you what you don't know. It's about revelation, discernment, and understanding.

### ***The Coach's Prayer***

*Lord, when I pick up the whistle, lace up my shoes and walk out of the locker room, I coach for You alone. There is no turning back. In every victory and every defeat, I celebrate Your goodness and greatness. The way I coach demonstrates my love for You. I stand for the cross and declare my loyalty to You. I coach for You.*

*My energy and enthusiasm come from the Holy Spirit. My purpose and passion come from above. Through the strain and struggle, I never give up or give in. The champion inside of me is Jesus who gives me strength. Winning is honoring You in all I do. I coach for You.*

*When I coach, I feel Your pleasure. My heart longs for Your applause alone. All of my abilities are from You. I am under Your authority as my Ultimate Coach. I will respect and honor all competitors, coaches, and officials. I compete by all of the rules. I coach for You.*

*My coaching is my offering to my Savior. I am Your warrior in the heat of battle. I am humble in victory and gracious in defeat. I coach to serve You, my athletes, and our opponents. My words bring healing and refreshment that inspire and motivate. I speak words of life. I coach for You.*

*Success isn't a winning program, but seeing the power of Christ transform the lives of my athletes. Victory is not the scoreboard, but for my athletes to become more like You. Bless my athletes in great ways and increase their faith and confidence. I coach for You.*

*In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.*

Remember, lift up your athletes through prayer daily. God will use your prayers to transform lives. Pray well. Coach well.

### GO

1. How do you currently pray for your athletes? How do you need to pray for your athletes?
2. What part of *The Coach's Prayer* resonated the most with you?
3. How can *The Coach's Prayer* help you? How can you integrate it into your coaching?

### WORKOUT

- [Job 42:10](#)
- [1 Timothy 2:1](#)
- [Philippians 4:6](#)
- [2 Chronicles 7:14](#)

### OVERTIME

"Father, give me the wisdom how to coach in a Christ-like manner and the courage to put it into action. Develop a heart of prayer in me. I want to stand in the gap through prayer for my athletes. They are counting on me to cover them in prayer daily. Fill me up with your Holy Spirit. I need you more than ever. In Jesus' name, amen."

## (2) Talk is Cheap

### READY

"To the pure, everything is pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; in fact, both their mind and conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but they deny Him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, and disqualified for any good work."

-Titus 1:15-16

### SET

I had many favorite sayings as a coach. Here are some of them:

- Rule 1: The coach is right.
- Rule 2: If you think Coach is wrong, see Rule 1.
- Whether you can or can't, you are right.
- Don't tell me. Show me.

The last one may have been my favorite. Athletes have a hard time backing up what they say. They talk a good game, but many times today's athlete can't back it up. All in all, talk is cheap.

In the book of Titus, Paul encouraged the true believers to stand strong. Many people in that time were all talk and didn't live up to their words, especially when it came to Christ. Paul called these kinds of people despicable, disobedient and worthless for doing anything good. Wow. Tough words, huh? But as I said before, talk is cheap. In James, we find a simple message: do not just talk or listen to the word, be doers of it (James 1). Christ said that if you are going to tell Him you love Him, also show Him. Peter was a prime example of cheap talk. His heart was good, but he did not always walk his talk and did not show Christ that his talk was a reflection of his true belief.

All coaches want to believe that their players will do what they say all the time. But they know that that is not always the case. The coaches who can convince their players to talk less and do more will usually find a greater level of success. Jesus wants the same for His believers. He wants us to talk less about all the great things we intend to do for Him and to start doing them. He wants a lifestyle of action, not just of mere talk. Athletes and Christians need to heed the same message: talk is cheap, and action is everything.

### GO

1. Are you a talker or doer?
2. In your sport, where do you find that you are a cheap talker?
3. Today, how can you show Christ that you want to keep Him first in your sport, on your team and in your life?

### WORKOUT

- [James 1:22-25](#);
- [James 2:14-26](#);
- [1 John 3:18-20](#)

### OVERTIME

Lord, let my talk match my actions—both pure that You might be glorified. Amen.

### **(3) Blessing the Taxi Squad**

#### READY

“The share of the one who goes into battle is to be the same as the share of the one who remains with the supplies. They will share equally.”

