



Power Handbook



GO GREAT GREAT GREAT GREAT

Power Handbook: 2023 Edition
FCA Group Meetings and Training Time
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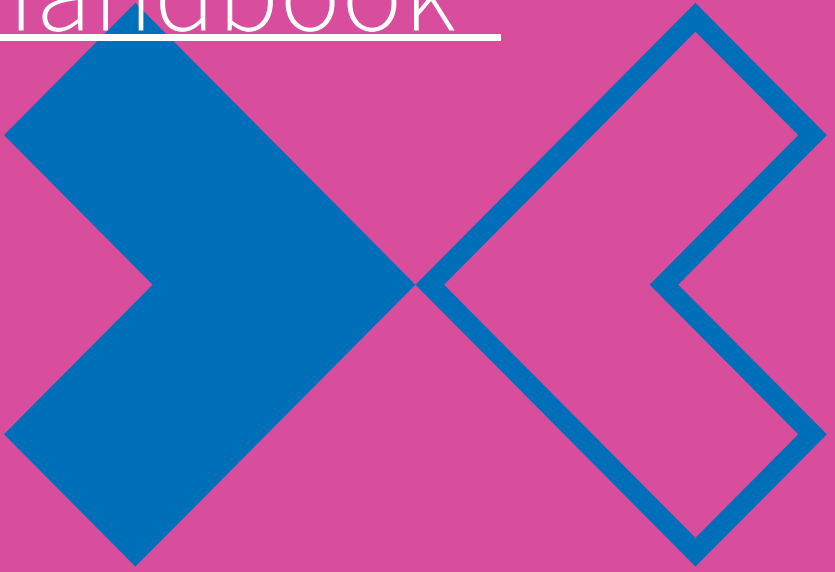
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Power Handbook



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THE FOUR

THE GOSPEL EXPLAINED IN FOUR SIMPLE TRUTHS

The FOUR is a simple, repeatable way for anyone to share the Gospel.



GOD LOVES YOU

God made you and loves you! His love is boundless and unconditional. God is real, and He wants you to personally experience His love and discover His purpose for your life through a relationship with Him.

Genesis 1:27; John 3:16



SIN SEPARATES YOU

Sin damages your relationships with other people and with God. It keeps us from experiencing the fulfilling life God intends for us. The result: you are eternally separated from God and the life He planned for you.

Isaiah 59:2; Romans 3:23; 6:23



JESUS RESCUES YOU

Jesus died, but He rose to life again. Jesus offers you peace with God and a personal relationship with Him. Through faith in Jesus, you can experience God's love daily, discover your purpose and have eternal life after death.

Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; 1 Peter 3:18



WILL YOU TRUST JESUS?

You choose to trust Jesus when you believe and confess that Jesus is Lord and surrender your life to Him. Are you ready to place your trust in Jesus?

John 1:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 10:9-10; Revelation 3:20



The **FAITH RESPONSE TOOL** is for coaches and athletes who have recently made a decision to **START** a relationship with Jesus or they desire to **GROW** in their relationship with Jesus.

To use the tool, simply **TEXT** GOFCA to 46322 **OR SCAN** the QR Code.

After completing the form, you will receive a series of short “first steps” videos from professional athletes. These videos are designed to help coaches and athletes grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.



GREATER OVERVIEW

“He must increase, but I must decrease.” — John 3:30

As competitors, we always dream of something Greater. We train tirelessly to reach our potential, seeking approval from teammates, coaches and fans. The promise of a trophy or praise pushes us to succeed. Our identity becomes about our performance—how well we play, not who we are. The pressure to succeed fuels our purpose to compete every day.

But what happens when our season ends or we don’t perform well? What does that say about our potential or our purpose? The world will say we’re not good enough—that we’ve failed. But Jesus Christ says differently.

In Christ, we have a Greater potential than what is on a scoreboard. Through His sacrifice on the cross, we have the promise of a new life. When we surrender our lives to Jesus, we give up the old expectations to gain a new identity in Christ. The pressure to perform evaporates, and our performance is transformed. We no longer compete for something Greater, but for Someone Greater. We play with a new purpose: He must become Greater, and we must become less.

THEME TOPICS

MEETING 1: GREATER POTENTIAL

“Jesus spoke to them again: ‘I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’” — John 8:12

MEETING 2: GREATER PROMISE

“For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” — John 3:16

MEETING 3: GREATER PERFORMANCE

“I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me.” — John 15:5

MEETING 4: GREATER PURPOSE

“As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” — John 17:18

HOW TO USE THE GREATER MEETINGS

At Camp: These four topics were designed to fit together for a complete message at Camp. It’s not recommended to completely skip any of the topics. If you need to cover the contents in fewer than four meeting times, you may decide to focus a bit more on one or two topics while hitting the highlights in the others depending on your emphasis and group makeup. A Training Time devotional is added to the end of each meeting for a daily personal quiet time.

In Huddles: These 16 topics were designed for a deeper dive into the 2023 Greater theme. These can be studied over the course of a semester or a sports season with your Huddle.

WELCOME

“Jesus spoke to them again: ‘I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’” — John 8:12

Have you ever tried out for a team and didn’t make it? Or maybe you’ve been practicing a lot, trying to get better at your sport, but you still aren’t as good as you want to be. Maybe you have felt like even when you try your hardest, it still doesn’t seem good enough. This can make you feel sad and disappointed, but God says you don’t have to feel sad. God says that even though you might take your sport seriously, sports aren’t everything. It’s about who you are, not what you do.

WARM-UP**UNDER PRESSURE**

In this game, you will name five things that fit into a category. The catch? You have only ten seconds to do this. Have someone count down and keep track of your score.

(Example categories: sports played without a ball, superheroes, animals that swim, foods that are green, etc.)

Q: When you were asked to think of things while being timed for a short time, that’s called pressure. You just performed under pressure! How hard was it to think of things when you were being timed?

Q: Have you ever felt this kind of pressure in your sport? How is it similar or different?

WORKOUT**UNTAPPED POTENTIAL**

There will be days you will not play your best in practice or in a game, and as an athlete, it is normal to want to play better in those moments. When you don’t play as well as you were hoping, you might start to feel pressure to do better.

The scoreboard isn’t everything. And your wins should not decide who you are. Who you are should be based on who God says you are. You can live a greater life when you are focused on God and care more about what He says about you than anyone else.

Q: How does knowing that God says you are worth more than your sport make you feel?

Q: Do you ever feel like you only care about your sport or how you perform? How can you change this to focus on God?

TRUE LIGHT

The Gospel of John (a book in the Bible) shares the start of Jesus’ time on earth. Jesus had a cousin named John the Baptist who was a preacher, and he told people about Jesus. John did great things, and even though other people thought he was great, John knew Someone was coming who was greater. Who’s that person? It’s Jesus.

As John preached about the coming of Jesus, many leaders became nervous about Jesus, who John called the greater One. They were nervous because they were used to just following rules and performing well. They thought that if they were good at their job, that

meant they were a good person. But Jesus had a better way. His way! Bringing light to a dark world:

“The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was created through him, and yet the world did not recognize him.”— John 1:9–10

But there was a problem: “The world did not recognize him.”

Q: Why do you think the world didn’t know Jesus when He first arrived?

Q: How do you think knowing Jesus better could help you reach your potential or what you have to offer?

WRAP-UP **GREATER POTENTIAL**

There is more to sports than just your performance. It’s easy to forget that when you’re playing, but your life will change in a good way when you begin to find your potential in Jesus and not in your sport.

Here’s how to see and apply the “Greater Potential” of Jesus:

1. Greater Way. There’s a better way to reach your fullest potential. And it’s the *only* path that will truly get you there.

“Jesus told him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”— John 14:6

2. Greater Truth. It’s not just a greater truth. It’s *the truth*. When you believe the truth of Jesus, you will feel free from the pressure to play well.

“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”— John 8:32

3. Greater Life. This is what Jesus can give you through a relationship with Him. When you focus your life on Jesus, you will feel more joy, peace and purpose.

“A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.”— John 10:10

John the Baptist knew what it meant to be fully connected to Jesus. It’s not what you do but who you are. Let’s read the theme verse together and remember that Jesus has greater potential for us:

“He must increase, but I must decrease.”— John 3:30

OVERTIME

As a Huddle go to thefour.fca.org or turn to page 2 and go through “The FOUR.” Talk about each of these key points with a teammate. If you haven’t decided to give your heart to Jesus Christ, talk to your Huddle Leader about making that big decision today.



TRAINING TIME 1 ✕

GREATER POTENTIAL

MARK JONES

READY

“Jesus spoke to them again: ‘I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.’” — John 8:12

SET

When I was ten years old, I discovered basketball. My first memory of basketball was this guy named Larry Bird (he was *really* good), and he made this amazing shot. From then I was hooked! It did not matter if I played with friends or played alone, but I wanted to play all the time. When I was a little older, I wanted to play for the high school team, but I didn’t make the cut. It broke my heart, and I was angry about it for a long time.

Sometimes when you like something too much, like sports, it can take your eyes and attention off things that are more important. It is almost like this—what if your parents tried to drive you someplace at night without lights? You would probably think they were crazy, but it could also end up really bad. It is super important to be able to see where you are going and what you are doing.

There is nothing wrong with liking sports. But if we like sports too much, it could be something that makes up our entire identity. Remember, your identity is what makes you you as a person, competitor and child of God. And you know what God says about your identity? God says you have greater potential in your life than just sports! Potential is the level of success you can gain in the future. Jesus once said, “I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in darkness but have the light of life” (John 8:12). You are so much more important than those sports you like. You are so important that Jesus came to Earth to be the Light for us, so we can see where we are going and so we won’t trip over anything.

If we say we like sports, there is nothing wrong with that, but when we can say we love Jesus, then we have the Light we need to live our lives to the greatest potential!

GO

1. What is your favorite part about sports? Why?
2. What would you think if your parents drove the car with no lights on?
3. Why do you think it is better to love Jesus more than sports?

