



F E L L O W S H I P
O F C H R I S T I A N
A T H L E T E S

Faith Strong: By Roger Lipe

Introduction:

Sports test our strength, individually and collectively. Our strength is likewise tested when we encounter failure, injury, illness, or any other kind of adversity. Your team will be tested as well.

Application:

1. What are some of the more difficult things your team has had to deal with?
2. On a letter grading scale from A to F, how well has your team dealt with such difficulties?
3. How does faith add strength for such tests?

Bridge:

In 1 Peter 1:6-7, the Apostle Peter encouraged his friends going through persecution, *"So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world."*

1. What do you suppose tested Peter's friends?
2. What does Peter say would be the results of painful, but momentary trials?

Connection:

1. How has your faith been tested in sports?
2. How were your teammates helpful to you during those days?

Discovery:

1. How can your team deal with adversity when it tests you?
2. How will your faith in Christ Jesus provide the strength to endure and to bring honor to Jesus?

Prayer:

Lord Jesus,
Thank You for not abandoning us in our struggles.
We will trust You through every step of the process of testing and adversity.
We will trust You to test and refine our faith.
We pray and commit ourselves to You and to each other, in Jesus' strong name,
amen.



Fight Strong: By Roger Lipe

Introduction:

Coaches often refer to a team having “fought hard” in a game. Sometimes competitors talk about an upcoming opponent and anticipate a “knock-down, drag-out fight” with that team, not talking about fist fights, but rather a strong and spirited competition.

Application:

1. When has your team had to stand and fight for each other?
2. How often are those good fights, and how often are they foolish fights?
3. What about your team is worth fighting for?
4. What about your faith in Christ Jesus is worth fighting for?

Bridge:

1 Timothy 6:12 says, *“Fight the good fight for the true faith. Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you, which you have declared so well before many witnesses.”*

1. Which cause is Timothy told to fight for? What is good about that fight?
2. How would God’s calling on Timothy shape the way he would fight?

Connection:

1. Who or what shapes the way you compete in your sport?
2. How do the people or things you listed influence how you compete?

Discovery:

1. What will you do to help your teammates compete strongly, to fight good fights?
2. How can you help your teammates to fulfill their calling from God in sports?

Memory Verse: *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful.”*—2 Timothy 4:7

Family Strong: By Roger Lipe

Introduction:

Teams that enjoy both success in competition and significance beyond sports have developed a strong relational bond among their teammates. Whether developed intentionally by the team's leaders or stumbled upon because of their collective love for each other, strong teams have a family like relationship characterized by teamwork and joy.

Application:

1. On a scale from 1-10, with 1 being "I feel all alone" and 10 being "We are family!", how well has your team created a sense of family?
2. Who is responsible for creating this family atmosphere among your teammates? How well are they creating a positive bond?
3. List the ways a family-like spirit can benefit your team.

Bridge:

The Apostle Paul explained how Ephesus, a church countries away from him, was considered his family, *"God decided in advance to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace He has poured out on us who belong to His dear Son."*—Ephesians 1:5-6

1. How does Paul say we came to be a part of God's family?
2. Who was the agent of our adoption, bringing us to God?

Connection:

1. How well has your team adopted new players?
2. Who among your teammates best introduces new players to everyone and helps them feel welcomed into the family?

Discovery:

1. What can you do to better welcome new players to the team?
2. What are some ways you can share your faith in Christ with your team?

Prayer:

Father in Heaven,
Thank You for bringing us into Your family through Christ Jesus.
Please help us to welcome our newest teammates into our family.
We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus,
amen.



Finish Strong: By Roger Lipe

Introduction:

Think about the teams you have witnessed that consistently finished strong. Have you known of a team that everyone knows that they will make it, even if they have trailed throughout the game? You expect those teams to make a powerful surge at the end and win.

Application:

1. Share about a team that consistently finishes strong. Who or what enabled them to play that way?
2. What does it take for a team to finish strong in your sport?
3. Do you think your team has what it takes to finish strong? Why or why not?

