

**Week 1:  
We or Me?**

**READY**

"Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus." – Philippians 2:4-5

**SET**

At the end of the movie *The Greatest Game Ever Played*, there is a scene that depicts what winning is all about. Based on a true story, 20-year-old golfer Francis Ouimet wins the 1913 U.S. Open with a fifth-grade caddie named Eddie. After accomplishing this unthinkable feat by sinking a playoff-winning putt on the 18th hole, Francis yells, "We did it!" Francis played the round of his life, but understood that he won with the help and encouragement of Eddie. This scene captured my heart and I was convicted. I'm embarrassed to say I would have yelled, "I did it!"

From this movie I was reminded that we is more powerful than me. Yet in sports, winning is usually all about me. God wants us to take up our cross daily and follow Him. We must die to self. Those are tough words. To be crucified daily means to empty ourselves and not look after our own interests only, but of others. We need to realize that competing is not about us, but about Christ within us. Dying to self, on and off the field, is a daily battle.

Imagine being on a team that has a "we" instead of "me" focus, with players who say, "We did it!" God can best use us when we sacrifice our own interests. We need to be reminded that together we win. So what will it be for you? We or me?

**GO**

1. If you sank a playoff-winning putt, what would you say?
2. When you have success, do you use "we" or "me"?
3. How can Christ help you sacrifice your own interests?

**OVERTIME**

Father, I admit I talk too much about my own accomplishments. I want to use "we" in my speech more than "me." Help me to focus on others, not on myself. Thank You. Amen.

**Week 2:  
The Unseen**

**READY**

"So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen; for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." - 2 Corinthians 4:18

**SET**

In sports, it is so easy to focus on what is seen. Statistics and I have a love-hate relationship. I love to look at them when mine are good, but they invade my thoughts when they are bad. I try to keep from even glancing at them anymore, but most of the time curiosity kills the cat. The two statistics that haunt me are my batting average and my ERA. Neither has been up to my standards as of late. Thankfully, God gave me a new outlook on stats after reading 2 Corinthians 4. This verse claims that we should fix our eyes on what is unseen, not on what is temporary. All our accomplishments, all our numbers and all our wins are temporary. Who will remember what your fielding percentage was 10 years from now? You might remember. If you are lucky, it will be on the back of a baseball card. But in the framework of all eternity, personal statistics do not have much weight. So then, what does matter eternally? What is "the unseen"? I don't know the answer for you personally, but I do have some guesses: the hard work you put in to developing skills that help your team, encouraging and lifting up your teammates and opponents, good sportsmanship, dedication to your team, learning how to lose and win gracefully, playing thankfully, using your gifts to honor God, and witnessing to your team and your opponents by the things you say and the way you play the game. None of these things are recorded in your personal statistics. So, the real question is: What has real eternal weight? Today, don't be trapped by the stats. Pursue excellence, but don't forget about those things that matter on a more eternal scale.

**GO**

1. What are some temporary things on which you have fixed your eyes? How does focusing on these things affect you positively or negatively?
2. Honestly, are the things you focus on more about bringing acclaim to yourself or to God?
3. What are some "unseen" things on which you need to fix your eyes?

**OVERTIME**

"Father God, I often lose my focus and fix my eyes on the temporary. Please mold my vision to focus on what brings glory and honor and praise to You. Help me to value what You believe is important. I want to live for the unseen — not for what brings acclaim to my name, but what brings acclaim to Yours. You are the only One who is worthy! In the name of Jesus I pray. Amen."

**Week 3:  
The Three D's of Devotion**

**READY**

"I long for Your salvation, Lord,  
and Your instruction is my delight.  
Let me live, and I will praise You;  
may Your judgments help me." –Psalm 119:174-175

**SET**

My dad loved to engage God daily and passionately challenged others to do so as well. It had not always been that way. Eighteen years ago he was an overcommitted businessman who would squeeze in a two-minute devotion in his car before running into his office. That changed when Brad Curl saw that my dad, who was on many ministry boards, was skimming with his devotions. To get his attention, Brad grabbed my dad and said, "Ed, stop playing with God. You are a Christian leader. Start diving into God's Word and get serious! No more giving God leftovers!" That day marked my dad. No more two-minute devos! My dad's life transformed as he feasted on God's Word first thing every morning. My dad liked to share the three Ds of devotions: drudgery, discipline, and delight. He would say, "Don't wait. Start now!" Getting up daily to do a quiet time may start as drudgery, feeling hard and unnatural; but get it done. It will gradually grow into a discipline and become a part of life. Then it will turn into a delight, a love, and a longing to be with the Lord. It goes from a have-to, to a need-to, to a want-to. Jesus longs to be with us. Engage Him today. No matter what D stage we're at, it is a delight for the Lord when we engage Him. Oh, how He loves you and me.