WORKOUT

Genesis 1:3–4; John 12:46

OVERTIME

Father, thank You for giving us the light of Jesus. Help us make Him the most important part of our lives. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

WELCOME

“For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” — John 3:16

You may be starting to improve as an athlete, and that’s exciting! But is it just about winning? If so, that feeling of excitement might not last for long. The great news is that God created you for something more!

**WARM-UP
FOR THE PRIZE**

Let’s all line up for a race. We’re going to sprint to a designated spot and back. The winner gets a prize (e.g., a quarter, a piece of candy, a pen, etc.).

Q: Besides winning a prize, are there other reasons you wanted to win the race?

**WORKOUT
ON THE LINE**

In all competitive situations, it seems like you’ll get something good for winning or something bad for losing.

One Oklahoma softball coach, Patty Gasso, did a good job at encouraging her athletes to celebrate the greater promise they have through their life in Christ and not just how well they do at softball. That team went to the 2021 NCAA championship. During their big game, their motto was “BATL” or “Boast About The Lord.” By focusing on God, they were able to play without being afraid of doing bad or making mistakes.

Q: What does *boast* mean?

IN THE LIGHT

As Jesus began His ministry, many religious leaders were nervous about His arrival. Most of them didn’t like the idea that someone else was greater than them. Except for a few.

Nicodemus is a man we learn about in the Bible. His identity, who he believed he was, was wrapped up in his job and that he was an important man. Nicodemus felt the pressure to perform, but what he really needed was the truth. Until that point, Nicodemus knew all about God, but he didn’t really know Him. Jesus showed Nicodemus that there was a greater promise for him with Christ. That greater promise was eternal life.

“For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Anyone who believes in him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God.” — John 3:16–18

Because Nicodemus didn’t have a relationship with Jesus, he was living in darkness, which just means he was living apart from God.

“This is the judgment: The light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light and avoids it, so that his deeds may not be exposed. But anyone who lives by the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be shown to be accomplished by God.” — John 3:19–21

That night Nicodemus decided to listen to God’s promise and began to live in the Light, and his life changed forever.

Q: Why do you think Nicodemus knew so much about God and yet didn’t have a relationship with Him?

WRAP-UP

GREATER PROMISE

God wants to give you the greater promise that only comes from Jesus, more special than anything you can get by being good at your sport. Here are three amazing things His greater promise will bring:

1. Greater Love. God loves you so much that He even gave up His own Son to die on the cross for you.

“As the Father has loved me, I have also loved you. Remain in my love.” — John 15:9

2. Greater Gift. God gives us all a gift; that gift is a choice. You have a choice to have a relationship with God, and if you do, God promises you eternal life with Him.

“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” — John 3:17

3. Greater Identity. You won’t have to worry anymore about trying to figure out who you are because you’ll be a part of God’s family.

“But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name.” — John 1:12

As we think about these things, let’s say our theme verse together again:

“He must increase, but I must decrease.” — John 3:30

OVERTIME

Take some time to say this prayer to yourself:

Dear Lord, thank You for Your greater promise to save me and give me eternal life. Help me receive Your love so that I might begin to find my identity in You.

If you want to learn more about receiving the greater promise of a relationship with God, talk to your group leader or another FCA staff member about making that life-changing decision today. You can also go to thefour.fca.org or turn to page 2 and go through “The FOUR.”

TRAINING TIME 2 ✕ GREATER PROMISE

ARBOR DIGGS

READY

“For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” — John 3:16

SET

Growing up I heard a few times, “Arbor, I promise, you can be whatever you want to be if you work hard enough.” This made my young mind go wild thinking of all the things I could be: an astronaut, a ballerina, a movie star, a veterinarian—endless possibilities. All I had to do was try hard enough. Well at 25 years old, none of those came true. It was not because I did not try hard enough or that I failed; it was because the Lord had something different for me.

We all try to make up our identities and even pretend what amazing thing we could be in the future. Maybe play in the NFL? Be an Olympian? A coach? A trainer? Whatever we think of, that is what we think our identity will be. But here is the truth: we do not know what we will be or what title/identity we will have. But we have a God who promises us what we will be, and He does not say, “All you have to do is try hard enough.” He says in John 3:16, *Believe in him.*”

God sent Jesus to take our place and defeat death, forever changing our identity. Identity is what makes you you! We once were slaves and prisoners of sin, but in believing in Him and what He did for us, we are a new creation. He gives us a greater promise than the world. We can be His forever.

Christ’s promise of Salvation gives us a new identity. He has never broken a promise, and we hold fast to His promise that we have eternal life and an eternal identity as His children forever.

GO

1. Has there ever been a time a coach, teammate or parent promised something that didn’t come true?
2. Has there ever been a time God’s promise did not come true?
3. How can knowing His greater promise and forever identity encourage us today?

WORKOUT

Romans 6:6; Romans 10:9–10; Hebrews 6:18

OVERTIME

God, let my heart believe what You say is true. Help me believe Your promises that I read in Your Word. Let me live confidently that my identity is in You and You alone. Thank You for loving me and saving me. Amen.

WELCOME

“I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me.” — John 15:5

How you perform is important. Wanting to perform well isn't a bad thing, but if that's all you care about, it can make you have unnecessary pressures. The good news is that your identity in Christ gives you a new way to perform.

WARM-UP

EYES ON ME

Imagine you are in the middle of competition. You look into the crowd and notice some of the fans cheering or watching in excitement.

Q: Whom do you see that might make you (a) play harder, (b) get nervous and (c) have more fun?

Q: Why do you think some people can have an impact on your performance?

WORKOUT

AUDIENCE OF ONE

NFL quarterbacks like Carson Wentz, Russell Wilson and Tua Tagavailoa have become known for using the popular phrase “Audience of One.” It's their way of telling football fans that they play first for God before anyone else. They want to give Him the glory by doing their best on the field.

That doesn't mean they don't feel pressure, but any athlete who competes knowing God is the only person they need to please can find more peace and joy while playing. It can also give you more freedom from fear of messing up or making mistakes.

Q: What does the phrase “Audience of One” mean to you as an athlete?

Q: Is playing for God something you think about always, some of the time or not at all?

LOSING TO WIN

When your identity is in Christ, you are no longer performing for yourself, your coach, your family or your friends. Like those NFL athletes and many more like them, you are playing for an Audience of One. Once you only compete for Jesus, others can see Christ working through you as an athlete.

That's why it's so important to stay close to God. The Bible refers to remaining in Christ as staying connected to “the vine” (John 15:5). God is the vine and we are the branches. To give your life to Jesus and to stay close to Him means you must be willing to give up certain things.

“The one who loves his life will lose it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” — John 12:25

Giving your life to Christ and staying connected to Him might mean giving up some things that are holding you back or keeping you from experiencing everything God has to offer. But what you will get in return is so much greater than anything the world can give you. You will



have the power of Christ inside of you and be able to be your best self to perform for His glory.

You give up something to gain something greater.

Q: Do you feel like your performance is mostly for God, yourself or someone else?

Q: What is something you feel like you need to give up to stay connected to Christ?

WRAP-UP

GREATER PERFORMANCE

When you have found your new identity in Christ, it will help you unlock your best self so you can perform for God's glory, not your own. You are now playing for Someone, not something. Here are three key things you will receive through your relationship with God:

1. Greater Fuel. God is your Creator, and He knows (and through Jesus will give) exactly what you need so you'll be able to glorify Him in all areas of your life.

"I am the bread of life," Jesus told them. "No one who comes to me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again." — John 6:35

2. Greater Freedom. Performing for an Audience of One allows you to focus on what's important and not what the world wants.

"So if the Son sets you free, you really will be free." — John 8:36

3. Greater Fruit. It's not all about sports, so staying connected to Jesus will improve other areas of your life as well.

"My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples." — John 15:8

Let these verses live in your heart. God will start to work inside of you and help you focus on playing for Him and not yourself, just like He tells us to do in our theme verse:

"He must increase, but I must decrease." — John 3:30

OVERTIME

Read John 12:23–26.

Then let's all gather, hold our pointer finger in the air and shout, "Audience of One!"



TRAINING TIME 3 × GREATER PERFORMANCE

SUE ALLRED

READY

“I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me.” — John 15:5

SET

Over the winter we had a storm that brought down trees and limbs everywhere. One of the trees from the neighbor’s yard had a limb that was half torn off but not completely. As winter turned to spring, part of the broken branch began to put out leaves and flowers while other parts showed no signs of life.

It reminded me of a player on my daughter’s basketball team. This young lady was talented and worked hard and was the top scorer on the team. As the season wore on, she became more convinced that she was the only person that could make her team win. She became greedy with the ball and vocal with her criticism of the other girls on the team. Despite their best efforts, the coaches were not able to convince her that she was part of a team that needed all of them to work together.

Unfortunately, she was injured in a game and was forced to sit out several games to recover. To her great surprise, the team won their games without her, and they had fun doing it! Like the broken branch, the parts that had stayed connected to the tree were blossoming and successful while the parts that were no longer connected to the tree had died. The girls who worked together as a team under the guidance of the coach had success and joy in the game. The girl who tried to go it alone was miserable and depressed.

Our lives are much like that branch. When we try to live our lives apart from God, we will find ourselves exhausted, stressed out and isolated. However, when we remain connected to God through reading the Bible, prayer and connection with other believers, we will bear fruit for God. With this closeness with God, we find a new identity, and this new identity in Christ gives me a Greater way to perform.

GO

1. What does it look like to play for God’s glory instead of your own?
2. Whom can you ask to help you root your identity in Christ instead of your sport?

WORKOUT

Galatians 5:22–24; Colossians 3:23; Ephesians 5:9

OVERTIME

Lord, You have given me athletic skills and talents, and I am grateful. I know—it is easy for me to want to take credit for the achievements I have accomplished because of those gifts. Please help me remember that You give me a greater way to perform. I love You. Amen.

WELCOME

“As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” — John 17:18

When things don't go your way, it's hard to want to keep going. But when you play for God, you can be confident that you are playing and living for a greater purpose or reason.