Bridge:

In John 19:28-30, the final minutes of Jesus' life on earth were witnessed: *"Jesus knew that His mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture He said, 'I am thirsty.' A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to His lips. When Jesus had tasted it, He said, 'It is finished!' Then He bowed His head and gave up His spirit."*

1. What were some aspects of Jesus' mission that He knew were now finished?
2. To whom might Jesus have been speaking when He said, "It is finished!"?

Connection:

1. What does it take for a sports team to finish strong?
2. Share about your experience in a practice, a game, or a season where you were able to finish strong. What gave you the motivation to do so?

Discovery:

1. What is your team's mission, and how much of your team's mission seems to still be unfinished?
2. What will you do to contribute to your team's strong finish this season?
3. How much of your personal mission in following Christ is still to be finished?

Memory Verse: *"And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns."*—Philippians 1:6

Motivation: By Nate Bliss

Introduction:

The coach watched the young ball player walk through drills while his teammates ran with intensity. As that same player goofed around while another coach was giving instructions, it became clear that the player didn't want to be at practice. When asked, the player admitted that he was only playing because his parents forced him to be there, and they promised to reward him if he didn't quit before the end of the season. His only motivation came from the reward promised by his parents. His teammates instead were motivated by the reward of playing the game.

Application:

1. What is the difference between external motivation and internal motivation?
2. What has motivated your teammates internally and externally? What impact does their motivations have on your team?

Bridge:

We are motivated by one of three main groups: for them, for you or for Him. An athlete's effort is usually lowest when their motivation focuses on pleasing other people or gaining rewards because external motivation provides little satisfaction. A higher level of effort occurs when an athlete is motivated from within. The Bible says that anything you do should be done enthusiastically as for the Lord and not for other people (Colossian 3:23). When following Jesus, you can be entirely motivated to compete with greatest effort all for His glory. This means that your reward comes from giving your full effort toward developing the abilities and talents given to you in order to bring God honor.

Connection:

1. Share how external rewards or competing to please other people affects you.
2. How can you compete and practice in order to honor God?
3. How would you compete and practice if God were your coach?
4. Develop a strategy as a team for reminding one another to compete as for the Lord.

Discovery:

1. Approach every practice this week as if the chance to play was the reward. At the end of the week, tell a teammate how it felt to practice with that level of motivation.

Memory Verse: *"Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people."*—Colossians 3:23



Confidence: By Chris Rich

Introduction:

My dad often told me, "Sometimes your greatest strength can also be your greatest weakness." An athlete's confidence may be one of their strengths, but there is a fine line between confidence and arrogance, and when an athlete becomes arrogant, they will fail. When we find confidence in our faith in the Lord, who is the source of greatest confidence, we are both humbled and driven to be the best we can be.

Application:

1. What are some signs of confidence?
2. What do you find your confidence in?
3. Have you seen professional athletes that have let their confidence become arrogance?
4. How does the source of your confidence change how you perform in your sport?

Bridge:

"Blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit."—Jeremiah 17:7-8

1. Your confidence is unshakable if it is in the Lord. He is a rock that never moves. In good times and bad, wins and losses, you can be confident in the Lord!

Connection:

1. Jeremiah says that those who put their trust in the Lord will be blessed. What does he mean by blessed?
2. How can you put your confidence in the Lord no matter the circumstance?
3. If your complete confidence is in the Lord, how will this affect your performance?

Discovery:

1. Do you find yourself putting your confidence in things outside your faith in the Lord? What specific things are athletes tempted to put their confidence in other than the Lord?
2. How do you go about putting your confidence in the Lord instead of the things you listed?

Memory Verse: *"But blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence."—Jeremiah 17:7*

Emotions: By Roger Lipe

Introduction:

Sports engage the emotions of competitors, coaches, officials, and even fans. We celebrate after an important score. We are crushed after a disappointing loss. Our emotions can run the spectrum from despair to elation and from joy to anger in the same contest. Athletes must engage their emotions without being foolishly ruled by them.

Application:

1. Which situations tempt you to be angry or upset most in your sport? How have you responded when encountering such situations?
2. How have your teammates dealt with foolish, hot-tempered competitors?
3. Who are considered the wise, cool-headed players among your teammates?

