



Devotion – First Practice

Game Plan: “Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”
1 Peter 2:12

Making an Impression!

They should call it the “embarrassment card.” In soccer, when you do something really bad, the ref runs over to you, pulls a red card out of his or her pocket, and waves it in your face. When you see that dreaded red, you are one sunk soccer player.

In front of your team, the other team, and everybody else watching, you have just been kicked out of the game. It’s embarrassing, but worse is knowing that you’ve done something wrong and you’ve just made a terrible impression seen by coaches, players and fans at the game.

Making a good impression by staying under control goes far beyond how you act on the soccer field. It also should show up in all kinds of situations. At school, when a friend says something bad about you, how do you respond? At church, when you don’t get the recognition you thought you deserved for some good work you did, what’s your reaction? At home, when your brother or sister takes one of your CDs, how angry do you get?

Day after day you will face situations where people will be watching your actions to see if you are what you say you are. Would they red card you?

Instant Replay: What are some things I know in my life are red card things: stuff I know I shouldn’t do because they make the wrong impression on people who need to know Jesus?



Devotion – Week 1 Game (Feb 11)

Game Plan: “A wise man’s heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction.”
Proverbs 16:23

Trash Talk

“Hey Ref, do you need my glasses to see that foul?”
“My baby brother dribbles better than you do!”

Trash talk. It gets a lot worse than that, but it’s all over the place in sports. For some reason a growing number of athletes can’t be happy to compete just with their sport skills. They think they have to compete with their tongue.

God is pretty clear that what we say with our mouths shows what is inside our hearts. If there’s a lot of trash rattling around in the heart, it’ll make its way up to the old voice box. Then we cause some real damage.

Look at what God says about trash talk:

- He who holds his tongue is wise
- An evil man is trapped by his sinful talk
- Reckless words pierce like a sword
- The mouth of the fool gushes folly

Do you know why the Bible says so much about our tongues and about how we should talk? It’s because God knows that controlling what we say is very hard and that we can do a lot of damage with it.

Instant Replay:

How do I trash talk? Who do I trash talk? What can help me be a wise talker, not a wise guy?



Devotion – Week 2 Game (Feb 18)

Game Plan: “Above all else, guard your heart.”

Be Your Own Goalie!

Imagine playing soccer without a goalkeeper. Who would keep the other team from scoring? It would be easy to score on a team with an empty net: no goalie in place.

Did you know it’s possible to live your life with an empty net? It can happen when we don’t know how to stop bad influences from sneaking into our lives- when we let them in just like a soccer ball flying into an unattended net.

That’s why you need to learn to play goalie. Not on the soccer field, but in your life. You need to stand your ground against any kind of influence that might damage you. For example, when you get the urge to watch something on TV that you know is wrong, you need to guard the goal. You need to guard your heart.

Just like a soccer goalie will do anything to stop that ball from getting into the net, so we have to protect our heart from anything that will separate us from God.

Instant Replay: How are your goalkeeping skills? How can you stop bad influences from getting into your “net?”



Devotion – Week 4 Game (Mar 3)

Game Plan: “Saul replied....you are only a boy.” 1 Samuel 17:33

Too Small?!

There’s probably something you’d like to do in life but you are too small or too tall or too young to do something. When you feel that way, it’s easy to give up on your dreams, isn’t it?

Think of what would have happened if David has said he was too small to fight Goliath. Or if God would have let Moses refuse to lead the people of Israel because he wasn’t a good speaker. Or if Caleb had thought it was impossible to take the Promised Land because he was too old.

Everybody has something that is not perfect about them. But do you think anyone ever got anywhere by worrying about what they couldn’t do? God made you for a reason. Just the way you are. God wants to use you just as you are. He wants to use the special characteristics he gave you.

Too small? Not in God’s eyes.

Instant Replay: What do I think my biggest problem is (too small/tall)? How can God use me with that special characteristic?



Devotion – Week 3 Game (Feb 25)

Game Plan: “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.” Psalm 42:1

Thirsty?