WARM-UP**WHAT MATTERS MOST?**

Purpose is a big word that can have a lot of meanings depending on the situation. Usually, how you apply that word to different areas of your life is based on what matters most to you.

For example, let's take a few minutes to walk around and search for one object you can bring back (piece of nature, sports equipment, etc.) that represents something important in your life.

Q: What did you bring back, and what important thing in your life does it represent?

Q: What aspect of your athletic life matters to you the most and why?

WORKOUT**WHY DO I COMPETE?**

It's a question all athletes ask themselves at some point in their life: “Why do I play? Why do I compete?”

Usually that question comes up when dealing with a hard time like getting hurt, feeling tired, when you or your team are losing or when you have issues with family or teammates. And it's easy to focus on other things you think will solve your problems like winning, being the best at your sport or on your team, getting an award, having your coach like you or getting a starting spot.

Q: How often do you ask yourself the question, “Why do I compete?”

Q: What helps you stay motivated as an athlete?

WHO IS IT ALL FOR?

In John 17, Jesus was a few days away from dying on the cross, buried in a tomb and raised from the dead. He knew He only had a little time left with His followers. That's why Jesus spent a lot of His time in His last moments on Earth praying for the disciples and all people who would one day believe and go on to tell the world about Him.

Jesus wanted to make sure they had no question about their greater purpose:

“They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” — John 17:16–18

Jesus also wanted to redefine what success and winning are all about. Life's greater purpose has much more to do with God and others than it does with you:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.” — Matthew 22:37-39

Part of loving God is giving Him the glory for anything good you do; and part of loving others is to tell them about Jesus and remind them how to live like Christ:

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

— Matthew 28:19-20

Q: How often do you want to compete or live for yourself?

Q: How do those verses in Matthew make you want to compete and live for a greater purpose?

WRAP-UP

GREATER PURPOSE

When you start questioning why you compete, remember that you play and live for Someone and something greater than yourself. Here are three ways you can see a greater purpose in your life:

1. Greater Glory. Understanding your greater purpose reminds you that the glory always goes to God first!

“Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him.” — John 13:31

2. Greater Team. Understanding your greater purpose means you will look for ways to share God’s love with others.

“This is my command: Love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends.” — John 15:12-13

3. Greater Things. Understanding your greater purpose will show you that there is more to your life than you thought.

“Truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.” — John 14:12

OVERTIME

Using the spaces provided below, write down some specific ways you might fulfill God’s greater purpose for your life through sports and through your everyday life:

	Sports	Everyday Life
1. Glorify God:	_____	_____
2. Love God:	_____	_____
3. Love others:	_____	_____
4. Empower others to love God:	_____	_____

TRAINING TIME 4 ✕

GREATER PURPOSE

MINDY HOPMAN

READY

“As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” — John 17:18

SET

One time at a lacrosse game, I saw Taylor, the defender, check the opposing teammate making the ball pop loose! He quickly scooped up the ground ball and threw it to Hunter who was playing middle (midfielder). Hunter roll-dodged two players, ran around the goal and sent a quick pass to Justin who scored! The crowd went wild because the awesome play took place in the last ten seconds of the game for the win!

The question is, Who gets the glory? Does Justin point to himself, his teammates or to His heavenly Father who created the moment?

While God created you to be a competitor, He did not create you to compete alone. God loves community, family and teams. He knows when we work together, serve together and play together, we are greater.

As Christian competitors, we get to play together for an audience we can see and an even bigger audience we cannot see.

Every win, or highlight, is a moment to give God glory. Just like in John 17, we see that Jesus takes the time to pray for the disciples and the church. He specifically calls them out in His prayer to God because Jesus knew His followers need the same care and attention to do Jesus' great work.

Jesus knew humans would be prideful. It is natural for us to get excited when we make a goal or when we win! But He reminded us that even He, the Son of God, served Someone greater. In John 13, He showed us this by washing His disciples' feet before He left this world. One created person is not above another created person. Together, we get to serve the Creator of all things created. Our purpose is to play for Someone greater.

When we play for an audience of One by pointing to Jesus in the good times, and looking toward Him in the hard times, we help others see Him, too.

GO

1. Whom do you play for? Your parents? Your coach? Or Someone greater?
2. Describe what your actions look like when you play for Someone greater.
3. How will you play differently the next time you get on the field or court?

WORKOUT

Colossians 3:23; Romans 8:28

OVERTIME

Heavenly Father, thank You for creating me. When I choose to follow You, I get to be a Christian competitor and compete for Someone greater. In every win and every loss, I trust You are working out all things for my good and Your glory. May others see You in me when they watch me play!

WELCOME

“Jesus spoke to them again: ‘I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’” — John 8:12

Have you ever tried out for a team and didn’t make it? Or maybe you’ve been practicing a lot, trying to get better at your sport, but you still aren’t as good as you want to be. Maybe you have felt like even when you try your hardest, it still doesn’t seem good enough. This can make you feel sad and disappointed, but God says you don’t have to feel sad. God says that even though you might take your sport seriously, sports aren’t everything. It’s about who you are, not what you do.

WARM-UP**UNDER PRESSURE**

In this game, you will name five things that fit into a category. The catch? You have only ten seconds to do this. Have someone count down and keep track of your score.

(Example categories: sports played without a ball, superheroes, animals that swim, foods that are green, etc.)

Q: When you were asked to think of things while being timed for a short time, that’s called pressure. You just performed under pressure! How hard was it to think of things when you were being timed?

Q: Have you ever felt this kind of pressure in your sport? How is it similar or different?

WORKOUT**UNTAPPED POTENTIAL**

There will be days you will not play your best in practice or in a game, and as an athlete, it is normal to want to play better in those moments. When you don’t play as well as you were hoping, you might start to feel pressure to do better.

The scoreboard isn’t everything. And your wins should not decide who you are. Who you are should be based on who God says you are. You can live a greater life when you are focused on God and care more about what He says about you than anyone else.

Q: How does knowing that God says you are worth more than your sport make you feel?

Q: Do you ever feel like you only care about your sport or how you perform? How can you change this to focus on God?

TRUE LIGHT

The Gospel of John (a book in the Bible) shares the start of Jesus’ time on earth. Jesus had a cousin named John the Baptist who was a preacher, and he told people about Jesus. John did great things, and even though other people thought he was great, John knew Someone was coming who was greater. Who’s that person? It’s Jesus.

As John preached about the coming of Jesus, many leaders became nervous about Jesus, who John called the greater One. They were nervous because they were used to just following rules and performing well. They thought that if they were good at their job, that

meant they were a good person. But Jesus had a better way. His way! Bringing light to a dark world:

“The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was created through him, and yet the world did not recognize him.”
—John 1:9–10

But there was a problem: “The world did not recognize him.”

Q: Why do you think the world didn’t know Jesus when He first arrived?

Q: How do you think knowing Jesus better could help you reach your potential or what you have to offer?

WRAP-UP

GREATER POTENTIAL

There is more to sports than just your performance. It’s easy to forget that when you’re playing, but your life will change in a good way when you begin to find your potential in Jesus and not in your sport.

Here’s how to see and apply the “Greater Potential” of Jesus:

1. Greater Way. There’s a better way to reach your fullest potential. And it’s the *only* path that will truly get you there.

“Jesus told him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’” — John 14:6

2. Greater Truth. It’s not just a greater truth. It’s *the truth*. When you believe the truth of Jesus, you will feel free from the pressure to play well.

“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” — John 8:32

3. Greater Life. This is what Jesus can give you through a relationship with Him. When you focus your life on Jesus, you will feel more joy, peace and purpose.

“A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.” — John 10:10

John the Baptist knew what it meant to be fully connected to Jesus. It’s not what you do but who you are. Let’s read the theme verse together and remember that Jesus has greater potential for us:

“He must increase, but I must decrease.” — John 3:30

OVERTIME

As a Huddle go to thefour.fca.org or turn to page 2 and go through “The FOUR.” Talk about each of these key points with a teammate. If you haven’t decided to give your heart to Jesus Christ, talk to your Huddle Leader about making that big decision today.

HUDDLE 2 ✕

GREATER WAY

WELCOME

“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
— John 14:6

All athletes make mistakes; no one is perfect. But when you try to do it by yourself and try to be perfect, it can create a lot of problems. Thankfully, there is a greater way we can take that will lead us to the answer.

WARM-UP

MIXED-UP

In this game, one person will receive simple directions from three different people at the same time, each one shouting out a different set of directions (see the list below). The person playing has to decipher what the direction givers are saying and then decide which directions to follow.

(Directions: touch toes, spin around, run in place, jumping jacks, crawl, skip, knee lifts, dance moves, or punching bag motion.)

Q: What was it like trying to follow lots of directions at the same time?

Q: What did you do when you weren't sure which way to follow?

Q: Have you ever had different people tell you different ways to play your sport? What did you do when that happened?

WORKOUT

WRONG WAY

This might be embarrassing to admit, but have you ever accidentally gone the wrong way in a game? Maybe you started running the football to the wrong end zone. Or maybe you almost shot a basketball at the wrong goal.

Hopefully you realized you were going the wrong way before you scored for the other team! But there was a moment when you thought you were going the right way; you were trying to score points for your team, not the other team. That's a good example of trying to do the right thing but really doing the wrong thing because you tried to do things on your own.

Q: What are some mistakes you've made as an athlete because you tried to do things the wrong way or tried to do things on your own? Share your story.

PREPARING THE WAY

As John the Baptist was preaching about Jesus Christ, the religious leaders had lots of questions. They wanted to know who he was, what he was doing, and why he was doing it. John replied:

“I am a voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord—just as Isaiah the prophet said.” — John 1:23

The religious leaders didn't know what “the way of the Lord” meant. They thought that if they did certain things and followed certain rules, then it was the right way to know God. They didn't understand that there was a greater way—a way that would lead to real truth and real life. What's that way? It's Jesus' way.

Another man from the Bible called the Apostle Paul wrote a letter to a friend about a greater way.

