



Coach's Handbook



GO GREAT FOR GREAT FEEL

Coach's Handbook: 2023 Edition
FCA Group Meetings and Training Time
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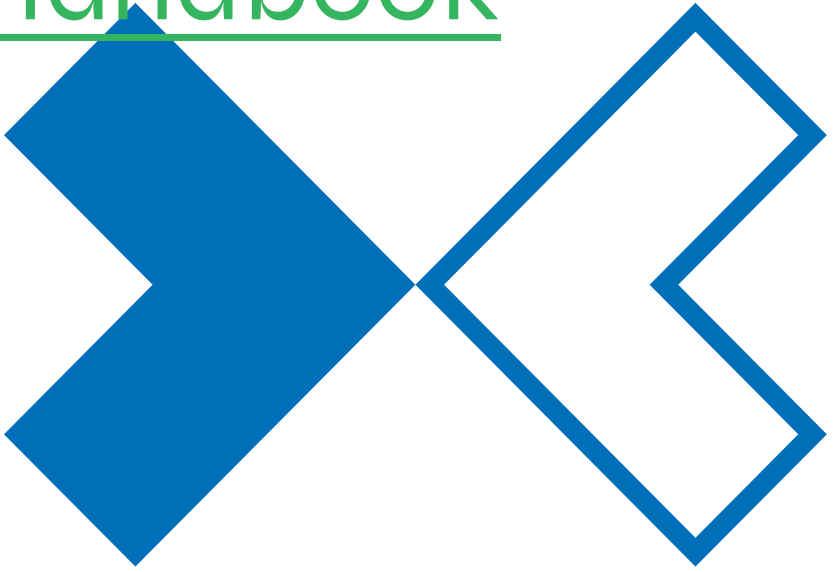
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THE FOUR

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.

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.

MEETING 1 **X**

GREATER POTENTIAL

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

During the previous season, competition or opponent always seemed like a defining moment. Maybe it went great, and your team won; maybe you didn’t. These fleeting feelings associated with the scoreboard often dictate perspective, which affects your family, your livelihood and even your job.

You start to sacrifice more time to prepare your team, believing that more effort will create additional victories. You give it your all—even at the expense of your family or stress level—but even then, it still never seems satisfactory. Surely there’s something greater than this.

Coach, we’re here to tell you there is. Through Jesus Christ, you can experience greater potential in your life than what you and others say about your identity as a coach.

Let’s begin.

WARM-UP

UNDER PRESSURE

- Q: When do you feel the most pressure in coaching? Share a few instances with your Huddle.
- Q: How do you handle that pressure? Describe your process and even resolution to these situations.

WORKOUT

UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

As a coach, it’s natural to feel like you have more potential than what is showing up in practice or the heat of competition. And when you don’t feel like you’re living up to expectations, the pressure starts to build.

Living up to your potential is more than what you can do on your own. There’s more to life than coaching for the scoreboard. Your potential shouldn’t just be measured by championships, trophies or banners. It should be measured by *who God says you are*. Greater purpose is wrapped up in your potential when your potential is wrapped up in Him!

- Q: How do you define your identity? Who or what is it based on?
- Q: What are some things that cause you to base your identity on coaching?

TRUE LIGHT

The Gospel of John shares the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. His cousin, a fiery preacher known as John the Baptist, prepared the people for Jesus’ arrival. John did great things, and even the people thought he was great, but John knew Someone was coming who was greater.

As John preached about the coming of Jesus, many religious leaders were anxious about this greater One. They were comfortable living under a system that emphasized the pressure to perform. If you were good at your job, then you 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

Therein lies the problem: “The world did not recognize him.” Similarly, we often don’t reach our full potential because we don’t recognize that He is the true Source of our potential.

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

Q: How do you think having a deeper understanding of Jesus would unveil more of your potential as a coach?

WRAP-UP

GREATER POTENTIAL

There is more to coaching than just winning. It’s an easy trap to fall into, especially when your job can depend on it, but it’s life-changing when you begin to recognize your full potential through Christ.

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 embrace the truth of Jesus, you experience freedom from the pressure to perform and see the purpose behind the gifts that God has given you.

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

3. Greater Life. This is what Jesus offers you through a relationship with Him: more joy, peace and purpose through a life focused on Jesus.

