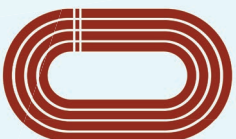




THE CHRISTIAN SPORTSPERSON

Bible studies helping the Christian sportsperson
connect their sport and their faith



The Christian Sportsperson

2nd Edition

All sessions taken the Sports Stadium Kit found at:

www.ReadySetGO.world

These studies are given to you freely to help you make disciples for Christ in all nations in the world of sport and play. These materials have been written by hundreds of people from every continent.

Specific resources for those working with competitive and elite sportspeople can be found at:

www.sportsonline.training

NOT FOR RESALE

English Language Version

ReadySetGO © 2015, 2019, 2023 sports movement – May be freely copied and shared for the purposes outlined in the pages of this book. English Bible quotations from the NIV. NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

PRAY, PLAY, SAY, TOGETHER



For generations, Christian athletes, and coaches all over the world have been committed to living out Colossians 4 as they:



PRAY for the sportspeople in their club or team who don't yet know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. (v2-4)



PLAY in a way that is wise as their sports friends watch them live and compete, so to make the most of every opportunity for them to see their faith in action.

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity (v5)



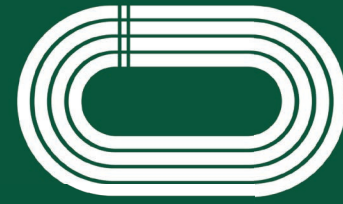
SAY the good news of Jesus through their conversation; being salty so sports friends want to find out more of who he is and what he has done.

Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. (v6)



TOGETHER recognize that they are not alone in the sports culture, but that they can work together with other Christian coaches and athletes as they look to share Jesus Christ with all sportspeople.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE



OVERVIEW



This study guide is written to go through on your own, with another Christian or in a small group of Christian sportspeople. Where possible we encourage you to do it together with others, following the model of Colossians 4.

In Colossians we see that Paul didn't work alone. He and his team were devoted to praying for each other and for people who didn't know Jesus, preparing each other to live and share Christ and planning how to spread the good news far and wide. We are also better off together as we look to reach sportspeople with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Why don't you gather other Christians involved in sports clubs near you? You could speak to local clubs and see if there are Christians involved or talk to your church or other local churches to see if there are Christians in their congregations. Then organize a regular time to meet up and use this study guide together.

What could you do in a group?

Aim for an hour, with 45 minutes of intentional focus together as you pray, prepare and plan:

PRAY (10 minutes) – Be committed to praying for the sportspeople in your club or team who don't yet know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Pray for the sportspeople who you compete and train with that they would see Jesus for who He really is and for an open door for the message about Christ.

PREPARE (25 minutes) – Use this Study Guide to help focus on God's word as you prepare to be a Christian sportsperson.

PLAN (10 minutes) – Following the Bible study, discuss what you are going to do following it. How is God's word going to change what you say, think and do over the next week?

The Studies

each of these studies have three elements:

Ready

A question to get you thinking about the topic



Set

Look closely at what the Bible says and answer questions together



Go

What are you going to do having looked at the Bible?



This study guide is a plan for how to be coaches or athletes for Jesus Christ. The studies are grouped under the headings Pray, Play, Say, Together and help the sportsperson grow in each of these four areas.



The Christian Sportsperson

Pray, Play, Say, Together

Study 1 – Understanding Pray, Play, Say Together

Page 4



PRAY

How prayer changes us and the world of sport we play in

Study 2 – Why prayer is essential for Christian sportspeople

Page 14

Study 3 – How to pray for sportspeople

Page 20



PLAY

How Jesus Christ changes the way we live and compete in our sport

Study 4 – Why we love to play sport

Page 26

Study 5 – Why sport isn't perfect

Page 30

Study 6 – The impact of Jesus Christ on a sportsperson

Page 36



SAY

How to share Jesus Christ faithfully with sportspeople

Study 7 – Our role in sharing the Christian message

Page 42

Study 8 – How to share the Christian message faithfully in sport

Page 48

Study 9 – Reading the Bible with a sports friend.

Page 52



TOGETHER

Working together to reach the world of sport

Study 10 – The importance of church for Christian sportspeople

Page 58

Study 11 – Developing impactful friendships with sportspeople

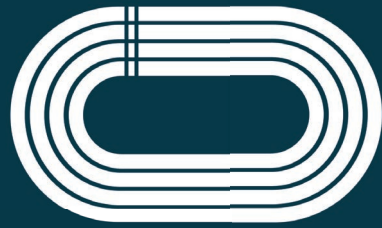
Page 64

Study 12 – Inviting sportspeople to hear and respond to the gospel

Page 70

Study 1

Pray, Play, Say Together



Ready



Why does it feel like my faith and my sport are disconnected at times?

We may believe in Jesus Christ and go to church, but often, when we enter our sports environment, whether training, coaching or competition, it can look and feel like we leave our faith behind. What does it look like then to fully integrate our faith and sport as we seek to encourage sportspeople to believe in Jesus?

Set



What you need to know:

Colossians is a letter written by Paul to a small church. He encourages them that Jesus is all they need and helps them see how their faith in Jesus impacts their whole lives. Here, he is helping them understand how to live out their faith amongst those who aren't Christians.

Pray

Read: Colossians 4:2-4



² Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.
³ And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

1. How important does Paul consider prayer to be? How can you tell?
2. List what he asks them to pray for?



3. What do you learn about praying for sportspeople?

4. What can you change this week to be more 'devoted to prayer'?

To pray is vital in reaching sportspeople. It is God who will open the eyes of sportspeople to see Jesus for who He really is, so let's be committed to praying for them and each other as we tell them about him!

Play

Read: Colossians 4:5



⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

5. What does it look like to be wise in the way you act in sport?

6. Why is this important as we play with those who are 'outsiders' to our faith?

7. What does it look like to make the most of every opportunity in your sport?

To play wisely is essential in reaching sportspeople with the good news of Jesus. How we act when we coach, train or compete is noticed by those we are in sport with and helps them see how what we believe changes how we speak and act.

Say

Read: Colossians 4:6



⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

8. What is our conversation to be like according to Paul? What does he mean by 'full of grace' and 'seasoned with salt'?

What you need to know:

When food is seasoned with salt it brings out the flavour making it tasty. It also was used to preserve food. Here Paul uses this metaphor to describe our conversation with those who aren't Christians.



9. Notice the 'always' and 'everyone', what point is he making?

10. How can you speak like this in your sports context?

To say something that is different and tasty and points people to Jesus is our role as a Christian in sport. Think through how this week you can speak like this when training, coaching or competing.

Together

Read: Colossians 4:7-18



⁷ Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. ⁸ I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. ⁹ He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

¹⁰ My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.)

¹¹ Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These

are the only Jews among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. ¹² Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. ¹³ I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. ¹⁵ Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

¹⁶ After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.

¹⁷ Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord."

¹⁸ I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

11. In these verses is Paul alone in his mission? How do we know?

12. List some of the things Paul's 'team' are like or do.

13. Paul wasn't alone but worked together with others. Who do you have around you as you look to reach sportspeople?

We too are better off together as we look to reach sportspeople with the good news of Jesus Christ. Think through who else you can meet together with to encourage, pray with and introduce to your sports friends so that they can meet others who love sport and Jesus Christ.

