

LESSON 1

LOYALTY

*“Many a man proclaims his own loyalty,
but who can find a trustworthy man?”*

Proverbs 20:6

What exactly is loyalty? Loyalty is faithfulness toward a person or an ideal. Loyalty is a virtue often overlooked in our culture today. With so many corrupt leaders taking advantage of their positions of power, many think this important virtue is a weakness rather than a strength. But Scripture regards this quality as important for any leader.

JOHN 21:15,19

MAN'S WAY OR GOD'S WAY?

When adversity strikes, man-centered loyalty fails just as Peter's pledge did, but biblical loyalty is compelled by love and includes a commitment to God. It's built on the foundation of Jesus' demonstration of His loyal love for us, which in turn produces a love response of loyaltyback to Him and those around us.

ASSIGNMENT

- Bible reading: John chapters 1:2. Watch Lesson #1 @ www.calledtocompete.com.

LESSON 2

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

*“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve,
and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

Mark 10:45

A team leader has to count the cost of the position, for the price of leadership is sacrificial servanthood. It requires laying down your life for the people you are leading. All personal glory must be set aside to serve your team.

MATTHEW 20:20,28

MAN'S WAY OR GOD'S WAY?

In this passage of Scripture, the Lord teaches the disciples that the style of leadership for believers should be different than that of non-believers. The non-believing Gentile leaders dominated in a dictatorial style, using whatever means necessary to control their followers. True spiritual leadership means loving service to one another. The real leader is someone who serves, not someone who demands to be served.

ASSIGNMENT

- Bible reading: John chapters 3:4. Watch Lesson #2 @ www.calledtocompete.com

GUARD YOUR HEART

“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.”

Proverbs 4:23

The subject of the heart is addressed in the Bible more than any other topic—more than works or service, more than belief or obedience, more than money, and even more than worship. Pastor John MacArthur states, “The single most important battlefield in the struggle for integrity is your own mind or heart. That’s where everything will actually be won or lost. And if you lose there, you have already ruined your character.”

JOHN 21:15,19

MAN’S WAY OR GOD’S WAY?

The relationship in this passage is that of a slave to a master. A slave cannot be owned by two people. However, many athletes spend their entire careers serving several masters. Even for the Christian athlete this is a challenge. Scripture doesn’t teach that a believer won’t be tempted by the sin of idolatry. How each person spends his time, talents and treasures, etc. will show who truly owns him. If you truly belong to Jesus, then you will guard your heart so that it seeks His glory above all things. So the question remains, are you storing up treasure in heaven or collecting wood, hay and stubble?

ASSIGNMENT

- Bible reading: John chapters 5. Watch Lesson #3 @ www.calledtocompete.com.

DEPENDS ON GOD

“It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.”

Romans 9:16

To depend on God means that you have faith, but faith is more than saying “I believe.” To believe in what you see requires no faith. However, believing in something you cannot see is genuine faith. Faith is a willingness to act upon your belief.

MATTHEW 6:25,30

MAN’S WAY OR GOD’S WAY?

Many athletes depend upon their own experience or advisors for wisdom at the exclusion of God. Man should depend on God because he is created, and a created being by nature is dependent on his creator. Even when athletes think Christ needs to be part of their lives, they might believe He’s an important part but not all. Some think they need Christ plus philosophy or they need Christ plus psychology. But the Bible says it’s all in Christ and it’s all in knowing Christ.

ASSIGNMENT

- Bible reading: John chapters 6. Watch Lesson #4 @ www.calledtocompete.com

SACRIFICE FOR OTHERS

“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”

John 15:13

The Apostle Paul stated in Galatians 6:2 that we are to “bear the burdens of one another” as part of our requirements as a believer in Christ. We are not to live under a mindset of self-reliance, but by the commandment to really show we love one another sacrificially (John 13:34-35).

JOHN 21:15,19

MAN’S WAY OR GOD’S WAY?

There are many reasons an athlete might sacrifice for his team. For the Christian athlete, the primary reason must be love. It is the greatest and most consistent motivating power in sports. Everything God has done for the believer, including Christ’s death for man’s sin, is based on love. No one has ever given so much for a people so unworthy. It is not even that people were simply bad; they were full-blown enemies. Yet, Christ died for His people and conquered death so they may have life.

ASSIGNMENT

- Bible reading: John chapters 7-8. Watch Lesson #5 @ www.calledtocompete.com.
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CONFIDENCE

“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ.”

2 Corinthians 2:14

Confidence is placing full trust and belief in the reliability of a person or a thing. Confidence in the Lord is crucial to our Christian walk, but many athletes and coaches place their trust in their own abilities. Even many Christian coaches and athletes are tempted to revert to the habit of self-confidence.

ROMANS 8:28-30

MAN’S WAY OR GOD’S WAY?

When confidence is based on our abilities or circumstances, there will always be a lack of consistency. From God’s perspective, we can have confidence that He will accomplish His purposes in us because He loves us and has chosen to conform us to the image of His Son. It is in this reality that we can have confidence in any and every trial.