— 1 Samuel 30:24b

#### SET

While David and four hundred of his men set out to defeat the Amalekites (1 Sm 30:1–26), two hundred men stayed behind to watch the supplies because they were too exhausted to fight. I call these men the “taxi squad”

They were not the frontline players, but they were nonetheless absolutely essential to the team. After his victory, David returned to the camp to greet the men who had stayed behind, even though some of the selfish frontliners did not want to share the plunder with the taxi squad.

However, David knew that everyone had a role to play and that the victory had come from God. Therefore, David issued a statute for all of Israel—that while he was in charge all would share in the plunder, including the taxi squad. Every soul was important to David; the only difference is that some souls had more physical ability than others.

David was willing to coach a group of men who were not those typically considered for first choice. The men David chose were distressed, discontented, or in debt (1 Sm 22:2). Likewise, some of us coach the lower skill levels of a sport, while others coach those with higher skill.

However, a physically talented man or woman is not more important to God. David was content to coach those whom God had given him.

The story of David challenges us to see the players we coach from God’s perspective. Levels do not matter to God.

Eventually, David was put in charge over all of Israel, but that did not change the way he viewed each person.

#### GO

1. Are you content with those whom God has given to you to coach?
2. How do you treat those in your “taxi squad”? What can you do to show them recognition? How are you dealing with the frontliners who have a prideful attitude?
3. Do you see each player and player support from God’s perspective? Which players do you need to change your attitude toward?

#### WORKOUT

Extra Reading:

- [1 Samuel 22:2;](#)
- [1 Samuel 30:1–26](#)

#### OVERTIME

Dear God, help me see each person with Your heart and to treat each person, no matter his skill level, with the same care. Amen.

## (4) Patience

### READY

"But endurance must do its complete work, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing." - James 1:4

### SET

In our culture, patience is becoming less and less common. We're an instant gratification society, so when things don't go according to our timetable or plans, we get frustrated and sometimes angry. How many times have coaches lost their tempers when athletes failed to make the right plays or the right decisions?

Biblical patience is a much-needed virtue these days, and certainly a reflection of where we are in our Christian walk. A verse well-loved by athletes is Isaiah 40:31:

*"Those who trust in the LORD will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not faint."*

The key word in the truth of this promise is trust. Trusting and waiting on the Lord go hand in hand, and the exercise of both produces patience for every area of life. One Christian author defines patience as "that calm and unruffled temper with which the good man bears the evils of life, whether they proceed from persons or things. It also manifests itself in a sweet submission to the providential appointments of God and fortitude in the presence of the duties and conflicts of life."

How do we develop godly patience? By looking to Jesus Christ, who exhibited great patience and kindness toward His disciples and who does the same with us today. Instead of giving us the punishment we deserve for our sins, He gives us forgiveness by taking our sins to the cross. Instead of condemnation, He gives us grace. His patience with

us creates patience in us, which we can then demonstrate to our athletes, families, coworkers, and friends.

### GO

1. What aspects of your life try your patience?
2. How do you react when things don't go according to your plans?
3. How can you demonstrate better patience with your players, friends, and family?

### WORKOUT

Extra Reading:

- [Proverbs 16:32](#);
- [Proverbs 19:11](#);
- [Romans 15:4-5](#);
- [2 Timothy 4:1-5](#)

### OVERTIME

*Merciful God, help me to wait on You today as You create in me an eternal perspective. Amen.*

## **(5) Trash Talking**

### READY

“For the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.” — Matthew 12:34b

### SET

In 1998, the Ohio State Buckeyes beat Northwestern 36–10, but personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct tainted the win. OSU’s coach at the time, John Cooper, made a point to his number-one ranked team, emphasizing that there is no place in football for trash talking and taunting and that it can be a distraction more than a help. Guard Rob Murphy said, “He got his point across.”

Discussing the numerous flags that were thrown during the game, Cooper demanded that the trash-talk behavior stop. Again Murphy said, “I agree. We need to play more and talk less.”

“You can have a good, tough, hard-nosed football game without all that stuff,” Cooper continued. “I think college football would want to do more to prevent trash talking. It seems like we’re more worried about a guy celebrating in the end zone after a touchdown than with what else is going on during the game.”

Is there a place in sports for trash talking? I don’t think so, and I agree with coach Cooper that it is a distraction.