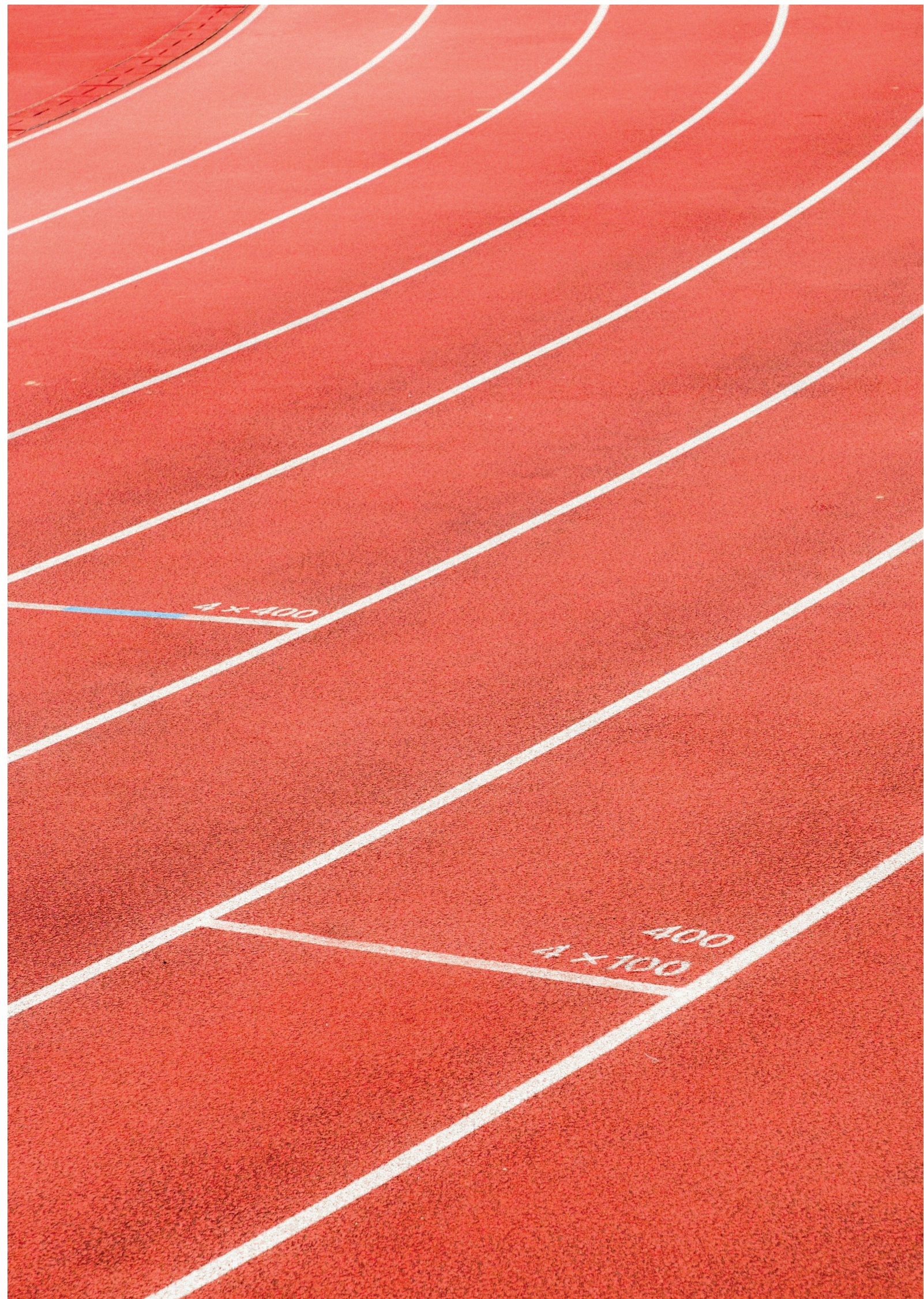


Go



What does it look like to fully connect your faith and your sport?

It is to PRAY, PLAY, SAY, TOGETHER. Think of ways you can remember these four words and together build a team to reach the sportspeople.





PRAY

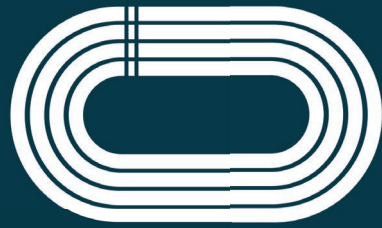
How prayer changes us and the world of sport we play in

Prayer is vital in reaching sportspeople. It is God who will open the eyes of sportspeople to see Jesus for who he really is, so let's be committed to praying for them and each other as we tell them about him!



Study 2

Why prayer is essential for Christian sportspeople



Ready



Think of your friends in your sports team or club. What are their big concerns in life? What about you?

In sport, so many people tell us to be concerned for ourselves. So much of sports culture is about being the best and making a name for yourself. Yet, when we look at Jesus Christ we see a better way of understanding ourselves and our sport. This change in our understanding starts with prayer.

Set



Read: Matthew 6:9-10



⁹ "This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

1. Jesus is teaching his disciples how to pray. Who does he teach us to focus on first in verses 9-10?
2. What do they remind us about God?

What you need to know:

The first thing that Jesus requests in his prayer is for God's name to be 'hallowed'. God's name is his character, it is who he is and what he is like. To 'hallow' something is a strange word, it literally means to make or treat something as 'holy' – that is pure and perfect. So this prayer is about changing our heads and hearts to see God as holy, honoring God as God and having a concern for his name to be lifted up in our sport.

Read: Matthew 6:11



¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

3. How do you feel about praying for 'normal' things like food on the table or a roof over your head or even the sport that you love?

4. Do you pray for these things regularly or do you take them for granted?

What you need to know:

God is our provider, and a thankful heart is one of the sure signs that we understand God's grace. When we don't feel thankful, we will be enjoying many of God's good gifts but acting as though he hadn't given any of it. Being thankful in prayer redirects our hearts towards the Giver of all things.

Read: Matthew 6:12-13



¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

5. Think of the last time someone badly fouled you or think about the last time you committed a bad foul. How did you respond?

6. Why is asking God for forgiveness and forgiving others so important in the Christian life?

What you need to know:

Asking God for forgiveness is not just the way to start the Christian life, but it's also the way we daily continue the Christian life. If we have been wronged by someone else, remembering that God has forgiven us can help us forgive them. Forgiveness reorientates our hearts away from ourselves to gratitude in Jesus Christ and the forgiveness we receive through his death on the cross.

Our life in sport often causes us to forget God and focus on ourselves or our performance but when we stop and pray our focus is taken off ourselves and rightly put back on him. When we pray we are reminded to be thankful for all he has given us including our sport. When we pray we remember that we are forgiven through Jesus' death on the cross and therefore we are motivated to forgive those who do wrong to us. The prayer ends with a request to not be led into temptation. God never tempts us to sin but the devil does and so we are finally called to pray for God's protection as we live in this world.