ASSIGNMENT

- Bible reading: John chapters 9,10.. Watch Lesson #6 @ www.calledtocompete.com

TRUTHFULNESS

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,”

Ephesians 4:15

The primary consequence of deception is the loss of trust. Living falsely betrays our friends, family, teammates and anyone else who discovers our lie. When individuals are not trustworthy, they will find themselves becoming more and more isolated. Trust is a vital part of any lasting and meaningful relationship. Conversely, damaging trust is one of the most difficult things to restore.

EPHESIANS 4:17-25

MAN'S WAY OR GOD'S WAY?

Many athletes will avoid being truthful to protect themselves and their programs. However, the Apostle Paul commands all believers to put away falsehood...but he doesn't stop there, he adds: "let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor." This is helpful language, showing that we must not only cast off sinful habits but put on godly ones.

ASSIGNMENT

- Bible reading: John chapters 11-12. Watch Lesson #7 @ www.calledtocompete.com.

POISE

“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”

Luke 2:52

Talk about "poise" comes up often in big-time sporting events. After a key win, coaches will comment on how their team maintained poise in the midst of a demanding situation. Poise is a key character quality because it reveals whether or not you are balanced.

LUKE 20:1-8

MAN'S WAY OR GOD'S WAY?

True poise is possible for anyone who relies on God's strength and spirit. J.I. Packer wrote, "If your eyes are filled with light and working properly, your body will be able to move easily and safely. If you can't see clearly, you will lack physical ease and poise. Similarly, if your heart is possessed by what this world and this life offers, you will not be able to see spiritual issues clearly, and when you read the Bible, its full meaning will escape you."

ASSIGNMENT

- Bible reading: John chapters 13-14. Watch Lesson #8 @ www.calledtocompete.com

PURPOSEFUL

“So whatever you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

1 Corinthians 10:31

There is always a reason, a motivation, for whatever we do. In fact, the word “motivation” means “to provide with a reason,” or “to incite to action.” We may never have expressed our purpose (motivation), but whether it is selfish (to win games, to obtain more money, or a better job) or unselfish (to help our teammates and coaches), we always have a purpose. Virtue is a weakness rather than a strength. But Scripture regards this quality as important for any leader.

JOHN 12:36-43

MAN’S WAY OR GOD’S WAY?

Many athletes find purpose in their career through bringing glory to themselves, their schools, or the community. Competing to bring recognition to your school may be a noble reason to play, but nothing compares to playing for the glory of God. Jesus is the definition of a person having purpose. Luke records that He set his face toward Jerusalem (9:51) even though it meant that He would die. Jesus’ sole purpose was to please His Heavenly Father and to finish His assignment.

ASSIGNMENT

- Bible reading: John chapters 15-16. Watch Lesson #9 @ www.calledtocompete.com.
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SELF-CONTROL

“A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.”

Proverbs 25:28

Developing self-control isn’t easy. Pastor John Piper said, “Following Christ isn’t magic. It requires repeated actions on our part, which develop into habits and life disciplines.” While the key to self-control isn’t easy, it is possible for the Christ-centered believer who develops habits such as Bible reading, memorization and prayer.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:6-13

MAN’S WAY OR GOD’S WAY?

Even unbelieving athletes view self-control as a necessary part of sports to be successful. In Jesus’ day, the word translated “self-control” was used to describe athletes. Those who were successful abstained from certain activities for the sake of disciplined training exercises. For the Christian athlete, self-control is about pleasing God so that it’s possible to control his desires rather than allowing them to control him.

ASSIGNMENT

- Bible reading: John chapters 17-18. Watch Lesson #10 @ www.calledtocompete.com

ENERGETIC

“I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”

Philippians 4:13

The Apostle Paul faced both weariness and every possible type of trial during his mission trips, but he relied on the Lord for his energy. Paul said, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13). That’s why he was able to write in verse 12, “I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:10,19

MAN’S WAY OR GOD’S WAY?

Some athletes look forward to their off-season to refresh themselves and recover from the pressures of competing. While it’s important to get the necessary rest, the Christian athlete knows his true rest and satisfaction is related to living life through understanding the plan of God. Resting in God’s promise brings satisfaction as we look forward to our eternal home in Heaven.

ASSIGNMENT

- Bible reading: John chapters 19. Watch Lesson #11 @ www.calledtocompete.com.

DETERMINATION

*“I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”*

2 Timothy 4:7

Determination is working intently to accomplish goals regardless of the opposition. Determination is the resolve to keep going in spite of roadblocks. No matter how daunting the task, determined people finish the job.

PHILIPPIANS 3:12,16

MAN’S WAY OR GOD’S WAY?

Many athletes pursue goals that will only disappoint and frustrate them throughout their careers, but the Christian athlete should have a much greater goal. Just as the Apostle Paul was still striving with the purpose of being Christlike, how much more should we be striving to be like our Savior? Christlikeness should be our goal in all we do. We should be determined to obtain it and press forward at all times. Paul was determined to be obedient so as to not disqualify himself from the prize. He had a goal and was determined to meet it.

ASSIGNMENT

- Bible reading: John chapters 20:21. Watch Lesson #12 @ www.calledtocompete.com