“For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus.”
— 1 Timothy 2:5

Q: Why do you think the religious leaders’ way didn’t help them know God?

Q: What do you think about Jesus being the greater way to knowing God?

WRAP-UP GREATER WAY

It’s great news knowing that we have a greater way to know God through His Son, Jesus Christ!

Here are three key points to help you remember this truth:

1. Your Way. Trying to figure things out on your own will only make you mad and will likely cause you to make mistakes or bad choices.

“There is a way that seems right to a person, but its end is the way to death.”—
Proverbs 14:12

2. The World’s Way. Trying to follow the world’s way will lead us away from God, but God’s way will lead us to life.

“Enter through the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who go through it. How narrow is the gate and difficult the road that leads to life, and few find it.”— Matthew 7:13–14

3. God’s Way. God has made a greater way to get to Him than we could by ourselves. To do that, we must know Jesus and invite Him into our hearts. That is the only way that gives us truth and life.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
— Romans 6:23

OVERTIME

Take some time with a teammate during the Huddle or on your own to memorize today’s main verse, John 14:6. Be prepared to share that verse at the next Huddle meeting.

If you want to know God better and how to follow His greater way, talk to your Huddle Leader or another FCA staff member about making that big decision today. You can also turn to page 2 and go through “The FOUR.”



WELCOME

“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” — John 8:32

As an athlete, when we feel pressure to play well, it’s not the truth. These are lies that keep us from the truth of our worth and potential. Sometimes all we think about is our sport, our performance and the lies that come with those if we don’t perform well. But there’s a greater truth that can set you free!

WARM-UP**TWO TRUTHS, ONE LIE**

Let’s go around the Huddle and tell three things about ourselves. The catch? One of those things has to be a lie. The rest of us will try to pick the lie from the two truths.

Q: How hard was it to tell the one lie from the two truths?

Q: In life, do you find it easy or hard to know what is true and what is a lie?

WORKOUT**MORE THAN A COMPETITOR**

This may not be the first time you are hearing about how it’s bad for athletes to let their sport rule their lives. Maybe you have heard other people talk about that, and it has helped you freely play your sport without pressure.

But some athletes still feel stuck. They feel like the wins and losses, how well they play and the awards they get make them a better person. They think that what they do is more important than who they are.

Whether you play your sport with freedom or you feel stuck, those two ways of thinking will always be with you as you play your sport. The good news is that God does not care about how well you play. He only cares about your heart.

Q: Why does God care more about your heart than your performance?

Q: What helped you know the truth about who you are as an athlete?

MORE THAN A CARPENTER’S SON

As Jesus started His ministry, or His plan here on earth, the religious leaders didn’t understand the truth. They did not believe God’s Son, Jesus, was standing right in front of them. They saw Him as a simple carpenter, someone who makes things out of wood, and that the things He was teaching didn’t mean very much.

But Jesus was more than a carpenter. He had been sent to earth to help get rid of the old way of religion. Jesus came to help connect people with God. He showed them they could know God better by having a relationship with Him. When they didn’t believe Him, Jesus said to them:

“I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.” — John 8:12

Sadly, Satan spreads lies that many people believe. These lies say there are a lot of ways to get to God, but none of them are based on the truth of God’s Word, which is the Bible. Satan

lies to people to try to get them not to follow and love God. It's like walking in the dark instead of in the light.

But we know that is not true. From the Bible verses we read, we know there is a greater truth that gives us freedom. The Bible tells us that we do not have to listen to those lies that say the only thing that matters is winning and getting awards.

Q: Tell the Huddle about a time you felt like winning, getting awards and playing well were the only things that mattered.

Q: How does knowing that God loves you whether you win or lose change how you play?

WRAP-UP GREATER TRUTH

When you believe what the Bible says, you will become free from feeling stuck, and you will learn that God gave you gifts and talents to use as an athlete and as a person.

Here are three key points to help you remember what we talked about today:

1. Seek Truth. You can find truth in God's Word—the answer to every question you might have about who you are, which is your identity.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness." — 2 Timothy 3:16

2. Believe in Truth. Don't just read it; believe it! Have faith that God's Word is true.

"So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ." — Romans 10:17

3. Live Truth. Let God help you play with freedom in your practices and games and every other area of your life.

"But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." — James 1:22

OVERTIME

Pray this prayer sometime during your alone time with God:

Dear Lord, help me learn how the world's lies and the greater truth that Jesus came to share with the world are not the same. Give me a stronger desire to study the Bible and to live by what it says.



HUDDLE 4 >

GREATER LIFE

WELCOME

“I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.”— John 10:10

It’s easy to get so focused on sports that we forget there is much more to our lives than what happens during a game. You can have a greater life by knowing God and having a relationship with His son, Jesus Christ.

WARM-UP

BEST LIFE EVER

At some point, you have thought about what your life would look like if it were perfect. A perfect life for an athlete might mean being on the best team, being the best player or getting a lot of awards. A perfect life outside of sports might look like being popular and having the right friends, wearing the right clothes and getting your way all the time. Act out your best life and have the campers try to guess what it is!

Q: How would you describe your best life as an athlete?

Q: How do you think having that best life would change what you do every day?

WORKOUT

BIGGER THAN LIFE

Professional or Olympic athletes seem like they have the best life. So many people look up to them and want to be like them. But just because they’re famous and are really good at their sport, doesn’t mean they don’t have problems like you and me. It might seem like their life is perfect, but they aren’t always living their best life.

There are many professional athletes that made it to the top; they won the World Series, the Super Bowl or the Masters, yet right after getting there, they had things go wrong in their life. Just because you win or do really well, or even become famous, doesn’t mean you won’t still have problems. You won’t live your best life until you give your life to Jesus.

Q: How do you think being the best at your sport would make you feel?

Q: Do you ever think about what your life will be like without sports?

ABUNDANT LIFE

In John 9, Jesus healed a man who had been blind from birth, but the religious leaders were not happy. They didn’t like that the blind man was telling everyone about what Jesus had done for him. In the next chapter, John 10, those same religious leaders and Jesus were talking, and Jesus explained that being blind doesn’t just mean not being able to see with your eyes.

Jesus also taught His disciples a similar lesson—that you can have what the world calls a great life and yet have no life at all.

“For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me will find it. For what will it benefit someone if he gains the whole world yet loses his life? Or what will anyone give in exchange for his life?”— Matthew 16:25–26

The greatest life ever for everyone is the life that is given to God. When we invite God into our life, we can have the greatest life. It’s the only life that is based on truth.

Jesus tells us in John 10:10 that we can have a full, loving life through Him. It's a life with greater joy, greater peace, greater purpose and greater freedom from the pressure to perform or do well.

Q: What are some areas of your life that could use more joy, peace, purpose and freedom?

WRAP-UP **GREATER LIFE**

There is no greater life than a life that is given to God. Here are three key points to show what this truth can look like in your life:

- 1. Joyful Life.** Joy is greater than happiness. Only Christ can give you a greater life in the good times and the bad.

*“You reveal the path of life to me;
in your presence is abundant joy;
at your right hand are eternal pleasures.”*

— Psalm 16:11

- 2. Peaceful Life.** Peace is hard to have as an athlete. But God's peace will help you with all of your fears and worries.

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” — Philippians 4:7

- 3. Purposeful Life.** There's more to life than awards and winning. God's purpose is to give you life and to change your life.

“However, I have let you live for this purpose: to show you my power and to make my name known on the whole earth.” — Exodus 9:16

OVERTIME

Using the space below, write down the words “Joy,” “Peace” and “Purpose.” Under the words *Joy*, *Peace* and *Purpose*, write down areas of your life where you would like to have these things. Then ask God to help you apply the truth of His Word so that you can have a greater life through Jesus.

WELCOME

“For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” — John 3:16

You may be starting to improve as an athlete, and that’s exciting! But is it just about winning? If so, that feeling of excitement might not last for long. The great news is that God created you for something more!

**WARM-UP
FOR THE PRIZE**

Let’s all line up for a race. We’re going to sprint to a designated spot and back. The winner gets a prize (e.g., a quarter, a piece of candy, a pen, etc.).

Q: Besides winning a prize, are there other reasons you wanted to win the race?

**WORKOUT
ON THE LINE**

In all competitive situations, it seems like you’ll get something good for winning or something bad for losing.

One Oklahoma softball coach, Patty Gasso, did a good job at encouraging her athletes to celebrate the greater promise they have through their life in Christ and not just how well they do at softball. That team went to the 2021 NCAA championship. During their big game, their motto was “BATL” or “Boast About The Lord.” By focusing on God, they were able to play without being afraid of doing bad or making mistakes.

Q: What does *boast* mean?

IN THE LIGHT

As Jesus began His ministry, many religious leaders were nervous about His arrival. Most of them didn’t like the idea that someone else was greater than them. Except for a few.

Nicodemus is a man we learn about in the Bible. His identity, who he believed he was, was wrapped up in his job and that he was an important man. Nicodemus felt the pressure to perform, but what he really needed was the truth. Until that point, Nicodemus knew all about God, but he didn’t really know Him. Jesus showed Nicodemus that there was a greater promise for him with Christ. That greater promise was eternal life.

“For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Anyone who believes in him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God.” — John 3:16–18

Because Nicodemus didn’t have a relationship with Jesus, he was living in darkness, which just means he was living apart from God.

“This is the judgment: The light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light and

avoids it, so that his deeds may not be exposed. But anyone who lives by the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be shown to be accomplished by God.” — John 3:19–21

That night Nicodemus decided to listen to God’s promise and began to live in the Light, and his life changed forever.

Q: Why do you think Nicodemus knew so much about God and yet didn’t have a relationship with Him?

WRAP-UP

GREATER PROMISE

God wants to give you the greater promise that only comes from Jesus, more special than anything you can get by being good at your sport. Here are three amazing things His greater promise will bring:

1. Greater Love. God loves you so much that He even gave up His own Son to die on the cross for you.

“As the Father has loved me, I have also loved you. Remain in my love.” — John 15:9

2. Greater Gift. God gives us all a gift; that gift is a choice. You have a choice to have a relationship with God, and if you do, God promises you eternal life with Him.