Go



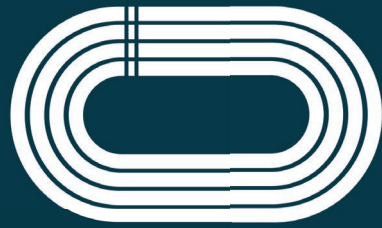
Prayer is essential to our lives as Christian sportspeople as it sets our focus back on God, from whom all life and joy is found.

How can you make prayer your priority this week as you enjoy your sport?



Study 3

How to pray for sportspeople



Ready



What are some of the reasons you don't pray more for your sports friends?

There are many reasons why we find it hard to pray: we don't know what to pray for, we're too busy, we don't see the benefit, we don't know where to start, it feels empty...the list can be endless. However, the root of these reasons is often a misunderstanding or failure to grasp who God is and his call to us to pray.

Set



READ: 1 Timothy 2:1-6



I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— ² for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. ³ This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.

What you need to know:

Paul is giving Timothy, a young leader, instructions for how to lead the church in Ephesus. His first instruction is to pray because it is foundational.

1. In verse 3 what name does Paul use for God?
2. In verse 5 how does Paul describe God and what does this mean?
3. What do you think it means to be made in the image of God?

Why should we pray for sportspeople? Because God is both powerful and intimate. The names of God in this passage reflect the power of God to save us and the intimacy of God as he sends Jesus Christ as our mediator.

REREAD: 1 Timothy 2:1-6



4. What does verse 1 teach us about how we should pray for our sports friends?
5. Describe in your own words the four things mentioned.
6. What is it that God wants us to pray for from verses 2 and 4?
7. Look at the repeated phrase 'all people', what is it emphasizing?

What you need to know:

Paul is keen for Timothy to pray for ALL people even those who are in authority over them, who may persecute them - because God is able to save anyone as Christ's ransom is enough.

How should we pray? Verse 1 tells us with all kinds of prayers, petitions (requests), intercessions (on behalf of others) and thanksgiving. Is this how you pray for your sports friends? We should pray that we would live godly lives among them and that they would be saved.

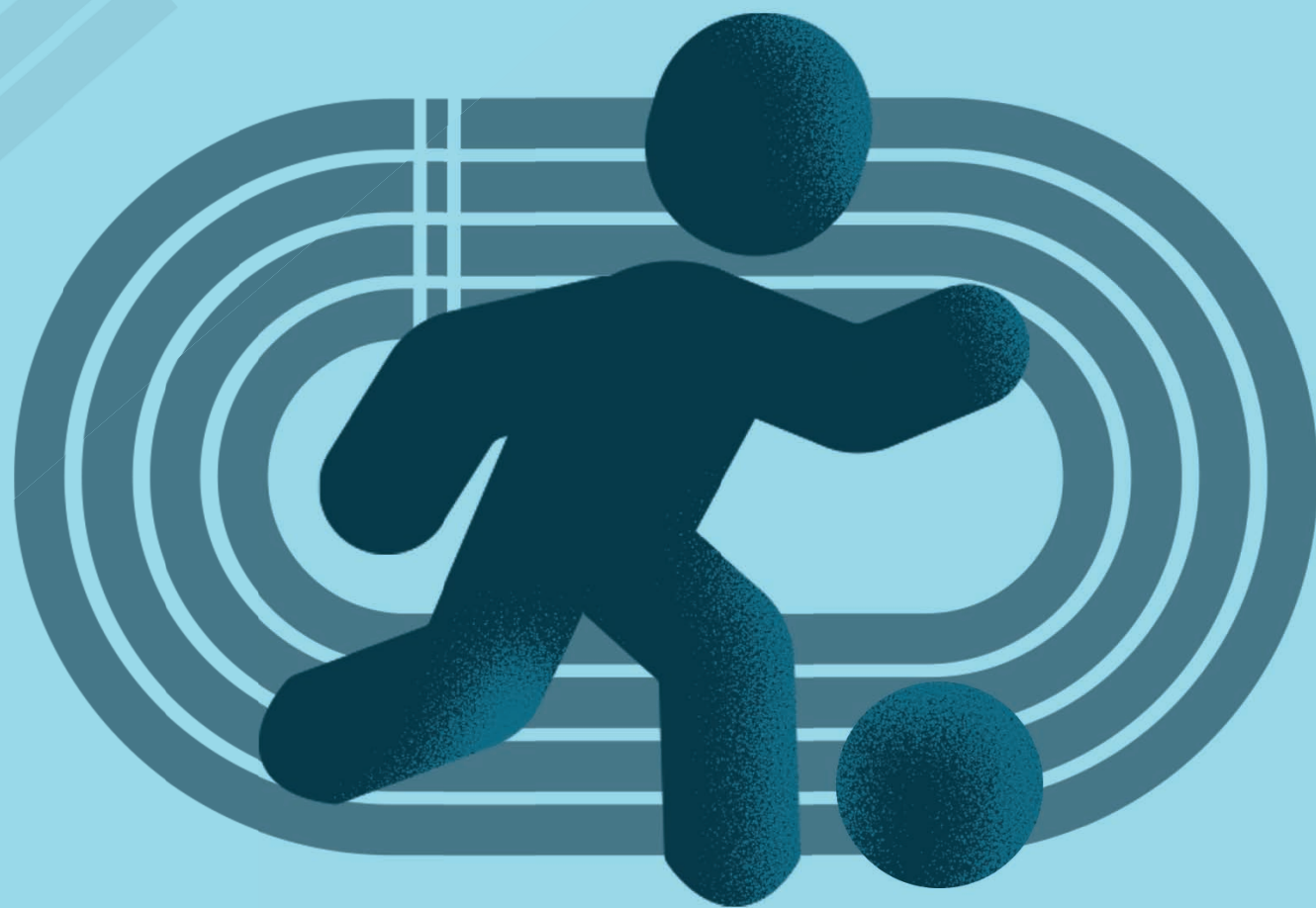
Go



It is often easier to talk about praying rather than doing it! Make sure now that you take some time to stop and pray.

Pray for:

- The wider sports world - that the Lord would raise up more Christians in different sports.
- Your sport - thank him for your sport and pray for those in it specifically.
- Your club/team - pray on behalf of your team that God would save them remembering that no one is beyond saving.
- Your sports friends.



PLAY

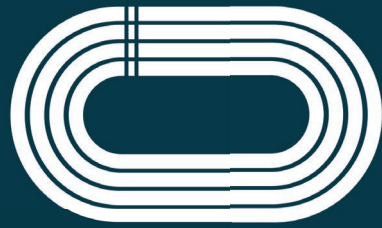
Jesus Christ changes the way we live and compete in our sport

How we act when we coach, train or compete is noticed by those we are in sport with and helps them see how what we believe changes how we speak and act.



Study 4

Why we love to play sport



Ready



Why does my performance in sport affect how I feel about myself?

For many of us, how we perform in our sport, what we achieve and who we play often defines how we feel, how we view ourselves or how we want others to see us. Why does this happen? What does the Bible teach us about the relationship between our sport and God?