You’ve just spent the last hour practicing drills on the soccer field. What’s the first thing you do? If you’re like most athletes, you go for something to drink. That’s smart. The body loses a lot of liquids when we exercise, and the best way to get them back into the system is by taking a nice, long swig of something wet.

Well, not just anything. Some things are better for you when you are thirsty. Water is best. Sports drinks are good. But cola is not so good at that time. In fact, that kind of drink doesn’t help restore liquids. As a matter of fact, it will dehydrate you.

Did you know you can get spiritually thirsty too? If it’s been a few days since you’ve prayed or read the Bible or gone to church, you might be able to understand what that means. You don’t really think about God much. You find it easy to think some thoughts you shouldn’t think. You’re thirsty.

When that happens, instead of heading for the water bottle, head for Jesus. Jesus said, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” (John 7:37-38)

Jesus is the well that will never run dry.

Instant Replay: What make me the thirstiest when I get away from it? Missing Bible reading? Not praying? Not being in church?



Devotion – Week 5 Game (Mar 10)

Game Plan: “May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.” 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

You Failed? So What!

Everybody has a failure story. You know, when you missed the goal and your team lost by one. Or you kicked a soccer ball into the wrong goal while your friends were watching. Aaaaagggghhhh!!! Don't you just hate that!? Makes you want to make like a gopher, dig a big hole, and hide!

So what happens next after you make a huge mistake? After you embarrass yourself so bad you just want to change your name and move to Greenland? Nobody likes to make mistakes. They can be sooooo embarrassing!

The best way to get over them is to realize that if we know Jesus Christ, he's the only person we have to really be concerned about. And we know he loves us more than we can ever imagine. We aren't alone. When we blow it, Jesus will be right beside us, offering his peace.

You failed? Who hasn't? Turn it over to Jesus. Talk to him about it. See what he can do for you.

Instant Replay: What should you do when you make a mistake? Blame someone else? Ask advice? Practice?



Devotion – Week 6 Game (Mar 17)

Game Plan: “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”
1 Peter 3:15

Will they Listen?

“Nobody will listen to me. I’m just a kid.” If you have friends who aren’t Christians, do you ever feel this way when you think about telling them about Jesus? It’s okay, because most people your age feel that way from time to time.

But if it’s something you might want to do, here’s some advice for you:

- Earn your friend’s respect- be honest, loyal, and trustworthy.
- Talk to God- prayer prepares your heart.
- Know what you’re talking about- listen in church and read the Bible
- Be aware- “We are the light of Christ.” Be aware that we are God’s witnesses.

This doesn’t mean you have to be a miniature Jack Graham before you witness. But if you’re serious about helping your friend discover Christ, these suggestions might help.

Instant Replay: Who of my friends would I like to try to witness to? How do I get ready to do that?



Devotion – Week 7 Game (Mar 24)

Game Plan: “What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?” Matthew 16:26

Happy?

What’s going to make you happy? Think of all the things you sometimes talk about having. Maybe clothes, a new phone, a faster computer, or even a cat. Okay, maybe not a cat. Sometimes you have a chance to get what you want- just for asking. Like at Christmas, when you ask for something and whamo! You get it.

But did you ever notice that sometimes when you get what you wanted, it doesn’t make you any happier? Some athletes think that a championship will make them happy. That’s what they work so hard for. But without Christ winning a championship doesn’t matter.

Look at today’s verse. It says the same thing, but it goes even further. It’s not talking just about winning the World Cup; it’s talking about winning the whole world. It doesn’t do any good to have it all if you don’t have Christ.

Instant Replay: What thing do I wish I had because I think it would make me happy? How can I tell the difference between something that I can enjoy and something that will bring me true happiness?



Devotion – Week 8 Game (Mar 31)

Game Plan: “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors.” 2 Corinthians 5:20

Coaches Testimony.

Give your testimony to the team. Be an ambassador for Christ!

Instant Replay: Do I know for sure I’m on my way to heaven? If not, who can I talk to about it?