“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” — John 3:17

3. Greater Identity. You won’t have to worry anymore about trying to figure out who you are because you’ll be a part of God’s family.

“But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name.” — John 1:12

As we think about these things, let’s say our theme verse together again:

“He must increase, but I must decrease.” — John 3:30

OVERTIME

Take some time to say this prayer to yourself:

Dear Lord, thank You for Your greater promise to save me and give me eternal life. Help me receive Your love so that I might begin to find my identity in You.

If you want to learn more about receiving the greater promise of a relationship with God, talk to your group leader or another FCA staff member about making that life-changing decision today. You can also go to thefour.fca.org or turn to page 2 and go through “The FOUR.”

HUDDLE 6 >

GREATER LOVE

WELCOME

“As the Father has loved me, I have also loved you. Remain in my love.”— John 15:9

You’ll do anything to keep playing the sport you love. There are many good things about being an athlete. But through Jesus, there’s something even better—a love that will last forever!

WARM-UP

DEDICATED LOVE

Being committed to your sport can make you do some crazy things. Let’s spend a few minutes talking about how much you love your sport and what that looks like in your life. Fill in the blank, “I love my sport so much I _____”

Q: What is the hardest thing you have given up so that you can be better at your sport?

Q: Was it worth it? Why or why not?

WORKOUT

SELFLESS LOVE

It is normal in our world for athletes to feel pressure to be great, so much so that they give up a lot in their life to be the best. It is good to work hard, but you never want your goals to get in the way of being a good teammate, caring for others and playing fair.

At all costs we should try to be like those athletes who do the right thing by being selfless and being willing to give up something for someone else’s good.

A great example of this took place in 2014 when a college softball player named Kara hit a three-run homer against the other team. But when Kara got to first base, she hurt her knee and fell to the ground in pain. What happened next was a perfect example of love and respect. The pitcher on the other team and one of Kara’s teammates rushed to her side. They helped her get up and carried her around the diamond, stopping so she could tap each base and home plate.

This kind of love is selfless and can be seen first in the Bible:

“Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.”— 1 John 4:7

Q: What does it mean to you to give up something for someone else?

SACRIFICIAL LOVE

The best love in the world came from Jesus when He died for our sins. His purpose was to live a perfect life, without sin, and die for us. Even though Jesus never made mistakes and was perfect, His death was painful and hard, and He ended up being nailed to a cross. Even through all of that, He showed love and forgave the men who nailed Him to that cross before He took His last breath.

God sent Jesus to earth knowing this would happen. It was all part of His plan to bring people back into a relationship with Him:

“But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
— Romans 5:8

Because Jesus died for us, we can now have a relationship with God, but that’s not all. We can live in His love every day, and God wants to give us a lot of His love! In the Bible we know there was a man named Paul, who was a follow of Jesus, and he teaches us what that looks like in real life:

“Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant, is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs. Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” — 1 Corinthians 13:4–7

Thanks to what Jesus did on the cross, we can live our lives, and that means in our sports too, loving others with a greater love.

Q: What does Jesus’ love mean to you?

Q: How does having a greater love in Jesus affect how you love others?

WRAP-UP GREATER LOVE

God is able to promise you greater love because He is the One who first had greater love for you by sending His Son to die for your sins. Here are three ways you can show greater love in your life:

1. Love Gives All. That means doing whatever it takes to help others and show them how much God loves them.

“No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends.” — John 15:13

2. Love Forgives All. It’s one of the hardest parts of love, but God asks us to forgive others just as He has forgiven us.

“And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.” — Ephesians 4:32

3. Love Endures All. You will face hard things and even hatred in this world, but God’s greater love gives you the strength you need to get through it.

“[Love] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”
— 1 Corinthians 13:7

OVERTIME

Take some time to read about when Jesus died on the cross (Matthew 27:27–44 and John 19:1–37). Afterwards, say a prayer of thanks for what He did and then write down a few ways His greater love makes you want to love others:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

HUDDLE 7 ✕ GREATER GIFT

WELCOME

“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” — John 3:17

Your athletic ability is a gift, but it can only make you so happy before it's gone. Thankfully, God has a greater gift that will last forever!

WARM-UP

A SHORT-LIVED GIFT

Every athlete has had something good happen to them—it could be as big as winning the championship or something as small as a good play. But one thing is for sure: the happiness we feel in those moments won't last forever, just like the athletic gifts that made those moments possible. Let's all show our best celebration moves—the bigger and louder, the better!

Q: When have you had a great game or a good play, and how long after did you feel happy about it?

WORKOUT

TEMPORARY GIFT

One of the worst things that can happen to an athlete is getting hurt and not being able to play anymore.

A famous basketball player, Tamika Catchings, got hurt at the worst time. In the middle of her college basketball season, she hurt her knee. This meant she couldn't play in the NCAA tournament, and she had to sit out of her first season with her professional team.

It wasn't 100 percent certain that Tamika would get better. So she spent the next few months not just working on making her knee better, but also working on her relationship with God. Her injury was a hard reminder that Tamika's athletic gift would not last forever.

For committed athletes, especially for young athletes, it's hard to think about not having your athletic gifts in the future. But for those who know that sports are just one part of your life, instead of the only thing, it'll be easier to find true happiness.

Q: Have you lost an athletic gift from an injury or seen someone lose theirs? If so, how did it make you feel?

Q: Do you ever think about the fact that one day you won't be able to play like you do now? How does that thought make you feel?

ETERNAL GIFT

The religious leader named Nicodemus was talking with Jesus late one night. He wanted to understand Jesus' teachings about light and darkness, life and death and Heaven and Earth.

Jesus shared with Nicodemus that everyone in the world had been born with sin in their hearts and needed to have a relationship with Christ in order to go to Heaven and “have eternal life” (John 3:16).

Eternal life means never-ending. It means that even though our bodies might wear out and die one day, we have the greater promise of an amazing, never-ending life with God. Unlike our athletic gifts and the life we live here on Earth, the greater gift of Heaven will last forever.

Q: What excites you most about the gift of eternal life?

WRAP-UP GREATER GIFT

There is no greater gift than the promise of eternal life through a relationship with Jesus. Here are three more gifts that come with that promise:

- 1. The Gift of Hope.** We will always have hard times in this world, but the greater gift is knowing that we have hope in Jesus Christ.

“For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” — 2 Corinthians 4:17–18

- 2. The Gift of Heaven.** The good things we get in this world will not compare to the awesome things we will experience in our forever home in Heaven.

*“But as it is written,
What no eye has seen, no ear has heard,
and no human heart has conceived—
God has prepared these things for those who love him.”*
— 1 Corinthians 2:9

- 3. The Gift of Eternity.** We will live forever with God. There will be nothing greater than that!

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.” — Revelation 21:4

OVERTIME

If you want to receive the greater gift of eternal life through a relationship with Jesus, talk to your group leader or another FCA staff member about making that life-changing decision today. You can also go to thefour.fca.org or turn to page 2 and go through “The FOUR.”

WELCOME

“But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name.” — John 1:12

It’s easy to be super focused on your sport, but doing so can leave you feeling empty. But competition takes on a new meaning when you find your identity in Christ and begin to live as part of God’s family and the plans He has for your life.

WARM-UP**FAKE ID**

One person in the group will pretend to be a famous athlete or celebrity (secretly given to them by the Huddle Leader) and give verbal clues to everyone else without saying the person’s name. The guessers will have 15 seconds to figure out the person’s fake identity.

Q: What was the hardest part about trying to uncover the famous person’s identity?

WORKOUT**PROPER ID**

Patrick Ewing is one of the greatest NBA players of all time. But when he visited the arena where he used to play, the Madison Square Garden security guards repeatedly asked to see his picture ID with his name and face on it, before letting him in. Ewing was not happy and felt like everyone should have known him without asking for his ID.

It’s a common feeling among popular athletes, coaches and other celebrities that who they are and what they’ve done should let them to get in places just because they’re famous.

But the famous aren’t the only ones who can feel like that. Other athletes, maybe like yourself, feel the need to be seen, known and treated well. That’s because it’s easy to let your success as an athlete define who you are.

But God’s Word tells us that when we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, our entire lives should be focused on Him and what He has done for us and wants to do through us.

Q: In what ways have you struggled to separate your life in sports from other areas of your life?

GOD’S ID

Not long after Jesus was gone, a man named Paul (also known as Saul) had a lot of pride because he was well known. He was Jewish. He was Roman. He was a religious leader. He was smart. He was an elite. He was a successful in business.

Paul was also arresting Christians and having them killed for their faith.

But when Paul found Jesus (in Acts 9), something inside him changed in a big way. He no longer only cared about all those things he used to let define him. Now the thing he cared about most was that he was a child of God and a follower of Christ:

*“I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, Christ lives in me.”
— Galatians 2:20*

Paul now understood the truth that God created him (in His image), loved him (enough to save him) and chose him (for a much greater purpose). And because of his new identity, Paul had the boldness and courage to tell the world about Jesus.

Q: What is so good about being known as a child of God?

WRAP-UP GREATER IDENTITY

When you join God's family, you know you have a new identity. Here are three key things to remember about taking on His identity:

- 1. You Are Created.** God wanted you in His life, so He created you with love and made you to be like Him.

*"So God created man
in his own image;
he created him in the image of God;
he created them male and female."* — Genesis 1:27

- 2. You Are Loved.** Even though you were born a sinner, God still wants a relationship with you. That's why He gave His Son to bring you back to Him.

"But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." — Romans 5:8

- 3. You Are Chosen.** God has a plan for your life, and He chose you so that you could fulfill your greater identity through His purpose.

"You did not choose me, but I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you." — John 15:16

OVERTIME

Take some time to answer these questions as a group or one-on-one with your leader or an FCA staff member:

Q: In what areas in your life is it hard to find your identity?

Q: How might focusing on your identity in Christ help you decide who you are?