Set



What you need to know:

Genesis is the opening book of the Bible and the opening 3 chapters give us a blueprint for how God made us and the characteristics that we share with him. In Chapters 1 & 2 we see God makes all things including mankind and that it is all very good.

READ: Genesis 1:26-27



²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.



1. What is the big idea or key theme of this section?
2. What repeated words do you see?
3. What do you think it means to be made in the image of God?

READ: Genesis 2:15-18



¹⁵ The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

¹⁸ The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

4. What does verse 15 tell us about what it looks like for us to be made in the image of God?
5. What does verse 18 tell us about what it looks like to be made in the image of God?
6. What are Adam and Eve not to do in verses 16-17 and why?

We are created in God's image, that means that we have the capacity to use creatively the talents that God has given us to bring him glory – to show the world the amazing God that he is! We are made to be relational with him and others. This can be seen clearly in sport.

Go

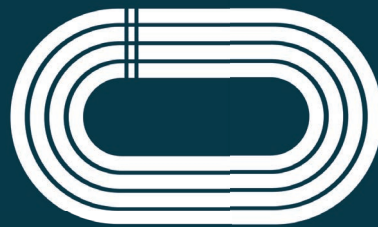


Because we are made creative and relational, we love sport because it is a beautiful reflection of these key characteristics of being human. No wonder we find great joy in training, competing or coaching sport!

How can you reflect God as you enjoy your sport this week?

Study 5

Why sport is not perfect!



Ready



What are some of the most frustrating aspects of sport or those that bring out 'the worst' in people?

Whether it is a bad foul or someone cheating we don't have to look very deep into sport to see that all is not perfect! We see in every competition that, alongside all the creativity and joy, sport has a bad side. We don't behave always as we want and nor do those we compete with, and we are constantly frustrated by not being able to play the perfect game or run the perfect race. So why is sport not perfect?

Set



READ: Genesis 3:1-10



Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

⁴ "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

¹⁰ He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

1. What is it that the serpent causes Eve to doubt?
2. What does the serpent promise Eve?
3. What did Adam and Eve do when they heard God coming and why?

What you need to know:

Genesis 3 show us the impact of our disastrous response to God as a human race. We see the devastating impact of disobeying Gods word and the consequences of that, which still impacts our lives today.

READ: Genesis 3:15-20



¹⁵ And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

¹⁶ To the woman he said,

“I will make your pains in childbearing very severe;
with painful labor you will give birth to children.
Your desire will be for your husband,
and he will rule over you.”

¹⁷ To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’

“Cursed is the ground because of you;
through painful toil you will eat food from it
all the days of your life.

¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you,
and you will eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow
you will eat your food
until you return to the ground,
since from it you were taken;
for dust you are
and to dust you will return.”

²⁰ Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother
of all the living.

4. As a result of disobeying God, how will relationships be affected?
5. How will it affect us using our talents to ‘work’?

Because they disobey God (sin), all humanity inherits the consequences. Our use of our talents to be creative is now hard and often fruitless and our relationships are broken by conflict. We see this in sport too.

Go



Sport is not perfect, and neither are we.

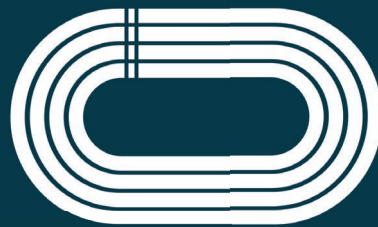
How can this sobering view of sport and humanity cause us to see ourselves clearly and turn to God for help?

Think through how a clear understanding of our condition helps you see your need for God and his mercy in Jesus Christ.



Study 6

The impact of Jesus Christ on a sportsperson



Ready



What motivates you to train, compete or coach in your sport?

As sportspeople it is easy to be motivated by the result, our performance, how our coach or team see us or our status within our sport or club. In Romans Chapters 1-11, the author, Paul, has explained to the Roman Church that 'there is no-one righteous not even one.'

Just like we read in our previous study. He then shows that Christians are people from all walks of life who know that they have turned away from God and turn to his Son, Jesus Christ, to save them.

Our understanding of who God is and what He has done for us, shapes our motivation, behavior and attitude in all areas of life, including our sport.

Set



READ: Romans 12:1-2



Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

1. What does verse 1 say true worship is? What does this look like in sport?
2. How does verse 2 encourage us to live? What does this look like in sport?
3. Think back to Genesis 1-3. Is what is described in Romans 12 more like Genesis 1-2 or Genesis 3? How, according to Romans 12:1, has this been achieved?

God's mercy to us through Jesus Christ pays for our sin and enables us to live a new life. A life where we don't use our talents and relationships to glorify ourselves, but we offer them as worship to God...this includes sport.