Bridge:

King Solomon, the wise and wealthy ruler of Israel, wrote the book of Proverbs, which is a collection of wisdom. Proverbs 29:11 says, *"Fools vent their anger, but the wise quietly hold it back."*

1. Why would Solomon say it is foolish to vent anger?
2. What happens when anger is vented or becomes out of control?
3. Why would it be wiser to hold back angry feelings?

Connection:

1. Has your team had trouble holding back its anger?
2. How have emotions interfered with how your team has played?

Discovery:

1. How can your team keep its emotions under control during competition?
2. How can your team be proactive when dealing with situations that may cause anger? Is there a word or a phrase your team can use as code to caution teammates about their intense emotions?

Memory Verse: *"Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires."*—James 1:19–20



Team Cohesion: By Roger Lipe

Introduction:

Some teams compete in a way that makes them appear to be sharing one giant brain. These teams act as though they know what each other is thinking and work together in perfect harmony. When a team experiences excellent cohesion, that team is unified in purpose, values, and goals, bringing out the best in each of its members.

Application:

1. Have you participated in or witnessed a team that had a strong, undeniable bond?
2. How was that bond formed? What was the process?
3. How can faith in Christ Jesus be a bonding agent for strong team development?

Bridge:

The book of Acts records how the early Christians worked together as a team in chapter 2, verses 42–44: *“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had.”*

1. What were the building blocks of this team’s chemistry?
2. How did their “meeting together” and “sharing all they had” form their bond?

Connection:

1. What are some of the things your teammates share with each other as you meet together?
2. In what ways are your team’s practices and meetings similar to the believers’ fellowship, meals, and prayer?

Discovery:

1. How can your teammates demonstrate devotion to your coaches’ instructions?
2. How would that devotion lead to stronger team cohesion?
3. How can your team build its chemistry as you meet together and share what you have?

Memory Verse: *“How wonderful and pleasant it is when brothers live together in harmony!”—Psalm 133:1*

Loyalty: By Nate Bliss

Introduction:

Mike prided himself on being a great teammate. From the start of practice until the final whistle, Mike encouraged his teammates and helped them learn the team's complicated system. Mike's loyalty to his team was tested, though, when Mike's best friend began starting over Mike. Though he knew it was wrong, Mike soon hoped his best friend would make mistakes, even if those mistakes cost the team a win. Since he was no longer playing very much, Mike stopped encouraging teammates, stopped helping them learn the system and, eventually, stopped giving his full effort in practice.

Application:

1. What was Mike truly loyal to? In what ways did his behaviors impact the team?
2. Why is it difficult to be loyal to the team when you don't get what you want?
3. How have players on your team demonstrated team loyalty?

Bridge:

Being loyal is difficult, especially when you care about your teammates. We all are tempted to be selfish, even when our actions could hurt the team. Loyalty is a choice we make in our hearts then act on. Jesus said it is impossible to be loyal to two opposing things, and we will be loyal to what we value more. Your faith in Jesus is where the ultimate test occurs. This world is full of things competing for your heart: fame, money, material possessions, acceptance and sin. These things want your loyalty. Even if you know Jesus deserves your loyalty, it is up to you to decide in your heart to follow Him, then consistently act on that decision.

Connection:

1. What habits are you developing now to ensure loyalty to God when you feel tempted?
2. As a team, what can you do to help your teammates consistently follow Jesus?
3. How will you demonstrate that you value your team's goals more than your personal goals?

Discovery:

1. Ask God to show you things that are taking your loyalty away from Him today.
2. What is one way this week you can demonstrate loyalty to your team?

Memory Verse: *"No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money."*—Matthew 6:24



Sacrifice: By Sarah Roberts

Introduction:

One of the greatest definitions I have heard concerning sacrifice is, “giving up something you love for something you love even more.” As athletes, we are taught individual sacrifice for team success—all for the love of the game.

Application:

1. What are some ways a player can sacrifice for the team?
2. Share about a time you had to personally sacrifice for the team.
3. What is the hardest part of individual sacrifice for team success?