WELCOME

“I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me.” — John 15:5

How you perform is important. Wanting to perform well isn't a bad thing, but if that's all you care about, it can make you have unnecessary pressures. The good news is that your identity in Christ gives you a new way to perform.

WARM-UP**EYES ON ME**

Imagine you are in the middle of competition. You look into the crowd and notice some of the fans cheering or watching in excitement.

Q: Whom do you see that might make you (a) play harder, (b) get nervous and (c) have more fun?

Q: Why do you think some people can have an impact on your performance?

WORKOUT**AUDIENCE OF ONE**

NFL quarterbacks like Carson Wentz, Russell Wilson and Tua Tagavailoa have become known for using the popular phrase “Audience of One.” It's their way of telling football fans that they play first for God before anyone else. They want to give Him the glory by doing their best on the field.

That doesn't mean they don't feel pressure, but any athlete who competes knowing God is the only person they need to please can find more peace and joy while playing. It can also give you more freedom from fear of messing up or making mistakes.

Q: What does the phrase “Audience of One” mean to you as an athlete?

Q: Is playing for God something you think about always, some of the time or not at all?

LOSING TO WIN

When your identity is in Christ, you are no longer performing for yourself, your coach, your family or your friends. Like those NFL athletes and many more like them, you are playing for an Audience of One. Once you only compete for Jesus, others can see Christ working through you as an athlete.

That's why it's so important to stay close to God. The Bible refers to remaining in Christ as staying connected to “the vine” (John 15:5). God is the vine and we are the branches. To give your life to Jesus and to stay close to Him means you must be willing to give up certain things.

“The one who loves his life will lose it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” — John 12:25

Giving your life to Christ and staying connected to Him might mean giving up some things that are holding you back or keeping you from experiencing everything God has to offer. But what you will get in return is so much greater than anything the world can give you. You will

have the power of Christ inside of you and be able to be your best self to perform for His glory.

You give up something to gain something greater.

Q: Do you feel like your performance is mostly for God, yourself or someone else?

Q: What is something you feel like you need to give up to stay connected to Christ?

WRAP-UP

GREATER PERFORMANCE

When you have found your new identity in Christ, it will help you unlock your best self so you can perform for God's glory, not your own. You are now playing for Someone, not something. Here are three key things you will receive through your relationship with God:

1. Greater Fuel. God is your Creator, and He knows (and through Jesus will give) exactly what you need so you'll be able to glorify Him in all areas of your life.

"I am the bread of life," Jesus told them. "No one who comes to me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again." — John 6:35

2. Greater Freedom. Performing for an Audience of One allows you to focus on what's important and not what the world wants.

"So if the Son sets you free, you really will be free." — John 8:36

3. Greater Fruit. It's not all about sports, so staying connected to Jesus will improve other areas of your life as well.

"My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples." — John 15:8

Let these verses live in your heart. God will start to work inside of you and help you focus on playing for Him and not yourself, just like He tells us to do in our theme verse:

"He must increase, but I must decrease." — John 3:30

OVERTIME

Read John 12:23–26.

Then let's all gather, hold our pointer finger in the air and shout, "Audience of One!"

HUDDLE 10 >

GREATER FUEL

WELCOME

“I am the bread of life,’ Jesus told them. ‘No one who comes to me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again.’” — John 6:35

As an athlete, you might be looking for healthy things that will help you be better at your sport—like drinking Gatorade or water instead of pop or eating fruits and veggies instead of junk food. But with God, there is a greater fuel that will make your body, mind and spirit more powerful than anything else!

WARM-UP

GOOD FUEL, BAD FUEL

What you decide to put in your body can affect how well you compete and play. There’s good fuel and there’s bad fuel. Good fuel works perfectly with your body and helps it perform at its best. Bad fuel might give you a sugar rush but will run out quickly, and it’s not good for your body and health. Show me what you look like on a sugar rush! Show me what you look like when you are fueled with healthy foods.

Q: What are some good fuels you eat that help you do your best (fruits, vegetables, natural or organic food, etc.)?

Q: What are some bad fuels that drag you down and keep you from doing your best (energy drinks, soda or candy)?

WORKOUT

NATURAL FUEL

Now more than ever, the sports world is focusing on what you put in your body. Olympic gold medalist Allyson Felix is a great example of an elite competitor who was able to compete longer than anyone else, and now many others are following her lead.

Sadly, many athletes still choose things that might help them do better in the moment but are not good fuels and end up causing a lot of problems in the future.

Q: What are some good ways today’s athletes are trying to get the most out of their bodies and helping them have long careers?

SPIRITUAL FUEL

The world has a lot of bad fuel to offer for your body, mind and spirit that can keep you from getting closer to God. The world’s fuel can also have bad, long-term effects on your mental and spiritual health.

But when your life is full of Jesus (Who is called the Bread of Life), His fuel will bring peace, freedom and joy. Not only that, but you will want to share those gifts (the Bible calls those gifts Fruit of the Spirit) with others. Paul, a follower of Jesus from the Bible, tells us about the three most important gifts we can have:

“Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love—but the greatest of these is love.” — 1 Corinthians 13:13

Your access to God’s greater fuel will not only change your identity as a competitor, but it will also give you the ability to reach the greater purpose to which He has called you.

- Q: What are some things the world has to offer as fuel for your mind and spirit?
 Q: What are some of the differences between the world's fuel and God's fuel?

WRAP-UP
GREATER FUEL

God is your Creator, and He knows (and through Jesus has given) what you need most to give Him glory. Here are three ways Jesus' greater fuel will help you in all areas of your life:

- 1. Jesus Fuels Your Faith.** When the world gives you fear, God can give you something bigger and better with faith.

"Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen." — Hebrews 11:1

- 2. Jesus Fuels Your Hope.** When the world makes you feel like you have no hope, God gives you the promise of a better today, a brighter future and an eternity with Him.

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." — Romans 15:13

- 3. Jesus Fuels Your Love.** When the world makes you feel anger and hate, God gives never-ending love to you that you can then give to others.

"And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him." — 1 John 4:16

OVERTIME

Go back and look at some of the things the world has to offer as fuel. Write some of them down in the spaces provided below, and then use the other column to list God's greater fuel:

The World's Fuel

Example: Fear

God's Fuel

Example: Faith

- Q: What are some ways you can start to spend more time and energy getting God's fuel?

WELCOME

“So if the Son sets you free, you really will be free.” — John 8:36

Everybody wants you to play well as an athlete—including you! It can be easy to feel overwhelmed by those expectations. But trusting God’s plan and embracing who you are in Christ will allow you to feel free to do your best no matter what.

WARM-UP**ALL TIED UP**

Form two teams and then take off your shoes and throw them into two separate team piles. Keep track of where your shoes are while someone from the other team takes 30 seconds to tie all of the shoelaces together. On the leader’s command, the first group to untie their shoe pile wins.

Q: What was the hardest part of getting your shoes untangled and freed up?

WORKOUT**ALL MIXED UP**

You might be thinking about a lot while you compete, and some of those thoughts might be about your expectations, others’ expectations and maybe even God’s expectations of how you should play. That’s not all though; you might also compare yourself—trying to be like someone else or wanting what someone else has—to your teammates, friends or opponents.

It’s really hard to feel free to play and do your best when you’re thinking about all of those other things. When that happens, it’s easy to feel trapped by your own thoughts, and you might not know what to do.

Q: What are some athletic expectations that sometimes make you feel stuck and held back from doing your best?

Q: How often do you think about what God wants from you when you play your sport?

ALL FREED UP

Without Christ, you won’t find true freedom. That means you won’t feel free—and not worried about messing up—to be the best you can when you play your sport or in other areas of your life.

That was Jesus’ message to the people who believed He was God’s Son:

“If you continue in my word, you really are my disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” — John 8:31–32

They didn’t understand at first. They thought Jesus was talking about setting them free physically. But He was actually talking about setting them free spiritually because being trapped by sin can make it hard to grow as a Christian.

God has greater things in mind for you, and what He expects from your athletic performance and your life are the same. He wants you to do everything for Him and His glory. He wants

you to do everything without worrying what others think. He wants you to give your best in all things and trust Him with the result.

Once you're able to give up the things in your life that are holding you back, you can have true freedom. That's when God will help you do your best. And He will also teach you how to follow Him in your life.

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."
— 2 Corinthians 3:17

Q: How do you think not having anyone expect anything from you other than God—who just wants you to do your best and give Him glory—might help you give your best in your sport?

WRAP-UP **GREATER FREEDOM**

When you give up everything to God, you can live the way He wants you to and stay untangled from all those things. You are free to do your best no matter what. Here are three benefits you will have through God's greater freedom:

1. Freedom from Worry. There is no more pressure to perform when you are focused on living for God.

"Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." — Philippians 4:6

2. Freedom from Doubt. There is no room to doubt when your trust is placed in God and His Word.

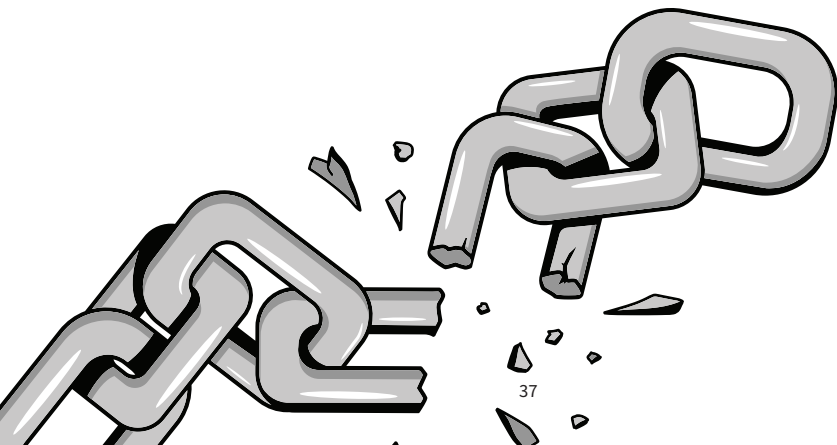
"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding." — Proverbs 3:5

3. Freedom from Fear. There is no longer any reason to be afraid when you know God is on your side.

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment."
— 2 Timothy 1:7

OVERTIME

At the end of your group time, make up a cheer about "Free" or "Freedom" that your Huddle can shout as they break the Huddle, i.e. "Greater Freedom!"