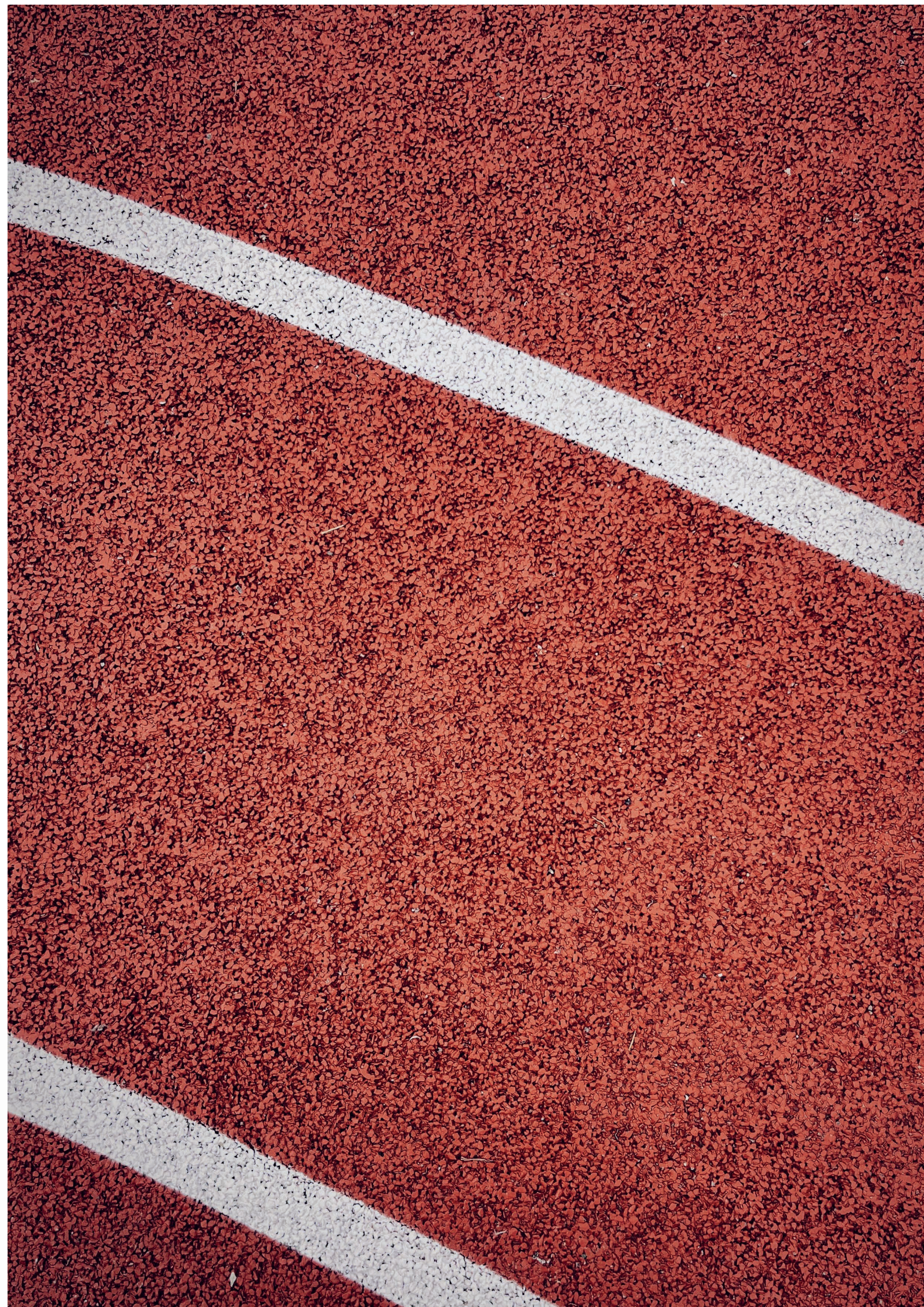
Go

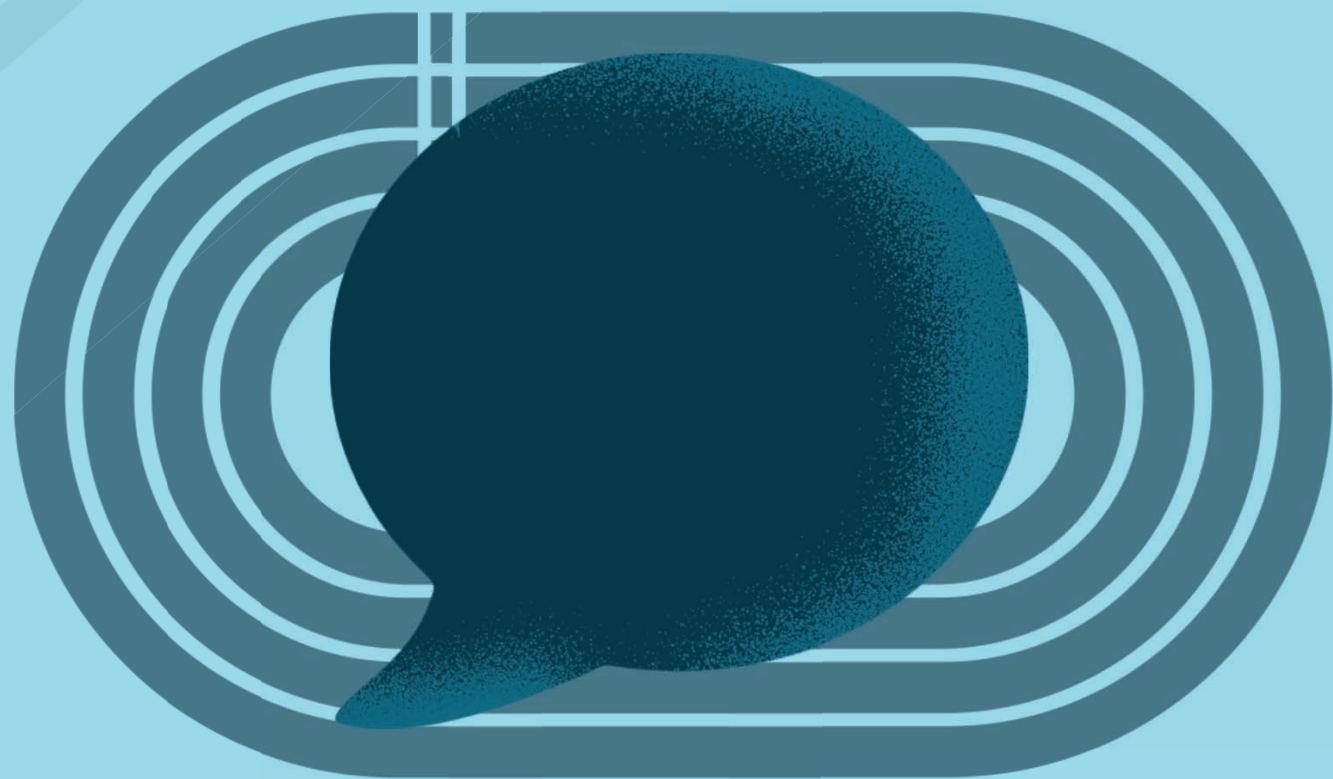


Because of what Jesus Christ has done, we can understand our sport differently. Now we can offer our sporting talents as worship to God when we compete.

Now we look to honor him in the way we conduct our relationships in sport. We understand sport as worship!

Think through how you are going to approach your sport differently this week because of this.





SAY

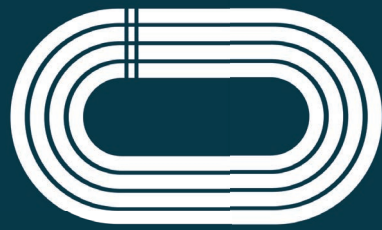
How to share Jesus Christ with sportspeople

To say something that points people to Jesus is our role as a Christian in sport.



Study 7

Our role in sharing Jesus Christ with sportspeople



Ready



What was the most exciting conversation you have ever had about your faith and why?

The commandment to 'go and make disciples' is daunting. It is important to grasp the difference between our role and God's role in pointing people to Jesus and leave him with the results.

Otherwise, the weight of responsibility will either crush our spirit and leave us feeling dejected with God, or we'll become proud and forget God when we see people come to faith.

Set



What you need to know:

Paul is writing to a church he knows well and who have been led astray by some eloquent speakers who put their value in their own power and ability to persuade. They accuse Paul of having an unimpressive ministry and being fruitless compared to them. In this passage, he is responding to those claims by showing clearly what our role is and God's role in bringing people to Jesus.

READ: 2 Corinthians 4:1-5



Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. ² Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. ³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.



1. What is it that ensures Paul doesn't 'lose heart' in telling people about Jesus? (verse 1)

2. How can the same assurance help us as we think of the sportspeople we share life with?

3. As Paul communicates God's truth, what do we learn from him about how he does it? What do we learn about how not to do it? (verse 2)

What you need to know:

When Paul talks about a 'veil', he is referring back to Chapter 3 and the veil Moses wore so people couldn't see the glory fading (Exodus 34:33-35). Paul makes a comparison with unbelievers having 'veiled' minds so they can't see Jesus clearly.

4. Who is 'the god of this age' and why has he blinded the minds of unbelievers? (verse 4)

5. What does this mean as we think about sharing the gospel with our sports friends?

6. What would it look like to 'preach ourselves'? (verse 5)

7. What is our role according to Paul to this verse?

In our eager desire to see our sports friends become Christians, we can often be tempted to leave the hard bits of the gospel message out. Paul says know your role: preach Christ and not yourself, present the truth plainly and trust it to do its work.