Jesus said, “For the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart” (Matt. 12:34). As Rob Murphy said, “Play more and talk less.” Play with the character that’s reflective of a heart surrendered to the Lord. It is not our accomplishments that influence others, but our character. Trash talking means we must belittle our opponents in order to build ourselves up as greater and better than them. That

type of behavior is both unsportsmanlike and unworthy of a follower of Christ.

### GO

1. Is it easy for you to trash talk?
2. If so, why?
3. How do you think the Lord wants you to change such behavior?

### WORKOUT

- Matthew 12:34;
- James 3:1–12

### OVERTIME

Lord, I need help with my mouth. Take total control of my heart. I pray this in Jesus name. Amen.

## **(6) C'mon, Blue**

### READY

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law. — Galatians 5:22–23

### SET

I love baseball. This is a sport that relies on a team for a successful outcome. Baseball is also the only American sport where, during a stoppage in play, a manager or coach can approach an umpire to dispute a rule or argue a call.

Unfortunately, we've all watched a manager throwing a tantrum, kicking dirt on the plate, or verbally abusing an umpire. We've also seen the umpire retaliating in anger and sometimes losing control. It's hard to have someone yell at us or challenge our character in any setting, but especially in front of peers and spectators in a stadium.

The Apostle Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit produces self-control in those he indwells. We can't obtain this fruit by natural means; it is produced only when we look to Christ's control of our lives.

Granted, our sinful nature wants to yell, get angry, show off, or get the last word. Even though I have been a Christian for twenty-five years, I have often forgotten to give control of my favorite game to the Lord. But when I've yielded my life—including baseball—to Him, I've been changed and have witnessed the fruit of self-control grow stronger.

When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we begin the greatest adventure of our lives: becoming like Him. Others will see a picture of Christ by our example, especially when the fruit of the Holy Spirit is formed within us. When He produces self-control in us, we are able to see our situation more clearly, control our emotions and actions, and

allow Him to guide us in handling circumstances correctly. Living a Spirit-filled life means living in harmony with the life God intended us to live and bearing fruit that will last.

### GO

1. In what areas of your life do you need more self-control?
2. How do you react when confronted?
3. What can you do today to allow the Holy Spirit to make you more like Christ?

### WORKOUT

Extra Reading:

- 1 Corinthians 9:24–27;
- Galatians 6:1–5;
- 2 Peter 1:3–11

### OVERTIME

Gracious God, thank You for continuing the good work You've begun in me and producing fruit in my life that points others to Jesus. In His name. Amen.

## **(7) Play the Next Play, God's Way?**

### READY

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—and I am the worst of them. But I received mercy because of this, so that in me, the worst of them, Christ Jesus might demonstrate the utmost patience as an example to those who would believe in Him for eternal life." — 1 Timothy 1:15-16

### SET

Much like Paul, I also felt at times that I was the worst of sinners. I wondered how God could forgive me, how He could use me. I didn't measure up. As a young football coach, I modeled myself after several older, rough and rugged, salty coaches who were known to be profane to the extreme and who had a "take no prisoners" attitude. It had worked for them; maybe it would work for me.

Using these questionable techniques, I, too, became successful—as in wins and losses. I gained the respect of my peers and won trophies and accolades, but for what? There was still a major hole that needed to be filled—a Jesus hole.

I rededicated my life to Christ after drifting away for years. I seemed to be getting back on track. But something still wasn't right. I had not invited Christ into one of the most important parts of my life—my career, my purpose.

I was afraid of the unknown, afraid of being labeled a hypocrite. I had sinned way too often and in front of too many people for me to proclaim my faith now. I thought I would work on this Christian thing for a while, and then Christ would be able to use me. Not today—maybe tomorrow.

### GO

1. Have you found yourself asking some of the same questions as a player or coach?
2. What old habits or skeletons still haunt you in your walk with Christ?
3. What is holding you back from bringing Christ into your locker room?

### WORKOUT

Extra Reading:

- Matthew 5:16;
- Luke 9:26;
- Romans 3:23;
- Colossians 3:23

### OVERTIME

Lord, I pray that we as coaches will understand that Christ can use us now, right where we are. We do not have to be perfect; we never will be. We are a work in progress. I pray for courage and conviction to take a stand for Christ. Amen.