**GO**

1. Which D stage best defines your quiet time?
2. What gets in the way of making daily devotions a part of your life?
3. Accountability is key. Do you have a Brad Curl in your life to speak the truth?

**OVERTIME**

Jesus, I desire to be in Your presence. Help me to carve out time each day to hear from You and transform my quiet times so that they are a pure delight. Amen.

**Week 4:  
Tunnel Vision**

**READY**

Brothers, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus.—  
Philippians 3:13-14

**SET**

"That's never been done here before." "We've never been to the state playoffs." "We've never beaten them before." How many times have athletes looked at past seasons as the standard for the current season? The past can be a great thing when kept in perspective. At times we get caught up in looking at the past. We think that what we did last year has a bearing on what we can do this year. That is true to an extent. If we don't work hard in the off-season, the season's competition will be a struggle. But we also need to forget past seasons in order to reach our full potential. Paul knew this well. He was the ultimate bad guy. He not only persecuted Christians, he killed them. How could someone with such a past be of any use to God? By "forgetting what is behind," Paul accepted God's grace and forgiveness and pressed on to the goal of what the Lord had for him. He refused to allow past mistakes to keep him from doing the will of the Father. If Paul, who killed many Christians for their faith, can accept God's forgiveness and put his past behind him, can't we?

**GO**

1. Is your past keeping you from doing God's will?
2. Have you accepted God's grace and forgiveness?
3. Do you need to talk to someone about how to let go of your past?

**OVERTIME**

Father, fill me with Your Spirit and guide me. Please forgive my past mistakes and free me from the guilt that comes with them. Help me to focus on what is ahead instead of what is behind. Lord, give me the strength to press on. Take this day and use it for Your glory. Amen.



## **Week 5: Usable**

### **READY**

All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like a flower of the grass. The grass withers, and the flower drops off, but the word of the Lord endures forever.—1 Peter 1:24

### **SET**

Our lives are so much bigger than what we can or cannot do on the playing field. Sometimes people think that the star athlete will be the best leader because of their athleticism. Or we think, Wow, if that person were a Christian they would have so much impact because they're so popular and athletic.

The man who wrote 1 Peter 1:24 had an eternal impact even though he was what some would call a "spiritual scrub" or a "spiritual walk-on." Peter was not the most popular, well- educated, or most athletic disciple. (Notice in the Book of John how he lost in a foot race with John to Jesus' tomb.)

He knew that his physical prowess or natural giftedness did not determine the impact he could have for God's kingdom. He knew that the outward appearances of a person would die away and only the eternal things would stick around.

Whether we are a scrub on our team or the best athlete, God wants to use us! Whether we are a new Christian or have grown up in church, God wants to use us! It is God's power through His eternal Spirit and Word that enables us to live the powerful lives He desires.

### **GO**

1. How has God used your abilities to further His kingdom?
2. Do you value those who are scrubs as much as the best athletes?

### **OVERTIME**

God help me to live in Your power. I pray that my actions in everything will reflect who You are. Please help my life to have eternal meaning and put Your Word on display. Amen.

## **Week 6: The Eyes of the Lord**

### **READY**

"For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him." -2 Chronicles 16:9

### **SET**

One day, the team was practicing when their coach had to leave for a minute. Once the coach was out of sight, the team started acting up and shooting half-court shots. Suddenly, out of nowhere they heard a voice say, "I saw that." One player made the comment, "Man, Coach must have eyes everywhere." In sports, the eyes of a coach are always watching even when no one thinks they are looking.

The eyes of the Lord are always watching, as well. God's Word is very clear about how God is watching us. Why does He watch over us? He loves us too much not too. But, I know that many still struggle with the fact the God is watching. Some see His attentiveness as His not wanting anything good to happen for us. Others look at it as though He is playing good cop/bad cop. Still others feel like He is trying to catch them doing bad all the time. That is the wrong impression of God. The eyes of the Lord watch us because He loves us.