Bridge:

We see the ultimate sacrifice when Jesus faced death at the cross for our sins. We see His willingness to give up something He loved (His life) for something He loved even more (our hearts) in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus knelt to pray, “Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from Me. Yet I want Your will to be done, not Mine.”—Luke 22:42

1. What does Jesus’ prayer tell you about his sacrifice for you?

Connection:

1. What can we learn from Jesus’ sacrifice when it comes to sacrificing for others?
2. How does Jesus’ sacrifice encourage you when it comes to sacrificing for your team?

Discovery:

1. What do you need to sacrifice personally for your team’s success?
2. What keeps you from sacrificially loving your teammates, coaches and family?
3. Write a prayer to God about His Will to be done in how you can love and sacrifice for others.

Memory Verse: *“Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are His dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered Himself as a sacrifice for us...”—Ephesians 5:1-2*

Adversity: By Chris Rich

Introduction:

Every athlete faces adversity at some point in their career. Whether injuries, loss of playing time or a crushing defeat, adversity comes to all athletes. Athletes also face adversity off the field. The best athlete must step onto the field with a clear mind. How you handle difficulties as an athlete will prepare you for success on the field, no matter what happens.

Application:

1. Have you ever faced adversity in your sport that impacted how you played?
2. Have you ever faced adversity outside your sport that impacted how you played?

Bridge:

Jesus knew we would face adversity. He predicted it even before his disciples faced any difficulty because He knew they would face it: *"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in Me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."*—John 16:33

Connection:

1. What does Jesus provide for us in difficult times?
2. Jesus promises two things in this verse: one is negative, and the other is positive. List them both.
3. What does Jesus mean when He says "take heart"?
4. When you face adversity, how will this verse change your outlook?

Discovery:

1. What are some ways you can combat current adversity?
2. What are some ways you can prepare for future adversity?
3. How have you handled adversity in the past as a team?
4. How can your team prepare for adversity in the future?

Memory Verse: *"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in Me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."*—John 16:33



Racism: By Roger Lipe

Introduction:

Somewhere along the path of every team's development, it has to look racism straight in the eye. A competitor, a coach, an opponent, or even a fan will make a remark that inflames the issue, and it screams to be resolved. The best teams deal with racism directly while the weakest ones either deny that racism exists or pretend that it doesn't affect them.

Application:

1. When have you observed or even experienced racism in sports?
2. How did your teammates respond to that experience?
3. What does the Bible have to say about racism?

Bridge:

The Apostle Paul gave instructions to a church that was divided in Colossians 3:10-11: *"Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like Him. In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and He lives in all of us."*

1. How would having a new nature and knowing our Creator shape how we deal with racism?
2. From what Paul said, how does Christ in us crush all social barriers?

Connection:

1. How has your relationship with Christ affected how you relate to your teammates of different races or ethnic backgrounds?
2. Has anything stood in the way of your faith transforming your view of race, ethnicity, and culture?

Discovery:

1. How can your team model a wise, God-honoring approach to racism in your community?
2. How can you protect your team from the cruel injustice of racism?

Prayer:

Lord Jesus,
Thank You for crushing the barriers of race, ethnicity, and culture through Your sacrifice. Christ is all that matters, and You live in us.
Please continually renew our minds and our hearts as we live together as one.
We pray in Jesus' strong name,
amen.

Respect: By Sarah Roberts

Introduction:

Respect is that one thing in sports where everyone is quick to want it, but slow to give it. We think respect should be earned, but the truth is, it is given. A successful team gives respect to its teammates, its coaches, and its opponents. As Christian athletes, we are called to give respect to all those people plus our teachers, classmates and parents.

Application:

1. Why is respect so vital to a team?
2. How can disrespect negatively impact a team?
3. How can respect positively impact a team?

Bridge:

"Jesus knew that the Father had given Him authority over everything and that He had come from God and would return to God. So He got up from the table... [and] began to wash the disciples' feet..."—John 13:3–5. Jesus, the Son of God, the One who deserved the most respect for all He had done, decided to give respect to His disciples by washing their feet, even though some would betray Him later. They didn't earn it; He gave it to them out of love for them.