## **(8) Silent Servitude**

### READY

Don't work only while being watched, in order to please men, but as slaves of Christ, do God's will from your heart. —[Ephesians 6:6](#)

### SET

Henry Ford used to dress incognito and walk throughout his factories, randomly giving \$100 bills to those working hard and staying on task, even though their managers were far out of sight. As word spread about this “mystery money man,” production sales skyrocketed. By 1914, Ford held roughly 48% of the automobile industry.

Why is it that when a head coach is away, drills may be performed with little effort and the team appears to be off task? Teams often perform at their best only when the coach is around, watching and taking notes. How often do we wait until the last minute to do our workout? Do we reluctantly drive to the gym or say, “I’ll make it up tomorrow”? If a coach were watching, the workout would probably have been done that morning. During those times, we need to remember our true coach—who we’re truly playing for. God has instilled in us a passion for the sports we love and play. Why not channel that passion back to Him?

God never leaves. He’s in the trenches with us, watching our every move and helping us. Paul calls us to “run in such a way that you may win” ([1 Corinthians 9:24](#)). When no one else is around, God still sees all. It’s through the quiet acts of servitude that we’ll gain our greatest reward. When we train on our own or help someone in need, we shouldn’t tell the world. God has seen our good work. Let Him be the ultimate motivator.

### GO

1. Whose approval are you truly trying to gain?
2. What can you do to remember whom you serve?
3. What specific actions do you need to make or change to glorify God?

### WORKOUT

- [Matthew 6:1-4](#);
- [Colossians 3:22-24](#);
- [1 Timothy 4:7](#)

### OVERTIME

Father, may my thoughts and actions be pleasing to You. Thank You for watching over me and guiding me each day. Amen.

## **(9) Weakness**

### **READY**

"He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may reside in me. So because of Christ, I am pleased in weaknesses, in insults, in catastrophes, in persecutions, and in pressures. For when I am weak, then I am strong." — 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

### **SET**

God blessed me with many accomplishments during my football career, but my greatest accomplishment actually occurred on the day my career ended. I didn't see it that way initially, however.

My whole life had been built on the dream of getting to the top in football, so the day I was forced to stop, I began a walk down a road to a life of destruction. I soon destroyed everything in my life and reached rock bottom. However, it was this path that brought me to my knees and made me powerful through my Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, this was actually the first time that I knew what it really means to be strong.

We do not have to destroy our lives to make this discovery and gain this strength. All that it takes is coming before God in complete honesty, telling him what He already knows about your sin and weakness, and asking Him to take over the running of your life. That's when you will truly find strength. We find more strength on our knees than in the practice of any sport. God will take your weakness and make it powerful.

### **GO**

1. Where is weakness in your life? In your coaching or marriage?
2. Do you find yourself hiding from those things that make you most vulnerable?
3. Do you define strength the way the Bible does?

### **WORKOUT**

Extra Reading:

Philippians 4:13;

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

### **OVERTIME**

Lord, I pray that I would look to You in my weakness, knowing that through Your power my weakness can be made strong. Lord, I confess these weaknesses to You, with faith in Your power to cleanse me in Your righteousness so that Your perfect power may rest on me. Amen.

## **(10) The One**

### READY

"So she named the LORD who spoke to her: The God Who Sees, for she said, 'Have I really seen here the One who sees me?'" — Genesis 16:13

### SET

The first thing anyone asks a coach is, "How are things with your team?" When someone meets me and finds out that I am a coach, he usually asks, "Is your team good?" When I walk down the street after a game, people stop me to say, "Great win coach!" I always have a quick response, sharing all of the positive things that are going on in our program and painting our team in the best light.

I have struggled with not letting my team's performance define me. I have battled against weighing my worth and status by my sport, or judging my success through the eyes of the fans who watch us.

Thankfully, God doesn't see me in that way at all. I often get a chance to respond to the question, "Did you win?" when I walk on to planes with my team after games. I try to respond to them politely and then to myself say, "I won when I became a child of God." On the average, Division I college basketball players spend 3,000 hours in their sport over 4 years, and only 4 percent of those hours are spent in games. I am not going to let that 4 percent of my time make me feel better or worse about myself. God has already said that I am one of His children. We need to remember that He is the audience who really matters.

Find something to define your identity in the midst of competition. For instance, I put a special coin in my pocket. This helps to remind me in the midst of competition why I coach, and for whom.

### GO

1. How do I remind myself that God accepts and loves me regardless of my win-loss record?
2. Whom do I feel pressure to please?
3. How do I define success?