WELCOME

“My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples.”
— John 15:8

It’s hard not to just focus on winning when that is all everyone else cares about. Most people only care about winning and playing well for their teams and parents. But when you follow Jesus, He is focused on something that will last forever, and that is fruit (or the outcome or results of our actions).

WARM-UP**UNDER YOUR SKIN**

Look around at the group and think about the first things that come to mind based solely on what you know about them as athletes. Now look around again and think about some things you know about them as individuals—their character, their personality, etc. Let’s share some of the positive things we have observed.

- Q:** Would you rather others judge you based on outward things like appearance, ability, results, etc., or based on inward things like character, personality, etc.? Explain.
- Q:** Why do you think it’s easier to see outward traits and results than inward traits?

WORKOUT**UNDER THE JERSEY**

There was a college football coach back in the day named Tom Osborne who coached at Nebraska. He used to have 180 players on his football roster (today, college teams are only allowed to have 105). Many of those players were walk-on, nonscholarship players.

Some of them would stick around just long enough to be in the team picture but would eventually quit as practice got tougher and harder. Even though those players were in the team photo and had a jersey, their time on the team was short.

The coach understood that competition reveals character. He was more focused about what was under the jersey, the character traits inside of the players. The coach knew that their character affected the way they played on the field, how they acted in the locker room, how well they did in school and even their future outside of their sport.

- Q:** What is something (good or bad) that sports can show you about yourself?
- Q:** Why is your character important?

UNDER THE SURFACE

When Jesus was traveling from town to town and teaching the truth about God, He would sometimes come across religious leaders. They were always focused on looking good on the outside, putting on a sort of show for everyone. They wore the right clothes, said the right words and followed all the rules. But Jesus was far more interested in what was inside a person’s heart. He cared about inward character over outward performance. In John 8, Jesus talks about a vine, the branches and its fruit. The vine is Christ, we are the branches and our character is the fruit.

Many years later, a follower of Jesus named Paul would list nine characteristics a Christian should have on the inside:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things.” — Galatians 5:22–23

For a competitor, here’s what that looks like:

- Showing **love** (and respect) when you’re winning.
- Having **joy** and **peace** when you’re losing.
- Displaying **patience** and **kindness** when a teammate is messing up.
- Embracing **goodness** when others are breaking the rules.
- Choosing **faithfulness** when friends are giving up.
- Demonstrating **gentleness** when opponents are talking trash.
- Focusing on **self-control** when things don’t go your way.

Q: Which Fruit of the Spirit is the hardest for you to do?

Q: What are some other ways you can show the fruits of the Spirit to your coach, teammates and family?

WRAP-UP GREATER FRUIT

Staying connected to Jesus will allow Him to help you build godly character traits inside of you. Here are three kinds of greater fruit He wants to see in your life:

1. Fresh Fruit. Godly traits can be grown in you no matter what the situation—good or bad.

“Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance.” — James 1:2–3

2. Healthy Fruit. Godly traits are for your good and the good of others.

“So that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God.” — Colossians 1:10

3. Lasting Fruit. Godly traits are not something that fizzles out and goes away. You can have them for a long time, and they can affect the people around you.

“He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams that bears its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.” — Psalm 1:3

OVERTIME

Below are some situations you might face as an athlete. Under the two columns provided, write down a good Fruit (from Galatians 3:22–23) and a bad fruit for each:

Athletic Scenarios	Good Fruit	Bad Fruit
Ex: Winning big	Love, respect, self-control	Pride, disrespect, bragging
Losing badly	_____	_____
Fans trash talking	_____	_____
Teammate struggling	_____	_____

WELCOME

“As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” — John 17:18

When things don't go your way, it's hard to want to keep going. But when you play for God, you can be confident that you are playing and living for a greater purpose or reason.

WARM-UP**WHAT MATTERS MOST?**

Purpose is a big word that can have a lot of meanings depending on the situation. Usually, how you apply that word to different areas of your life is based on what matters most to you.

For example, let's take a few minutes to walk around and search for one object you can bring back (piece of nature, sports equipment, etc.) that represents something important in your life.

Q: What did you bring back, and what important thing in your life does it represent?

Q: What aspect of your athletic life matters to you the most and why?

WORKOUT**WHY DO I COMPETE?**

It's a question all athletes ask themselves at some point in their life: “Why do I play? Why do I compete?”

Usually that question comes up when dealing with a hard time like getting hurt, feeling tired, when you or your team are losing or when you have issues with family or teammates. And it's easy to focus on other things you think will solve your problems like winning, being the best at your sport or on your team, getting an award, having your coach like you or getting a starting spot.

Q: How often do you ask yourself the question, “Why do I compete?”

Q: What helps you stay motivated as an athlete?

WHO IS IT ALL FOR?

In John 17, Jesus was a few days away from dying on the cross, buried in a tomb and raised from the dead. He knew He only had a little time left with His followers. That's why Jesus spent a lot of His time in His last moments on Earth praying for the disciples and all people who would one day believe and go on to tell the world about Him.

Jesus wanted to make sure they had no question about their greater purpose:

“They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” — John 17:16–18

Jesus also wanted to redefine what success and winning are all about. Life's greater purpose has much more to do with God and others than it does with you:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.” — Matthew 22:37–39

Part of loving God is giving Him the glory for anything good you do; and part of loving others is to tell them about Jesus and remind them how to live like Christ:

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

— Matthew 28:19–20

Q: How often do you want to compete or live for yourself?

Q: How do those verses in Matthew make you want to compete and live for a greater purpose?

WRAP-UP

GREATER PURPOSE

When you start questioning why you compete, remember that you play and live for Someone and something greater than yourself. Here are three ways you can see a greater purpose in your life:

1. Greater Glory. Understanding your greater purpose reminds you that the glory always goes to God first!

“Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him.” — John 13:31

2. Greater Team. Understanding your greater purpose means you will look for ways to share God’s love with others.

“This is my command: Love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends.” — John 15:12–13

3. Greater Things. Understanding your greater purpose will show you that there is more to your life than you thought.

“Truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.” — John 14:12

OVERTIME

Using the spaces provided below, write down some specific ways you might fulfill God’s greater purpose for your life through sports and through your everyday life:

	Sports	Everyday Life
1. Glorify God:	_____	_____
2. Love God:	_____	_____
3. Love others:	_____	_____
4. Empower others to love God:	_____	_____

HUDDLE 14 >

GREATER GLORY

WELCOME

“When he had left Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him.” — John 13:31

There are times when you get praise and people tell you how good you’re doing, and that can feel really good. But your greater purpose reminds you that the glory always goes to God first.

WARM-UP

INWARD GLORY

All athletes want to be told good things while training, in practice and, of course, during and after competition. In those moments, there is a decision all athletes must make: Do you give that glory back to God, or do you keep it for yourself? Form groups of two or three and answer the following questions:

- Q: Which of the following do you give credit to when you get praise for doing well at your sport: you, your family, your team, your school, your hometown, God or something or someone else?
- Q: Do you feel like being told good things from others affects the way you play? Why?

WORKOUT

OUTWARD GLORY

At all athletic events there are moments of excitement where the fans, coaches or teams on the sideline start cheering. At most collegiate and professional athletic events these days, there always seem to be athletes who are setting new records and doing amazing things.

When that happens, crowds go crazy. Athletes can hear their name over the speakers from the announcer, and they’re often given awards or praise. Everybody wants that! It’s easy to live for praise.

And of course, after the competition, how you respond to praise and whom you give credit to for your success says a lot about who you are.

In all of those moments, a choice has to be made. That choice is not usually made on the spot but rather in private when an athletes are either thinking about themselves or spending time with God.

- Q: How often do you think about giving God the glory for the good things you do?

UPWARD GLORY

Jesus was sent to earth for the greatest purpose ever—to live a perfect life, die for our sins, defeat death and leave us with the greater promise of eternal life, getting to live with Him forever. Another part of His purpose was to bring glory to God through His teachings, His kindness and the miracles He performed.

If anyone had a right to take the glory for Himself, it was Jesus. He always said the right things. He never did anything wrong. He loved everyone. He was perfect.

In John 13:1–20, Jesus washed the disciples’ feet—something a servant would do, not something you would expect from the Son of God. Jesus gave glory to God at all times; even through His death, burial and resurrection (meaning He rose from the grave and lived).

“I have glorified you on the earth by completing the work you gave me to do.”
—John 17:4

Jesus’ whole life was about giving glory back to God. In the same way, when we get praise and glory for things, we need to remember that we were only able to accomplish it because of Jesus. He gave us the strength to do it. Through Jesus we accomplished it. So we should point people to God and pass all of the glory along to Him.

“Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it so that Father may be glorified in the Son.”
—John 14:13

Q: What are some ways you can glorify God while playing your sport?

WRAP-UP GREATER GLORY

Understanding your greater purpose reminds you that the glory always goes to God first. Here are three ways we can give greater glory in all areas of our lives:

1. Glorified Life. God didn’t just create us, but He also sent Jesus to die for us. How we use our mind, body and soul should always bring greater glory to Him.

“For you were bought at a price. So glorify God with your body.” — 1 Corinthians 6:20

2. Glorified Works. That means everything we do in competition, at work, at school, in our relationships, in our free time and for others should glorify God.

“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.”
— 1 Corinthians 10:31

3. Glorified Future. When we glorify God today, it’s just a small reminder of what we will experience in our eternal lives in Heaven one day.

*“For from him and through him
and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever. Amen.”* — Romans 11:36

OVERTIME

Take some time during the Huddle or in your devotional time to say this prayer:

Dear Lord, thank You for blessing me with athletic gifts and competitive success. Help me to always give You the glory first and to recognize that everything I do is always for You. Amen.