1. What does Jesus' actions teach you about respect?

Connection:

1. How does Jesus' example of respect for his teammates encourage you when it comes to respecting your teammates?
2. Knowing that Jesus wants us to serve those inside and outside of our sports, what do you need to do to show respect to all in your circle?

Discovery:

1. Write down some of the groups of people you need to show respect to.
2. Write down a prayer asking God to help you give respect out of love for Him.

Memory Verse: *"Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people."*—Ephesians 6:7



Rejection: By Nate Bliss

Introduction:

We've all witnessed how a player becomes ridiculed after going through a major slump. The fans boo and ridicule him, even if they don't know the entire story. Teammates often join in, blaming losses on the player's inability to perform and distancing themselves from the player whenever they can. Rejected and despised by the same people who used to cheer for him, the player often feels isolated, confused and bitter. He begins to feel as though he doesn't fit in with teammates and, often, will stop trying.

Application:

1. What are some of the ways that athletes experience rejection?
2. Describe a time when you felt rejected. How did family, teammates or friends help you during that time?

Bridge:

When you face rejection, the good news is that you never have to feel isolated. Jesus experienced worse rejection than anyone in human history. His teammates denied knowing Him. Some family members thought He was crazy. Jesus was rejected by the very people He came to save. Jesus understands how much it hurts to face rejection, and Jesus experienced rejection for you. We have a Savior who can sympathize with you in every way! When you feel rejected, go boldly to the One who provides the mercy and grace to help us in our time of need.

Connection:

1. What are some ways you can make sure that teammates don't experience rejection?
2. What will you do when you witness someone being rejected?

Discovery:

"He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on Him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. Yet it was our weaknesses He carried; it was our sorrows that weighed Him down. And we thought His troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for His own sins!"—Isaiah 53:3-4

"So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for He faced all of the same testings we do, yet He did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive His mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most."—Hebrews 4:14-16

1. Find one way this week to include all your teammates in fun activities.
2. The next time you feel rejected, remember that Jesus understands, and ask Him for help in dealing with the situation.

Prayer:

Father,
Thank you that Jesus understands when I feel rejected.
Help me to forgive those who have rejected me, and help me to be someone who people can turn to when they feel alone or unwanted.
Amen.

Character: By Nate Bliss

Introduction:

Have you ever had teammates who always followed through on what they said they would do? Every team has a few players on which they can always depend. Usually, these high character athletes are named team captains and have the respect of their teammates and coaches. It is commonly said that your character is developed when no one is looking, tested when everyone is looking and revealed when outside pressures squeeze you like a sponge. Your character is linked to your reputation, and your reputation is what people consider when deciding if you are a trustworthy, reliable teammate.

Application:

1. Who are your most reliable teammates? What character traits make them trustworthy?
2. When it comes to trust, would you trust the most talented teammate or the teammate with the highest level of character? Why?

Bridge:

Proverbs 22:1 says we should *“choose a good reputation over great riches; being held in high esteem is better than silver or gold.”* A good reputation is recognizable when people respond positively when they hear your name. A good reputation is far more valuable than gold because it will position you to be a trustworthy teammate others will come to when they need wisdom and support.

Connection:

“You can ask for anything in My name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. Yes, ask Me for anything in My name, and I will do it!”—John 14:13–14

1. In Jesus’ day, “in my name,” as seen in John 14:13–14, was like saying “in alignment with my character.” How does knowing that impact your understanding of prayer?
2. What is the character and reputation of your team? If either are negative, what changes will you begin making as a team?

Discovery:

1. Look for passages that reveal Jesus’ character this week.
2. Write down some ways that your character is being developed, tested and revealed.

Memory Verse: *“We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.”—Romans 5:3–4*



Identity: By Roger Lipe

Introduction:

When coaches speak of their team searching for or working to establish its identity, they generally mean that the team is trying to determine its areas of strength and the players on which the team can depend. Teams and individuals often hang their identities on weak and foolish ideas, but few place their identity in a rock-solid relationship with Christ.

Application:

1. On a letter grading scale from A-F, how well would you say your team has established its identity? Share why you gave your team the grade you did.
2. How much does your faith in Christ influence your personal sense of identity?