How does it make you feel that the eyes of the Lord are watching you? As we live for Christ, this should give us confidence that He cares about us. Throughout God's Word we read about those who found favor in the eyes of the Lord and others who did evil. When God watches you, what does He see?

Like the coach who always seems to see everything, our God does see everything, and His eyes are looking for those who want to follow Him.

### **GO**

1. How does it make you feel to know that God is watching over you?
2. God sees the good, the bad and the ugly in our lives. When do you wish He was not watching?
3. What is the positive side of His seeing us during our sinful behavior?

### **OVERTIME**

Heavenly Father, I want to be blameless before You. Thank You for loving me and keeping an eye on me. Help me to clean up my thoughts, words, and actions so that they bring You glory. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sin. Amen.



**Week 7:  
Purpose in Defeat**

**READY**

Look at the nations and observe—be utterly astounded! For something is taking place in your days that you will not believe when you hear about it.—Habakkuk 1:5

**SET**

As Christian athletes we sometimes fall into the trap of thinking that God is always on our team's side. We think, Why would God not want us to have victory on the playing field? Are we not more righteous than our opponents? (For some reason I always saw the other team as the bad guys). Even more, Why would He not want us to experience victory?

Habakkuk cried out to God for answers to questions like these. He could not understand why God would allow such evil and horrible injustice to take place in his land. God gave him an answer he couldn't believe. God told him the Chaldeans were going to invade his land. God had purposed that the Chaldeans—a nation more evil than his own—were going to be His instrument of justice among the people of Judah.

As followers of Christ, we must remember that His ways are higher than ours. Sometimes God will use defeat—even defeat handed to us by people who want nothing to do with God—to complete His purpose. This is what He did when He allowed evil men to crucify Jesus Christ, and this is what happened to the tribe of Judah in Habakkuk's day. God can use evil and pain to accomplish His best interests in our lives.

**GO**

1. Does the idea that God uses defeat to accomplish His purposes bother you?
2. How has God used defeat in your life?
3. Are you prepared to remain faithful and trust in His Sovereign plan in the midst of defeat?

**OVERTIME**

Dear Lord, You are the God of justice and mercy. Your ways are higher than my own. Please help me to trust in Your perfect plan, even in the midst of defeat. I affirm my faith in You, Lord, and thank You that You are in control—not me. Amen.

**Week 8:  
The "Salty" Christian Athlete**

**READY**

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled on by men." —Matthew 5:13

**SET**

I love the Olympics. The last time they were on, I could not help but stay up and watch. My greatest memory of the games was the opening ceremonies. As I watched athletes from around the world stand together, I was reminded of the power of athletics to build bridges between people from very different backgrounds.

If athletics can do such a thing, Christians should be able to as well. Unfortunately, many committed believers simply don't know how to build bridges with people of different faiths (or no faith at all). Yet, Jesus calls His followers to be "salt." Salt does two things: it makes things taste better and slows down the process of decay. In both cases, it must come in contact with another object to be effective. Christians must have interaction with people they are hoping to influence. Sadly, many Christians have little contact with non-believers.

As athletes, we come in contact with many other athletes whose lives long to be seasoned with the love of Christ. Not only do we rub shoulders with non-Christians, we sweat with many whose lives are quickly decaying as a consequence of sin. We must use our roles as Christian athletes to be "salt" for Christ today!

**GO**

1. Practically, how does God want you to be "salt"?
2. Who on your team can you be "salt" to in a greater way?
3. What does Matthew 5:13 say about you if you are not serious about being "salt"?

**OVERTIME**

Father, thank You for gifting me to play sports. I recognize that You have put me on my team to be "salt." Help me to season my team with Your love and slow down the decay of sin. Amen.



## **Week 9: Character Test**

### **READY**

You rejoice in this, though now for a short time you have had to be distressed by various trials so that the genuineness of your faith—more valuable than gold, which perishes though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.—1 Peter 1:6

### **SET**

What do we consider to be the “trials” of our sport? What parts of our character are tied into those trials? Do they test our wills, our bodies, our attitudes, our emotions, or all the above? How deeply are we affected by those trials?

In 1 Peter 1:6, we read, “You rejoice in this, though now for a short time you have had to be distressed by various trials.”

