

Integrity On and Off the Field

Good [morning/afternoon], everyone.

Let me start with a powerful quote by Marcus Aurelius, a Roman emperor and philosopher. He said:

“If it’s not right, don’t do it; if it’s not true, don’t say it.”

Let that sink in.

Now, I want to ask you a question—by show of hands, how many of you have ever been tempted to cut a corner—maybe skip a rep during practice when the coach wasn’t looking? Or maybe exaggerate a story to make yourself look better to your teammates?

Yeah—me too.

This quote challenges us to live with integrity, especially in the moments when no one is watching. And as Christian athletes, we’re not just playing for the scoreboard—we’re playing for something bigger. We’re playing for an audience of One—God.

1. Integrity in the Little Things

In sports, the little things matter.

- You might think skipping that last sprint won’t matter. - Or maybe fouling a player when the ref isn’t looking is just “part of the game.”

But let me ask you: If you only act right when you’re being watched—what does that say about your character?

In Luke 16:10, Jesus says: “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much...”

If you want God to trust you with big things—in sports, in life, in leadership—you’ve got to prove yourself in the small stuff.

2. Integrity in What You Say

The second part of the quote says, “If it’s not true, don’t say it.”

That means no lying, no trash talk that cuts people down, no gossip in the locker room.

Interactive moment: Think of the last time you said something you knew wasn’t totally true—maybe to avoid blame, to boost your image, or to fit in. Ask yourself quietly: What was driving that choice?

Proverbs 12:22 tells us: “The Lord detests lying lips, but He delights in people who are trustworthy.”

When your words match your heart—and your heart is aligned with Christ—you stand out. And in a world full of spin, exaggeration, and drama, truth-tellers shine.

3. Integrity as Worship

Here's the cool part—playing with integrity is an act of worship.

Colossians 3:23 says: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters."

So when you give your all in practice, when you help an opponent up after a hard play, when you speak truthfully, you are honoring God.

You might not always win the game—but you can always win with your character.

Final Challenge

So let me leave you with a challenge:

This week, when you're faced with a choice—to cheat, lie, exaggerate, slack off, or do what's right—remember this quote:

"If it's not right, don't do it; if it's not true, don't say it."

And remember who you play for.

Let's be athletes who lead by example. Athletes who reflect Christ. Athletes of integrity.

Closing Question for Reflection (give a few seconds pause): Where in your game—or your life—do you need to level up your integrity this week?

Thanks for listening. Let's go play with heart, and play with honor.