Bridge:

The Apostle Paul shared how his identity relied less on things he did and more in who he was in Ephesians 2:10: *"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago."*

1. How is being rescued by God a matter of grace and not a reward for doing good things?
2. How does being told you are God's masterpiece shape your identity?

Connection:

1. How would a team's identity be affected by each of its members embracing the truth that they are God's masterpiece?
2. What can prevent a teammate from fully embracing their identity in Christ Jesus?

Discovery:

1. What are some ways you can help your team understand the gift you have been given in Christ?
2. List ways you can transform your team's identity by demonstrating the power of new life in Christ Jesus.

Memory Verse: *"For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing His glory."*—Colossians 1:27

Purpose: By Roger Lipe

Introduction:

The new popular trend is for sports teams to craft a purpose statement for their upcoming season. Some teams state their purpose in terms of championships, others talk about their values, and others describe their approach to practice, training, and competition. Creating a purpose statement is not a new idea. There are purpose statements even displayed in the Bible.

Application:

1. If you could concisely state the purpose of your team, what would you say?
 - To represent our school, community, or club
 - To win games
 - To have fun
 - To honor God
 - Something different than above
2. How does a strong purpose affect how a team competes?
3. How could faith in Christ shape someone's purpose in playing a sport?

Bridge:

The Apostle Paul wrote very clearly about his own purpose in Philippians 1:20b–21: *“And I trust that my life will bring honor to Christ, whether I live or die. For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better.”*

1. What seems to be Paul's central life purpose?
2. In life or death, why would Paul be so committed to this purpose?

Connection:

1. Who among your teammates has demonstrated the strongest sense of purpose?
2. How does his or her sense of purpose affect their coaches, teammates, and opponents?

Discovery:

1. If you were to draft a purpose statement for your team, what would it look like?
2. How do you anticipate your teammates to react to this purpose statement?

Memory Verse: *“No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.”*—Philippians 3:13–14



Self-Worth: By Chris Rich

Introduction:

The term *worth* immediately makes us think of the monetary cost of something. We generally know how much a gallon of gas or how much a new pair of basketball shoes are worth. But when using the term *self-worth*, how much value do you see in yourself? How much were you worth to the One who created you?

Application:

1. How do we gauge self-worth?
2. If you had to rate your self-worth, would it be high or low?

Bridge:

The God who created you wanted to rescue you and show you your worth so badly that He paid for you by the blood of His only son: *“For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.”* —1 Peter 1:18-19

Connection:

1. Does Jesus’ sacrifice change how you rate your self-worth? Why?
2. How does having this sense of self-worth change how you play your sport?
3. What are some ways that you have found self-worth in things other than Jesus’ sacrifice. Did these things change or lose their value over time?
4. If every person is worth the blood of God’s son, then how should we treat our teammates, opponents, coaches and officials?

Discovery:

1. List some practical ways you can remind yourself of your worth to God. (For instance, you could keep a verse in your locker or recite a memorized verse before a competition)

Memory Verse: *“For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.”* —1 Peter 1:18-19

Significance: By Roger Lipe

Introduction:

The sports world is fixated on the present moment, pursuing today's victory and current season's championship. The wisest athletes seek significance more than pursuing success because significance far outlasts any success achieved.

Application:

1. 20 years from now, which experiences from your current team do you imagine will still be significant?
2. Which of the following do you find to have more significance? Which items do you find to have less significance?
 - Individual achievements
 - Team gear
 - Losses
 - Championships
 - Teammates
 - Experiences
 - Lessons learned
 - Coaches
 - Family
 - Discipline
 - Relationships
 - Teamwork

Bridge:

Luke 3:21-22 described the moment that started Jesus' ministry: *"One day when the crowds were being baptized, Jesus Himself was baptized. As He was praying, the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit, in bodily form, descended on Him like a dove. And a voice from heaven said, 'You are my dearly loved Son, and You bring Me great joy.'"*

1. Why was Jesus baptized?
2. What happened that made Jesus' baptism unlike any other?
3. What is significant about what the voice from heaven said?