READ: 2 Corinthians 4:6-7



⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

8. When his word is presented plainly, what does God do to unblind minds and what does it enable people to do?

9. In verse 7 it says there is a reason we are ordinary 'jars of clay' rather than impressive (like the Corinthian speakers), what is it?

10. How does this encourage you when you think about speaking to your sports friends?



What you need to know:

In Genesis 1:3 God says 'Let there be light' He creates light out of nothing! Paul refers to it here saying that it takes the same amount of power to unblind a mind to see Christ as it does to create light out of darkness! We don't have that kind of power, only God does.

In our eager desire to see our sports friends become Christians, we can often be tempted to leave the hard bits of the gospel message out. Paul says know your role: preach Christ and not yourself, present the truth plainly and trust it to do its work.

Go



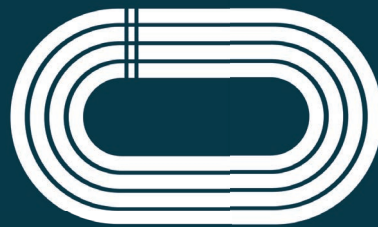
Give thanks to God for the role we have to play and the power of His word to save!

Why not challenge yourself this week to ask a friend if they would like to find out more about Jesus firsthand by reading the Bible with you!



Study 8

How to share the Christian message with sportspeople



Ready



What is the best news you have heard this week and why?

To be able to reach the world of sport for Christ, each Christian in sport must be able to explain the good news of Jesus Christ – the gospel.

Yet so often we keep it to ourselves rather than share it as good news. One of the reasons we don't share it as good news is because we don't know it!

Set



READ: Romans 1:16-17



¹⁶For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. ¹⁷For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

1. Why is Paul not ashamed of the gospel?
2. How does the passage describe what the gospel is?
3. Who is the gospel for?
4. How does this passage convict or encourage you as you think about sharing the good news with your sports friends?

What you need to know:

Romans 1:16-17 is the theme of the entire book. Paul tells us that this gospel is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes. Later, in the same letter, he tells us that faith comes through hearing the message and this message is the gospel; he asks us the question: How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? (Romans 10:14-17).



Six windows into the gospel

If our role is to tell people about gospel, we need to know what the gospel is and how to explain it clearly to a sportsperson.

Look at this simple framework rooted in God’s word for sharing the gospel. This can be a useful tool when you need to explain what the good news is.

If you are doing these studies in a group you can practice in pairs how you would explain the gospel to a teammate who is not a believer. If you are reading on your own, why not speak to a friend about it.

1 CREATOR

We are created by God to be in relationship with Him under His rule. This is good.

Revelation 4:11

2 SIN

We have all rejected God and disobeyed Him. The Bible calls this sin and it separates us from Him.

Romans 3:10

3 JUDGEMENT

There is a consequence to disobeying God. We will all die and after that face His judgment. We deserve hell.

Hebrews 9:27

4 CROSS

Because of His love for us, God sent Jesus Christ. He did not sin and died on the cross to pay the penalty for our disobedience.

1 Peter 3:18

5 RESURRECTION

Jesus Christ rose from the dead, proving the penalty for our sin has been paid and that there is life after death.

1 Peter 1:3

6 CHOICE

We have a choice: to turn from disobeying God to believing and trusting in Jesus Christ, or face God’s judgment.

John 3:36

Remember that the gospel is good news! So though it may be familiar, let’s not forget how important and how amazing it is!

Go



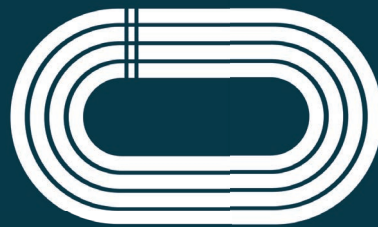
Why don’t you plan together to invite your sports friends around for a meal.

Pray in advance of these for those you are inviting. Pray for the courage to ask them what they think of the Christian faith and then be ready to answer!



Study 9

How to read the Bible with a sports friend



Ready



Why would you want to read the Bible with a sports friend?

God's word will do God's work in the lives of sportspeople. Our best thoughts, ideas, opinions or arguments, though useful, are still merely breathed out by humans. They cannot compare to the word of God in either power or influence.

The Bible is useful for all people, at all times, and remains God's word across generations. It is still today our greatest tool for growing disciples in the world of sport.

Set



READ: 2 Timothy 3:14-15



¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it,
¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

What you need to know:

2 Timothy is the second letter written by Paul to Timothy, a younger leader of the church in Ephesus, who had been his travelling companion on some of his journeys. This is the last of Paul's letters that we have in the Bible and the tone of it is that of an older leader 'passing the baton' on to a younger leader.

1. In verse 14 what is Timothy to do?
2. In verse 15 what are the 'Holy Scriptures' and what can they do?
3. What do you think these verses tell us about the potential impact of Scripture on our sports friends?
4. How does knowing this make you feel about reading the Bible with a sports friend?



It is exciting to read about what God's word can do, and a great encouragement to think that by reading it and studying it with a sports friend, it can make them wise for salvation in Jesus Christ!

READ: 2 Timothy 3:16-17



¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

5. What is meant by 'God breathed'? Why does this encourage you as you think about reading the Bible with a friend?

6. In verse 16 we see that God's word is useful for four things. Go through what each one of these means and why these four 'useful' attributes are able to make you wise for salvation?

7. What does the word of God achieve according to verse 17?

8. What would stop you asking a sports friend to read the Bible with you? Can you overcome this?

So often we make a decision on our sports friends behalf: 'They wouldn't want to read the Bible!' we say or think, and yet very often we have never asked them and may well be surprised! When we remember the power of God's word from 2 Timothy 3, and see the impact it has on lives, why wouldn't you want to give them every opportunity to find out for themselves?