### WORKOUT

Extra Reading:

Deuteronomy 8:17–18;

Psalm 139:13–14;

Colossians 3:4;

1 Peter 2:9

### OVERTIME

Lord, thank You that You love me more than I can comprehend.

Please help me to remember that You are the One whom I serve and that my worth comes from You and not from other people. Amen.

## (11) The Condition of the Heart

### READY

“Man does not see what the Lord sees, for man sees what is visible, but the Lord sees the heart.” — 1 Samuel 16:7b

### SET

“Too small...too short...can't play...can't survive...can't make it in the NFL.” Who were the so-called experts talking about? It was Buffalo Bills quarterback, Doug Flute. He was too small in the estimation of many NFL scouts. Yet, in the Canadian Football League, Doug Flute is considered to be the best player in CFL history, winner of six Most Outstanding Player awards in eight years, quarterback of three Gray Cup champions, holder of most of the league's passing records (41,355 career passing yards and 270 passing touchdowns).

Who would have ever thought that God would choose a shepherd boy to be king of Israel? “He's too small! He's too short! Too...too something! Why, he can't be king!” Yet that is exactly what the Lord did. God chose David, the youngest, the least likely of Jesse's sons, because, “man sees what is visible, but the LORD sees the heart” (1 Sm 16:7b).

God saw something special in David that others couldn't see. He saw that David's heart was a godly heart. And that's why David was God's choice for king, because he “found a man loyal to Him” (1 Sm 13:14). People are often preoccupied with their outward appearance, clothes, or hairstyle. But to God, the condition of the heart is most important. “What about your heart?” He asks. “Is it right with Me?”

Today God is looking for people He can use in His work. He is looking for someone with a godly heart. This is His heart's desire: “If only they had such a heart to fear Me and keep all My commands, so that they and their children will prosper forever” (Dt 5:29).

### GO

1. Why does God put so much stock in your heart condition?
2. What does it mean to be a person after God's own heart?
3. How is your heart condition?

### WORKOUT

Extra Reading:

1 Samuel 16:6–13;

Matthew 16:19–24

### OVERTIME

Lord, may my heart be Yours and bring You honor and glory because of my obedience to Your Word. Amen.

## **(12) The Coaching Field . . . Our Mission Field**

### **READY**

Shepherd God's flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but freely, according to God's will; not for money but eagerly; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. — 1 Peter 5:2–4

### **SET**

Competition is an obvious part of the coaching life, resulting in either winning or losing. But God's Word reminds us not to get so caught up in the results that we forget to take care of the flock—the athletes—who have been put under our watch.

Of course, we all want to win. Yet if we forget that we're really working toward an "imperishable crown" (as Paul writes in 1 Co 9:25), we've lost perspective of why we're coaching in the first place. In other words, just as we live our lives to please the Great Shepherd, so, too, do we coach our players with the same goal. In the process, we'll serve as examples to the sheep.

The Lord has given us our "mission field" first that we might know Him. He cares more about how we take care of the people He has entrusted to us than He does about our win-loss record. That's why Peter provides us with guidelines from the verses above on how to serve our athletes. We are to guide the flock (team) not by coercion or constraint, but willingly; not dishonorably motivated by the advantages and profits but eagerly and cheerfully; not domineering over them, but being examples to them. And when the chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ, appears again, we will win the unfading crown of glory!

That is our hope. Until then, He is able to help us accomplish this goal every day, not only in words but with actions, as He cares for our players through us!

### **GO**

1. Does your coaching style reflect the shepherding characteristics described by Peter?
2. What creative ways could you care for your athletes and please Christ?
3. Honestly assess your motives: "advantages and profits," or "eagerly and cheerfully." Does this area of your coaching need adjusting?

### **WORKOUT**

Extra Reading:

Isaiah 40:11;

John 10:11–15;

1 Corinthians 9:24–27

### **OVERTIME**

Lord, may our focus, our top priority, for our athletes be set on things above, the eternal purpose, for Your glory! In Christ's name, Amen.



# ONE

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P H I L I P P I A N S 1 : 2 7

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***Northwest Louisiana FCA***  
*12 Week Coaches Huddles Guide*

“I will know that you are standing together with one spirit and one purpose,  
fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News.”

Philippians 1:27