Connection:

1. Have you ever been baptized? Share about that experience.
2. Have you ever had a sense that God has said to you, "You are my dearly loved child, and you bring Me great joy"?

Discovery:

1. How would knowing that you are God's dearly loved child and that you bring Him great joy bring significance to your sport?

Prayer:

Lord Jesus,
 Thank You for letting us identify with You through baptism.
 Thank You for drawing us to Yourself.
 Thank You for making me a child of the Father.
 In Jesus' loving and strong name we pray,
 amen.



Value: By Sarah Roberts

Introduction:

There isn't an athlete in the world that doesn't want to be valued. The problem with wanting to be valued is that we try to find our value in what we do instead of who we are. Our sport cannot be our identity because the wins will go to our head, and the losses will go to our heart. When our value is based on what we do, the only time we will feel valuable is when we win, and, unfortunately, we don't always win.

Application:

1. What makes you feel valued?
2. What makes you value your teammates?
3. How do wins affect your value as an athlete? How do losses affect your value as an athlete?

Bridge:

Jesus said some of the most powerful words of encouragement to us in Luke 12:6-7, *"What is the price of five sparrows—two copper coins? Yet God does not forget a single one of them. And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God..."*

1. According to Jesus' words, does your value have anything to do with what you do?
2. Why does God value who you are?

Connection:

1. How would you feel if you knew your value didn't depend on what you did in the sports arena?
2. How can we show how we value our teammates like Christ values us?

Discovery:

1. When you know you are valued so much that Jesus would die for you, how does that affect your life?
2. Based on what you have learned, write down what makes you valuable to God and to your team.

Memory Verse: *"God showed how much He loved us by sending His one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through Him."*—1 John 4:9

THE STARTING LINE: MASTERING THE BASICS



Every sport requires players to learn fundamental skills that lay the foundation for excellence. At times, the basics can be unexciting and unglamorous. They can even be difficult to learn. But in any sport, mastering these basics is always the key to success.

1. What three basics have you mastered in your sport or your position?

2. What has motivated you to work on the basics? How has this helped your performance?



Much like fundamental skills in sports, a core set of basics will guide you in living a life focused on Christ. There are three areas of basic training essential to a successful endurance run with God.



THE STARTING LINE: MASTERING THE BASICS

BASIC 1

STUDY GOD'S TRAINING MANUAL—THE BIBLE

Each sport has its training manual or training program to develop excellence. For the Christ-follower, the Bible is like a rule book, playbook, and training manual rolled into one. Its inspired words come from the heart and mind of God.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16–17 and Hebrews 4:12.

3. From 2 Timothy 3:16–17, list four benefits of reading and studying the Bible. What are some specific ways these benefits might equip you and impact your life?

4. Why do you think Hebrews 4:12 describes the words of God as “living” and actively “effective”? How does the Bible differ from other books?

The Bible has power because it's God's words. It contains piercing truth about God, life, who we really are, our mission and destiny, and the condition of our individual hearts. Its message is basically simple and yet deeply powerful. Studying the Bible may feel like studying a complicated playbook. At times, it might seem confusing and overwhelming, but it's living and active so God can reveal new insights each time you open it.

THE STARTING LINE: MASTERING THE BASICS

BASIC 2

STAY IN CONSTANT COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR LIFE COACH—PRAY

Whether we play a team sport or compete individually, success on the field becomes increasingly difficult without a mentor, coach, or trainer to guide us. The same is true in our lives. We need to meet personally with God through direct communication—prayer.

Read Matthew 6:5-15.

5. In Matthew 6, Jesus gives us a model for communicating with God. What attitude should we have when we pray (vv. 5-6)? What should we avoid doing (vv. 7-8)?

6. Rephrase Jesus' prayer (vv. 9-13) in your own words, noting specific things for which Jesus prayed. How might sincerely praying those things impact your life and your relationships with others?

Prayer is a powerful tool that can change your life and the lives of those around you. Prayer is about sharing your heart with God and allowing Him to speak into your life. Learn to relax and be totally open with God. Learn to slow down long enough to listen for His voice.



