

REPS
DAY SEVEN
JOYFUL PLAY

READ

ISAIAH 55

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9

REFLECT

Rejoice! The God of the universe loves us and wants to be with us! He has sent his son so that we might have life to the full. He gives us identity and purpose, and he calls us into the light so that we might be witnesses to the world regarding his good and gracious plan to forgive sins and renew all things. He is just and righteous. His love and mercy endure forever. His ways are mighty and true, and his Word will never fail.

And he is sending you! Almighty God has asked us to partner with him in his mission. We are not mere pawns in a cosmic puppet show, but fully adopted children who will share in the inheritance of life that Jesus won on the cross. This is good news! All our efforts, our training, our commitments, our devotions – these all have a part to play in God’s story of redemption. Yes, to be an athlete is to exercise a great and precious gift from the Lord.

By training and competing at the highest level that we can, we are inspiring our campuses and communities through the stewardship of the bodies that God has blessed us with. Our commitment to discipline is a model for faithful growth, our pursuit of victory a paragon of perseverance and dedication. Rejoice! The Lord is with you on the field, in the water, on the track, on the court, and in the weight room. He takes pleasure in the thrill of fair and robust competition just as you do. But he doesn’t count you a success based on your results, but rather on the inherent worth that you have as his beautiful creation, made in his image and capable of wonderful and awe-inspiring feats of skill, endurance, and strength. Furthermore, God is joyful when you find joy in your teammates; when you serve each other and are of one mind such that your interests and goals are communally shared (Philippians 2:4).

Being an athlete is a tall order. It is an identity, a burden, a motivation, and a way of life all wrapped into one. But it is also a delight! The Lord God delights in your enjoyment of the heights that you can achieve, in the goals you reach, and in the relationships that are built as a result. May you also delight in the fact that your dedication to play, teamwork, and competition reflects God’s joy in and among us all.

RESPOND

God’s desire is that you are joyful! (1 Thessalonians 5:18) Yet, how many athletes feel burdened or burnt out by their training or their pursuit to be the best? What might be robbing you of your joy in sport?

- Take a step back and reflect: what makes your sport enjoyable? Why did you eventually choose to commit so wholeheartedly to it?

Remember the God takes joy in you stewarding your gifts well for his glory and not in whether you attain some earthly goal. Of course, there are always going to be obstacles, whether they be minor individual setbacks, things out of our control, or major systemic challenges that reflect the broader brokenness of the world. But fix your eyes on Jesus, who spoke these words of comfort over his disciples: “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) So, take heart! The Lord who has blessed you with a heart, body, and mind for sport is with you! Go, play, and change the world!

- What are some ways that you can continue to find joy even if there are significant obstacles preventing you from playing?
- How might you invite your teammates into God’s joy, both on and off the field? In season, and in the off-season?