Go



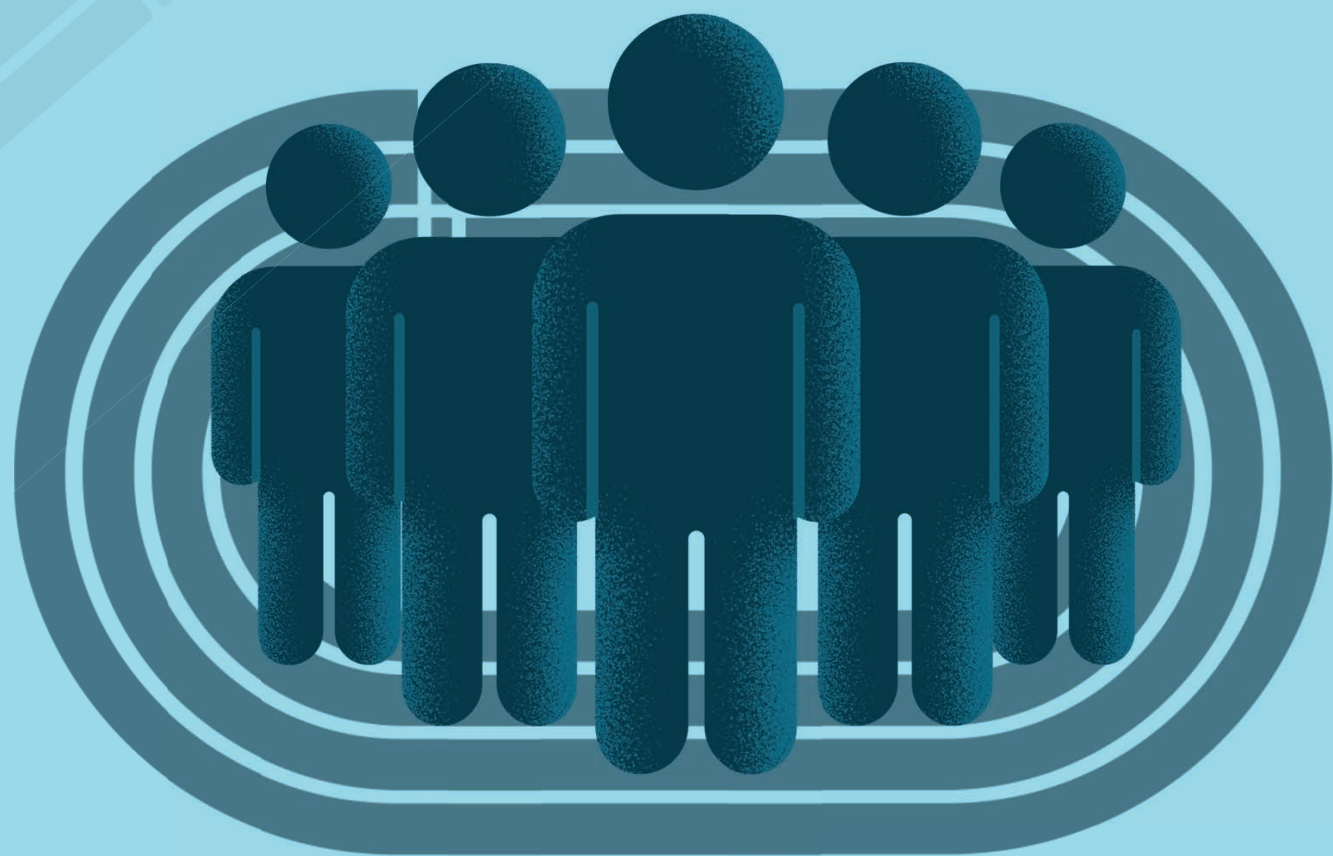
To finish, spend some time writing down:

- Who are you going to start or continue to pray for, that you might be able to read the Bible with?
- What will you do from here? Who could you ask to read the Bible with you?
- Who can hold you to account for the things you've just written down?
- How can I encourage any other Christians in my club to do this?
- What opportunities are coming up that I can pray and plan towards? training camps/tours etc
- Pray - remember prayer changes us and the world of sport we play in.

Mark's Gospels

For most of us, the biggest issue of reading the Bible with a sports friend is knowing where to start!

We have produced a Mark's gospel with studies focused on sportspeople to help you. You can get this at **[sportsonline.training](#)**



TOGETHER

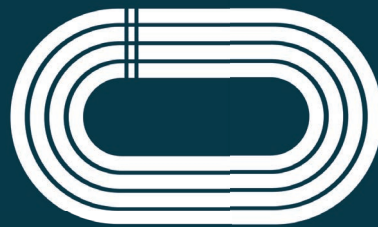
Building a team to reach the world of sport

We are better off together as we look to reach sportspeople
with the good news of Jesus Christ.



Study 10

The importance of church for
Christian sportspeople



Ready



How does your sport impact your ability to be part of your church?

We are often caught between knowing it is good and right to be part of a church in order to worship God, grow in our faith and be held accountable by others, and playing sport; as sport can often clash with timings of church. How do we get the balance right? It is important to note from the start that this is a conscience issue and people will have different views on it. With the issue of balancing church and sport, one of the most important things is for each individual to think it through for themselves and come to a position they are happy with.

Romans 14:5 says: "One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind."

Here are three biblical principles to help you think about your decision.

Set



We were created to rest

READ: Genesis 2:2-3



² By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³ Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

1. Why does God rest on the seventh day of creation?
2. What do these verses show us about rest?
3. How do they describe what rest is?

What you need to know:

In Genesis 2, God's blessing of the 7th day is linked to the fact that he, the God of the universe, rests on it. By him blessing it, he is establishing it for creation as a day of rest. It then becomes the day of rest for all humanity.

Whatever level of sport we compete at, we all need a day of rest – but this is not prescribed to be on a specific day. It is important to see that rest is not just stopping from work but reorienting yourself back to God. We are created to rest.

We were born to worship

READ: Romans 12:1-2



Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

4. How is worship described according to these two verses and what is it in response to?

5. Is worship therefore restricted to a specific time or place according to these verses?

6. Do you see your sport as a time of worship? If not, why not?

What you need to know:

Because of God's mercy given to us through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, our response is one of worship with all that we are, all of the time. Whilst there are other reasons to meet together in church, worship cannot be confined to church meetings alone.

It is important to grasp that as you use your gifts for sport, in relationship with others, for the glory of God, it is an act of worship in and of itself. We are born to worship.

We were made to meet

READ: Hebrews 10:23-25



²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.



7. What are the reasons the writer gives for ‘not giving up meeting together’?

8. Are there ways you can be committed to church and your sport?

What you need to know:

At the time of this letter, the Romans have declared Christianity illegal – and thus the temptation is to give up meeting together in the face of persecution. Yet, even as the Hebrew Christians might risk their lives doing so, the message is ‘Don’t give up!’ That’s how key it is to meet – without it you will not last as a Christian.

Hebrews affirms the need to meet together. It describes why this is important for ‘spurring one another on’, ‘encouraging one another’ and helping each other keep going until the ‘Day approaches’. We are made to meet.

Go



The three biblical principles which we have looked at are:

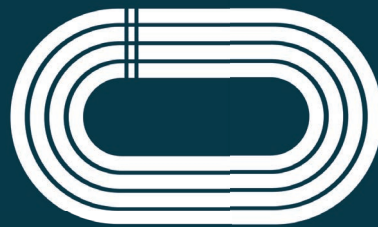
1. We are created to rest
2. We are born to worship
3. We are made to meet

How will they help inform your future decisions about sport and church?

What practical tips are there that you can give to those who have to compete at a time that clashes with church?

Study 11

Developing impactful friendships
with sportspeople



Ready



Do you have authentic or superficial friendships with your sports friends? How do you know?

In order to be good witnesses to our sports friends, we need to invest time in them; learn what they like, learn about them, have shared experiences with them. To have the trust to be vulnerable looking at the Bible, our friends need to trust us.

In order to build this trust, alongside spending time with people, we need to be authentic in how we live our lives. Are we consistent in our actions, is our life in any way going to compromise sharing the message?

Set



READ: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12



You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. ²We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. ³For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. ⁴On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. ⁵You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. ⁶We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. ⁷Instead, we were like young children among you.

Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, ⁸so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. ⁹Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. ¹⁰You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. ¹¹For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, ¹²encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.