THE STARTING LINE: MASTERING THE BASICS

BASIC 3

LOCK ARMS WITH A WINNING TEAM—FIND A CHURCH

As athletes, we must depend on the support of others to reach our competitive goals. A church is a supportive team focused on serving God. From the beginning, God has always put people together with different talents, abilities, life experiences, and strengths.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12–31.

7. What does Paul tell us about the importance of teamwork in the church (vv. 12–20)?

8. What attitudes should we exhibit to others in the church (vv. 21–26)? How can this build up unity and make the church more effective in impacting the world for Christ?



Keep a daily routine of prayer and Bible reading just like you follow a basic training schedule in your athletic life.

9. How will taking time to talk with God and read the Bible each day make you a better athlete? teammate? student? friend? son or daughter? brother or sister?

HOW TO SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY

A personal testimony is simply sharing what God has done in your life. One of the most effective ways to prepare your testimony is to ask three questions:

- 1. *What was my life like before Christ?***
- 2. *How did I meet Christ?***
- 3. *How has my life been since accepting Christ?***

The key is to share your story.

Tell your story of how you came to know Jesus personally.

TESTIMONY EXAMPLE:

WHAT WAS MY LIFE LIKE BEFORE I MET CHRIST?

I learned some things about God growing up, but I never really understood what it meant to have a personal relationship with Him. My life was basically hopeless.

HOW DID I COME TO KNOW CHRIST?

When I was at FCA Camp, I realized that Jesus paid the penalty for my sins when He died on the cross even though He didn't need to die since He was sinless. He rose from the grave and now offers me forgiveness of my sins and eternal life with Him in heaven. He also offers me abundant life! All I have to do is surrender my life to Him and have faith in what He has already done.

WHAT HAS MY LIFE BEEN LIKE SINCE?

I know what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and it is the best thing that ever happened to me. My life is full of hope now!

Now, you try it. Work through the three key parts below, write your testimony in your own words, and practice sharing it. Yours might be long and exciting or short and sweet. It is important to focus on what God has done, not on what you did wrong in the past. Feel free to use more paper if you need to, but remember, keeping things "simple" is always best.

THREE KEY PARTS TO EVERY TESTIMONY:

- 1. *Before Christ***
- 2. *How you came to Christ***
- 3. *How you have grown in Christ***



ABOUT FCA

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is touching millions of lives . . . one heart at a time.

Since 1954, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes has been challenging coaches and athletes on the professional, college, high school, junior high and youth levels to use the powerful medium of athletics to impact the world for Jesus Christ. FCA focuses on serving local communities by equipping, empowering and encouraging people to make a difference for Christ.

VISION:

To see the world transformed by Jesus Christ through the influence of coaches and athletes.

MISSION:

To lead every coach and athlete into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and His church.

VALUES:

Integrity • Serving • Teamwork • Excellence

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COMPETITOR'S CREED

I am a Christian first and last.
I am created in the likeness of
God Almighty to bring Him glory.
I am a member of Team Jesus Christ.
I wear the colors of the cross.

I am a Competitor now and forever.
I am made to strive, to strain,
to stretch and to succeed
in the arena of competition.
I am a Christian Competitor
and as such, I face my challenger
with the face of Christ.

I do not trust in myself.
I do not boast in my abilities
or believe in my own strength.
I rely solely on the power of God.
I compete for the pleasure of
my Heavenly Father, the honor of Christ
and the reputation of the Holy Spirit.

My attitude on and off
the field is above reproach -
my conduct beyond criticism.
Whether I am preparing,
practicing or playing;
I submit to God's authority
and those He has put over me.
I respect my coaches, officials,
teammates and competitors
out of respect for the Lord.

My body is the temple of Jesus Christ.
I protect it from within and without.
Nothing enters my body that
does not honor the Living God.
My sweat is an offering to my Master.
My soreness is a sacrifice to my Savior.

I give my all - all of the time.
I do not give up. I do not give in.
I do not give out. I am the Lord's warrior -
a competitor by conviction
and a disciple of determination.
I am confident beyond reason
because my confidence lies in Christ.
The results of my efforts
must result in His glory.

**LET THE COMPETITION BEGIN.
LET THE GLORY BE GOD'S.**

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