



SLAM DUNK! | Teamwork By God's Design

KEY VERSE: 1 Corinthians 12:12

"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ."

This devotional series is meant to teach players how to be humble, encouraging, honorable and less self-centered through teamwork. Teamwork is the building block of community. There will always be disagreements in life, however, God has provided his perfect design to overcome selfishness and disrespect of others through love and compassion!

Please make this series your own. The following is simply a guideline.

WEEK 1

1 Corinthians 1:10 | Agree to Be the "A" Team

"I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought." (NIV).

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

What do you think is so important about being part of a team? Can a team do its best without a coach? Probably not. Everyone will have their own idea of "what's best" and who should do what. In order for a team to be at its best, it needs a leader – a coach. The coach sets the standard, the goals of the team and understands and trains each player to achieve their unique contribution to the team.

Jesus Christ spoke regularly to people to discuss issues, set goals or the "vision" they wanted to achieve. Do away with disagreements which cause the "team" to become divided. Teams need to work on being in

agreement and have a united front at practice and every game. You cannot achieve anything good if the team players are against (divided) each other.

The coach provides the goal and reminds the team of the importance of working together. It can't be done without each player doing their part!

LET'S PRAY: *Pray or choose a player to pray.*

Pray today, this first game day, that the goals and training the coach has provided to the team will be played out on the court to the best of your ability. Thank God for your coach and his hard work. Ask God to remind you of the importance of each player as well as your part!

WEEK 2

1 Thessalonians 5:11 | Honor One Another

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." (NIV).

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

Friends are important, aren't they? They encourage us and make us feel good about ourselves. Not everyone we meet is "friendly". Sometimes others say bad things to us and others, are not welcoming and make us feel unwanted.

To be a team player, you need to be a friend or become a friend. We are all different – we look different, like different things, are better at doing different things. Being different doesn't mean make fun of or bully each other. That's the cowardly way of handling things.

Jesus encouraged all the people he spoke with, to encourage and build one another up, be honorable, treat others as you would have them treat you. Honor your team mates. Each one of you is there with different talents to make a strong goal oriented team.

LET'S PRAY: *Pray or choose a player to pray.*

Pray as a team that all the players will honor one another, even those on the other team. Ask God to show you how to be an encourager to a friend or someone you can become friends with. Thank God for the opportunity to be a part of the team and the opportunity to be a good friend.

WEEK 3

Proverbs 27:17 | VIP: The Value of Each Player

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (NIV).

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

Today's scripture is worth remembering and easy to remember. "Iron sharpens iron". Back in the day, swords and knives were made and sharpened by being struck, filed or rubbed against by another piece of iron. Maybe you've seen your mom or dad sharpen a kitchen knife with another knife or sharpener that has metal.

Like knives and swords, our minds and hearts are sharpened by others. When our coaches and team mates show us how to do something we don't know, or maybe could do better – they are sharpening our skills. Sometimes it's a reminder to do this and not that. We all help keep one another "sharp", accountable and doing our very best, as well as what is the right thing to do.

We have the honor of being that friend the goes along side others, helping them to succeed and be their very best. In return, they will honor and sharpen you.

LET'S PRAY: *Pray or choose a player to pray.*

Thank God for the opportunity to be a friend who "sharpens" another. Ask God to show you how to be kind when you offer help. Ask God to help you receive help and not believe it is meant to be embarrassing or shameful.

WEEK 4

Philippians 2:3-4 | Don't Steal the Show - Humility

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others." (NIV).

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

Have you ever heard of someone being referred to as a "show boater"? This is a term that was used for someone who likes to be in the spotlight, having little to no regard for other. They always have to be the center of attention.

When you are part of a team, there is no room for "show boating". **Everyone is important!** Each player should practice humility, looking out for others and not focus on themselves all of the time.

Jesus is the Son of God. He came from His home in Heaven, and came to live among us, experience life as a human being and humbled himself to the point of death, so we can all be a part of God's eternal "team"!

When we focus on others and not ourselves, the entire team wins. Everyone is helping and holding one another up. Everyone wins this way.

LET'S PRAY: *Pray or choose a player to pray.*

Thank Jesus for being the perfect example of humility and giving us the opportunity to become a part of his team. Ask God to show you ways you can value others on your team and put them first, instead of your own interests.

WEEK 5

Galatians 6:2 | The Struggle is Real

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (NIV).

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

What is the law of Christ? It’s rather simple, “Love the Lord God with your heart, mind and soul and love one another.” Love isn’t just a feeling, it is an action word. When we love someone we are willing to help bear their burdens, be by their side when they are having a hard time.

Sometimes our team mates may be having a bad day, we don’t know what they have been going through all the time. On a bad day, spend the time encouraging them, asking how you might be able to help. This is not a time to make fun of them and hurt their feelings.

In the same way, when you are having a bad day, it’s ok to ask for help, or just talk to a team mate or your coach.

God created us to be in community with each other. A team is the perfect example of community. In community everyone shares their struggles and burdens. When anything feels too heavy for you to carry alone, ask for help. Teamwork means doing the hard things sometimes. In doing so, the hard things become easier and everyone grows stronger from it!

LET’S PRAY: *Pray or choose a player to pray.*

Ask God to remind you to be open to others when they seem to be having a bad day or struggling with something. Thank God for giving us so many friends and team mates to help one another.

WEEK 6

1 Corinthians 12:12 | The Team Works Better Together

“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ” (NIV).

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

Did you know the human body has: 206 bones; 600 muscles and thousands of tendons to make it move. That doesn’t even include the vital organs of the body like the heart, brain, stomach and more!

Each part of the body has a special purpose and job to do. Without just one of these parts, the human body would not be able to function at its best.

Today’s scripture refers to us as parts of the body of Christ. All the parts, like us, are separate and special, and form one body. Without Christ (our life coach), we are just parts, but with Christ who gives us a special purpose, we work together as one body.

Being a part of a team is exactly like this. Each team mate has a special purpose, a special position to play. Without one player, the team cannot function at its best. The coach guides and shows each player their position and how to play it. Together, the team is so much better! Everyone has an equal part to play and it is very important.

LET'S PRAY: *Pray or choose a player to pray.*

Thank Jesus for being such a good coach and giving you a special purpose to play out in your life with others. Ask God to show you each day what your special part of the team is and to guide you. Thank God for your coach and his part in building a great team.

Week 7

Psalms 133:1 | Team Unity is Contagious

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" (NIV)

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

It's our final game day! This season we have discussed what it takes to be a great team, being a good friend and honoring one another.

Let's review:

1. Teams work toward being in agreement and are guided by their coach.
2. Friends and team mates honor each other even when there are disagreements.
3. Friends and Team Mates encourage one another by coming alongside one another to sharpen our skills.
4. Friends and team mates show humility. No one player is more important than the other.
5. Friends and team mates help one another through struggles and bad days. We don't make fun.
6. Every friend and team mate is important. Without each other, the team cannot be at its very best.

As a team, if everyone is doing their part in these 6 team building practices, the team will function at its best and be unified. Being unified means, working towards a common goal! Isn't that what sports is all about? Working towards the goal for the win!

Not only is it a win, it is a good and pleasant feeling for us to live and be together in unity. You can actually feel it! Everyone genuinely loves each other and wants the best for one another.

These team building skills don't stop on the field, you can use them every day, wherever you are! Once you start the process, others will pick up on it and spread the goodness.

LET'S PRAY: *Pray or choose a player to pray.*

Thank God for the opportunity to spend 7 weeks with your team mates and friends. Thank God for the guidance you received from the coaches and referees. Ask God to remind you of the lessons in teamwork you learned this season and use it at school and at home.