1. Make a list of what Paul was like with the Thessalonians.
2. What do we learn about Paul's heart and motivation through this description of what he was like?
3. If your sports friends were to describe you in your club, what would be the similarities and differences between their list and Paul's?
4. Why do you think this is?

What you need to know:

Paul was only with the Thessalonians three weeks before persecution drove him away, yet in that time he was able to share life and deep relationships.

Paul loved the Thessalonians. We see this clearly in verse 8 and in how he cared for them. Can the same be said of us with our sports friends? Or are we in danger of being superficial in our sports clubs and not really investing in the people there?

RE-READ: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12



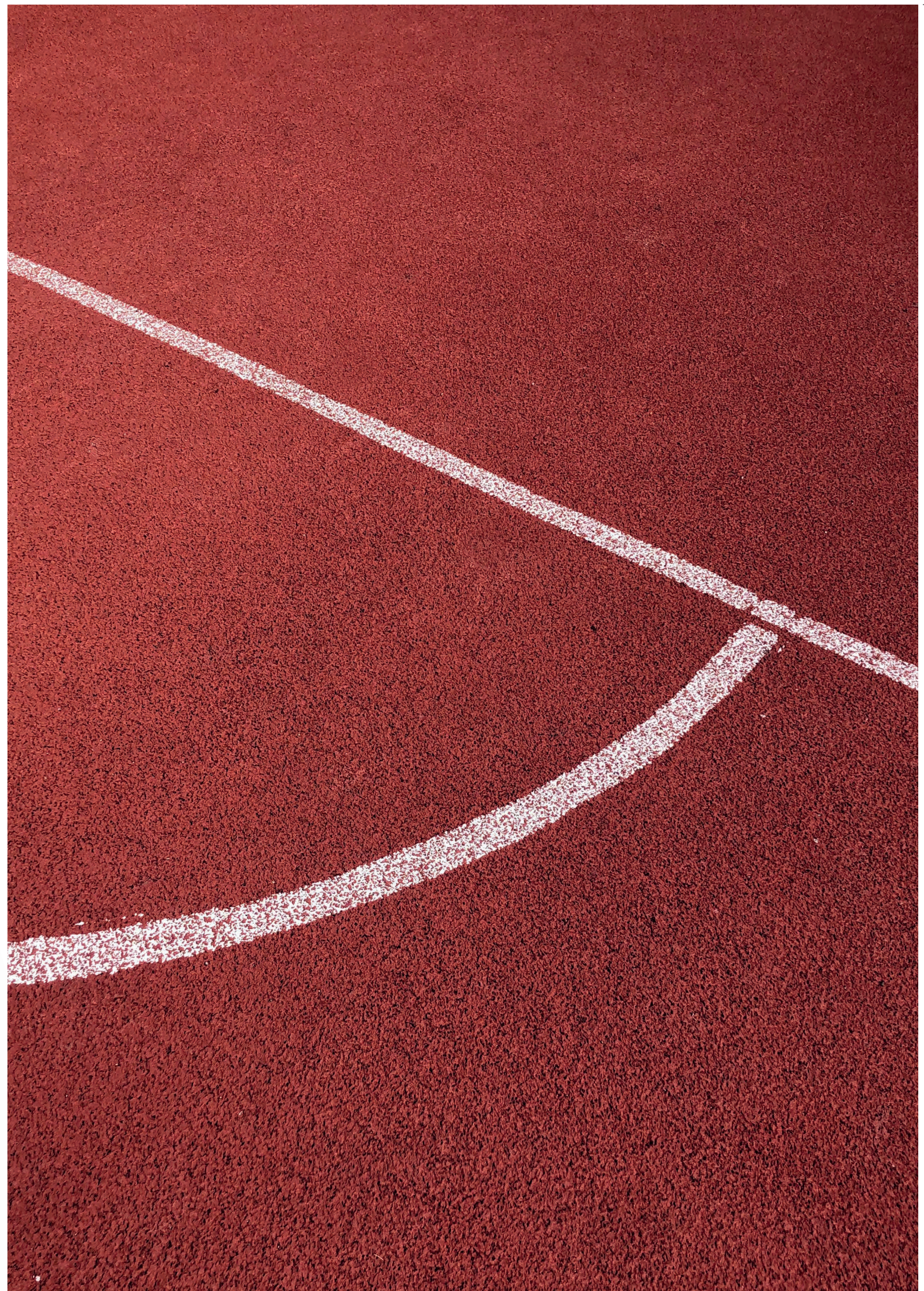
5. Dig into the passage again and see how Paul acted when he was with the Thessalonians?
6. Why is it important that his love for them showed itself in action?
7. How is our heart for our sports friends shown in how we act towards them?

Paul's actions were a natural outworking of his heart attitude that meant he shared life and the gospel. It starts with our heart attitude. How can you grow a deep love for your club mates that overflows into your actions?

Go

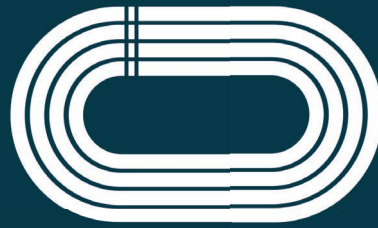


- Have you ever cared for sports friends like that?
- When did you last get alongside a sports friend who was having a hard time?
- When did you celebrate with a sports friend in their joy?
- How much do you know the people you train and compete with?
- Pray for opportunities this week to love them like Paul.



Study 12

Inviting sportspeople to hear and respond to the gospel



Ready



Can you imagine what it would be like if you couldn't hear at all during training or in a competition. How would that impact your sport and your ability to compete?

A generation of sports players exists today with very few having ever heard the good news Jesus explained to them. Many go through their whole sporting career without hearing someone explain the Jesus from the Bible to them! How can they even begin to understand who he is if they don't get a chance to hear?

Set



READ: Romans 10:12-17



¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

¹⁶ But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” ¹⁷ Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

1. How would you try to persuade another Christian sportsperson to bring their team to hear the gospel explained using this passage?
2. Who does verse 12 tell us the gospel is for?
3. What does someone need to do to be saved according to verses 13-14?



4. How do verses 14-17 describe our role in enabling this to happen?

5. Discuss what it would look like to have 'beautiful feet' (v15) in your sports club?

6. How would people describe your 'feet' today in line with this passage.

What you need to know:

In verse 15, Paul quotes Isaiah 52:7 which refers to those who bring the exiles the good news of their imminent release from captivity in Babylonia. Here it is applied to those who bring the good news of release from the captivity of sin.

Here we see that God uses people to proclaim his word and he uses his proclaimed word to save people. Think about how you can give your sports friends an opportunity to hear Gods message in an environment in which they will listen.

Remember the role we have to play in people hearing the good news about Jesus. Though it often makes us nervous asking our friends to come to an event or church, nothing is more thrilling than seeing our sports friends engage with Jesus Christ!

Go



**Who are you inviting to hear the gospel?
Who is going to hold you accountable for asking them?**

Pray with that person for the courage to follow through on good intentions and for your sports friends to hear about Jesus and respond to him in faith.