We all can find great enjoyment and fulfillment in playing the game. In fact, many of us seemingly live for competition. But the trying parts of the process often wear us down. The disappointment and frustration that comes with sore muscles, painful joints, disappointing losses, and strained relationships can bring us down.

We greatly rejoice in the best parts of our game, but we also, for a little while, may have to undergo plenty of grief. Today, let’s focus our minds on our favorite parts of the game. Put the grief and the trials behind us. Keep a clear view of our team’s goals and press on toward a great finish!

### **GO**

1. What part of competition/practice do you dread the most? Why?
2. How can you look at that activity in a positive light?
3. What attitude would Jesus want you to have?

### **OVERTIME**

Father, I admit that there are things about competition that I do not enjoy. Help me to see those tasks through Your eyes and to bring You glory in everything I do. Amen.

## **Week 10: Run to Win**

### **READY**

Do you not know that the runners in a stadium all race, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.—1 Corinthians 9:24

### **SET**

Competition is a great thing. It can move people beyond mediocrity to greatness. The Bible is full of examples that compare the Christian life to an athletic contest.

In 1 Corinthians 9:24, Paul wrote, “Do you not know that the runners in a stadium all race, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.” I like that! It’s said very simply, “Run in such a way that you may win.”

An athlete’s coaching staff has outlined the way to win the prize. The athlete’s part is to run that way. He/She needs to follow the coach’s direction, compete at the highest level of his/her ability, and invest his/her all in the pursuit of the team’s goals. As we compete today, let’s do so in such a way as to win, striving to honor Him in all that we do.

### **GO**

1. Do you give 100 percent in every game? in every practice?
2. Is Christ glorified through your effort on the field?

### **OVERTIME**

Lord, thank You for the opportunity to glorify You through competition. Help me to give my best effort on the field, that people may see You through me. Amen.



## **Week 11: Give Your All**

### **READY**

Whatever you do, do it enthusiastically, as something done for the Lord and not for men.—Colossians 3:23

### **SET**

How do we approach our sport(s)? Are they just games, or more than that? How hard do we work in practice? Do we give our all when striving to improve our game, or just try to make it through practice and do what it takes to keep the coach off our backs? The Bible gives us some encouraging words about work and practice.

My favorite verse related to hard work is Colossians 3:23. In reference to athletes, this verse is related to one's chosen field of competition. How should we approach all that is related to our sport? The Bible is clear: enthusiastically or with all our hearts.

As Christian athletes, we should give our absolute best in the pursuit of excellence. We should invest all that we are in doing the work before us. Why? Because ultimately we're serving God, the Audience of One, not just the coaching staff.

### **GO**

1. How would you rank your work ethic? Do you honestly give your all in practice? Do you give your all in competition? What about your off-season effort?

2. Often, whom we are working for determines the effort we give to each task. Who are your "audiences"?

### **OVERTIME**

Lord, help me to live Colossians 3:23 today. You should be the reason for everything I do. Help me to give my all in Your name. Amen.

## **Week 12: Bigger than Your Dreams**

### **READY**

Now to Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think—according to the power that works in you—to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.—Ephesians 3:20-21

### **SET**

Every year I look at the schedule during the pre-season and start to calculate wins and losses. We can beat them . . . We'll probably lose there . . . This one is a toss-up . . . We'd better beat them! I'm sure all of us lie in bed at night and dream about championships and MVP awards. What's exciting to me is that God can do immeasurably more than even those things.

In Ephesians 3:20, Paul wrote, "Now to Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think—according to the power that works in you." How much can we ask or imagine? How big are our dreams? No matter the dream, God's reality is even bigger!

Could it be that God's plans for us are greater than we could possibly dream? Absolutely. The text states He is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine. That's how great God's power is in our lives. He is at work in ways our simple minds can't even fathom. His reality is even bigger than our dreams.

Today, let the confidence that comes from security make us the players we've always dreamed of being. Let's step into the reality of God's plans and find life that eclipses our wildest dreams.

### **GO**

1. What dreams do you have for yourself?

2. What limits do you place on yourself in those dreams?

### **OVERTIME**

Father, thank You for each and every dream that You have given me. Help me to trust in Your power and will for my life. Amen





**FELLOWSHIP OF  
CHRISTIAN  
ATHLETES**

## ***Northwest Louisiana FCA***

*12-Week Devotional Guide (#2)*

*“And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”*

*Colossians 3:17*