HUDDLE 15 >X

GREATER TEAM

WELCOME

“This is my command: Love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends.” — John 15:12–13

You love your teammates, and you’d do anything for them. But when you understand your greater purpose, you’ll realize that your team is much bigger than you’ve ever imagined, and God wants you to share His love with them!

WARM-UP

NO TEAM

We’re going to have a relay race with a twist. One team will have four runners. The other team will be one person running all four legs on his or her own.

Q: For the person running alone, how hard was it racing with no team?

Q: For the people who ran as a team, how did having four people working together make the race easier?

WORKOUT

DREAM TEAM

Think of your favorite players from the sport you play. Imagine if you could make a dream team with those athletes. Do you think that they’d be the best team ever? They might be.

But there are more aspects to a team than being the best and having a lot of talent. In fact, a team can be gifted and not be successful if the players on the team don’t work together. A great team is loyal, selfless, honest and trusting.

Q: Who are some of the athletes you would want to play on your dream team and why?

Q: Other than athletic talent, what else is important to being successful?

GOD’S TEAM

One of the first things Jesus did when He began His ministry was to put together a team. He found 12 average men to become His disciples. Several other people also joined the team—men and women who followed Jesus because of His wisdom, kindness and the miracles He performed. They believed He was the Messiah, which means Savior, and is Someone who came to rescue them.

But Jesus’ team was never meant to only have a few people. When Jesus went back to Heaven, around 120 followers were ready to share the Good News of Jesus with the world.

In Acts 2, a smaller group got together to pray for God to help grow their team. And thanks to the Holy Spirit (this is how God works in people’s hearts), within a few hours, God’s team grew to more than 3,000 people!

Now, with billions of Christians around the world, there is still room on God’s Team. Because of His love for you, God wants you on His team. This is how Jesus prayed to God for you:

“I am in them and you are in me, so that they may be made completely one, that the world may know you have sent me and have loved them as you have loved me.” — John 17:23

And as part of your greater purpose, He wants you to invite more teammates to do the same.

Q: Why do you think Jesus created a team?

Q: What does being a part of God's team mean to you?

WRAP-UP GREATER TEAM

Understanding your greater purpose means you spread God's love to others, we should want to tell the whole world about Jesus and His love! Here are three ways others will be able to tell that you are a part of His greater team:

1. Sacrificial Team. People will see a difference in you and God's team when they see the way you love others.

"This is my command: Love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends." — John 15:12–13

2. Limitless Team. People will see a difference in you and God's team because of the people you have invited to be on His team. No one should be left out; everyone is welcome to follow Jesus.

"There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus." — Galatians 3:28

3. Powerful Team. People will see a difference in you and God's team because of the greater things you will do together.

"Now may the God who gives endurance and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, according to Christ Jesus, so that you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with one mind and one voice." — Romans 15:5–6

OVERTIME

Using the spaces provided below, come up with some ideas on how you can be a part of God's greater team:

Ways to Reach Your Athletic Team

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Ways to Expand God's Team

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

WELCOME

“Truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.” — John 14:12

Being an athlete is awesome. It’s amazing what you can do with your gifts and talents. But with God’s greater purpose for your life, you can do greater things than you could ever imagine!

WARM-UP**BIG DREAMS**

Every one of you has some sort of athletic dream, something you would love to do as an individual or with your team.

Q: What is the best thing you’ve done as an athlete so far?

Q: What would you do if there were no limits on your athletic ability?

Share your big dream with one or two people in your Huddle.

WORKOUT**CHAMPIONSHIP RINGS**

Many experts and fans consider Michael Jordan to be the greatest basketball player of all time. But I bet you didn’t know that in high school Michael didn’t make the varsity team as a sophomore and was so disappointed that he went home and cried.

While many young athletes might have given up hope, Michael knew he had something special inside of him. He worked harder than anyone else that next year and not only made the varsity team as a junior, but he went on to become one of the greatest basketball players of all time in college and in the NBA.

Like Michael, it’s important not to limit what God wants to do through you. When you believe in His purpose, you will see all of the greater things He has planned for your life!

Q: How often do you limit what you can do as an athlete?

Q: How might you be limiting what God wants to do in your life?

AMAZING THINGS

Jesus did some amazing things during His time on earth. He took 12 disciples and showed them how to live. He overcame sin on the cross and defeated death in the tomb. He encouraged those disciples and other close followers to do greater things with Him than they could have imagined.

In fact, it’s always been in God’s plan to use you to lead the world to Jesus, and His greater purpose for you will lead you to do greater things just like the disciples. Those greater things are fueled by His greater love for you and the greater love He wants you to have for others.

So, how will you do greater things? You will do greater things by obeying God and being faithful to Him. You can do this by reading the Bible, which is God’s Word. He gives us

instructions in it. And when you are ready, through His spirit, which we call the Holy Spirit, you can accept Jesus into your heart:

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive him because it doesn’t see him or know him. But you do know him, because he remains with you and will be in you.” — John 14:16–17

Q: What are some greater things you would like to do for God?

Q: What do you need to do today that will help you begin doing those greater things for Him?

WRAP-UP

GREATER THINGS

Understanding your greater purpose means you will do amazing things for God. Here are three ways that doing greater things will show up in your life:

1. Greater Power. It’s not an easy thing God has asked you to do, but He will give you everything you need to do it.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you.” — Acts 1:8

2. Greater Mission. There’s no better way to spend your life than to share God’s amazing love with others.

“And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” — Acts 1:8

3. Greater Future. The greater things you do will have an impact today and last forever.

“I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God’s heavenly call in Christ Jesus.”
— Philippians 3:14

OVERTIME

As we conclude our time together, take a moment to think back on the reason we started this journey—to fulfill the words John the Baptist spoke when Jesus’ ministry was just starting:

“He must increase, but I must decrease.” — John 3:30

Now take some time to pray this prayer:

Dear Lord, I want to do greater things for You. I want my life to make a difference that will last forever. Help me use the power of Your Holy Spirit to be bold and share Your love with everyone around me. Amen.

GET INVOLVED WITH FCA

DAILY IMPACT PLAY

Geared toward Christian coaches and athletes, **Daily Impact Play** is an email newsletter and social media outlet to engage, equip and empower readers to be stronger Christian competitors. Sign up at fca.org/quick-links/daily-impact-play-other-e-newsletters to receive Daily Impact Play devotionals every day or follow @fcaimpactplay and our Facebook page at facebook.com/thefcateam.



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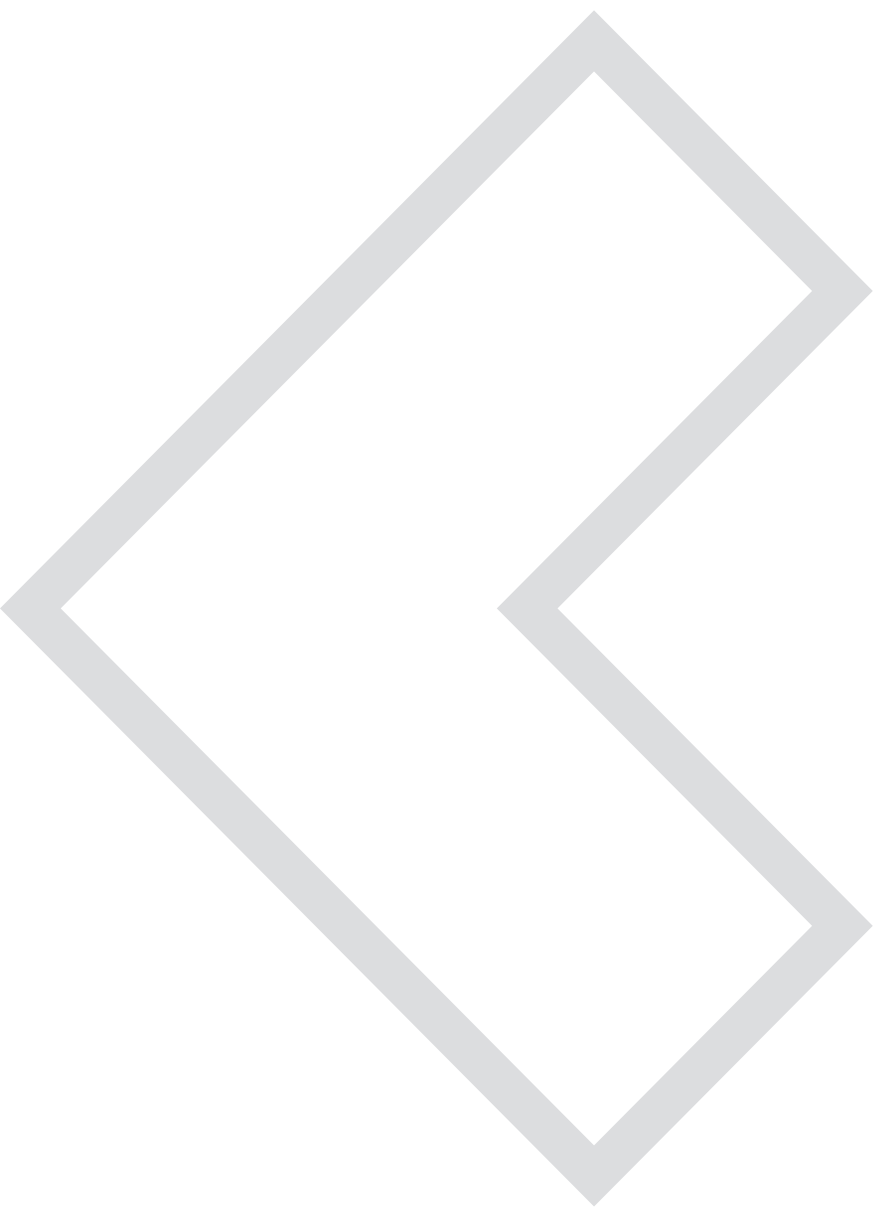


YOUTUBE

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GREATER



COMPETITOR'S CREED

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

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 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.