“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 understood what it meant to live your greater potential in Jesus. It’s not what you do but who you are. As you allow these truths to soak into your heart, pray that God will activate a desire to live for Him as exemplified in our theme verse:

“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 together. If you haven’t surrendered your heart to Jesus Christ, talk to another trusted coach or FCA staff member about making that life-changing decision today.

TRAINING TIME 1 ✕

GREATER POTENTIAL

JOJO VILLA

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

Many years ago, when I was coaching for National University, I chewed out one of my players during a time-out. Afterward, it hit me that what I had done was not honorable, not worthy of a coach. I put too much pressure on him as my athlete.

This is a common mistake seen in athletics. We put so much pressure on the potential of our athletes that it can make them leave the game. When we coach like we don't have Christ's light, humility and guidance in us, we coach blindly.

In John 8:12, Jesus promises a well-lit path and a safe landing. We can fully trust in this based on Jesus' sacrificial love and promise of salvation for our lives.

As we coach, we must remember to show our players that their potential doesn't rest in their ability to score points but in their abilities to follow Jesus, love Him and love others. That's it. That's the game plan. As mentors, that's the best key to success we can give our athletes.

About 20 years later, when I was the deputy commissioner of the league, all the former players of National University came to support the team when they entered the finals. I saw my former player whom I had berated and pulled him aside so I could apologize and ask for his forgiveness. He said he couldn't even remember the incident. Yet I humbled myself before him because what I had done was not right. While I had my player's forgiveness, I was grateful that I remembered that Christ will shine through me if I let Him. To this day, I rarely step onto the court without seeking the Lord for guidance.

GO

1. Have we ever released words as coaches that are life draining for our athletes? How can you be the light that Jesus is?
2. How can we control ourselves in tight situations?

WORKOUT

1 John 1:9; 1 Peter 5:6–7

OVERTIME

Father, help me not to follow the standards of this world but rather to follow Your ways when it comes to my behavior as a coach on and off the court. May I be an inspiration and blessing to those around me by the way I speak and act. May I build Your Kingdom in everything I do. Amen.

MEETING 2 **×**

GREATER PROMISE

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

Guarantees are fickle in an ever-changing world; in sports, they’re just as fragile. Victories can’t be guaranteed, nor can any premature claims originate with recruiting, playing time or offseason workouts. (Okay, there are usually guarantees for one or two crazy parents every season!) Though various factors are out of your control in sports (and life), one thing is in your control. It’s a decision you need to make that will forever alter your eternity. No one can do this for you. The catch? It’s not actually based on you. The decision focuses on receiving a greater promise made available to you today.

WARM-UP FOR THE PRIZE

- Q: Besides winning, what’s your motivation to compete?
- Q: When things go awry in sports and life and you don’t win, what is your typical reaction? How does this make you feel as a coach?

WORKOUT ON THE LINE

No matter the competitive situation, it always seems like something is on the line—the game, your bigger salary, a better recruit, a better title, etc. But Oklahoma softball coach Patti Gasso has become known for encouraging her athletes to celebrate the greater promise they have through their identity in Christ.

The team’s rallying cry throughout its 2021 NCAA championship run was “BATL” or “Boast About The Lord.” Focusing on God allowed them to play without fearing a negative result. They saw beyond the short-term promise of competitive success and instead saw the bigger picture of why they were competing in the first place.

- Q: When was a time that you coached with something on the line?
- Q: How did you feel when you had that pressure on you?

IN THE LIGHT

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

Nicodemus’ identity was wrapped up in his job and his status. Nicodemus felt the pressure to perform, but what he really needed was the truth. Until that point, Nicodemus knew all about God but didn’t truly know Him. Fixating on the rules of his religion prevented him from having a relationship. But Jesus showed Nicodemus the Light of truth and revealed a greater promise of 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

Nicodemus came to Jesus in the cover of darkness, but spiritually he was about to step into the Light thanks to these powerful words:

“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 stepped into the Light of God’s promise. After meeting Jesus, he was no longer wrapped up in what he could do but instead was compelled to see what God could do through him and for God’s glory.

Q: Why do you think Nicodemus could know so much about God and yet not truly know Him?

Q: What stands out to you about Nicodemus’ encounter with Jesus?

WRAP-UP

GREATER PROMISE

More than anything you can find through coaching, God wants to give you the greater promise that comes from Jesus. Here are three amazing things His greater promise will bring:

1. Greater Love. God’s promise is only possible because of His great love for you—even to the point of sacrificing His own Son.

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

2. Greater Gift. Salvation is the key to a relationship with God and the promise of eternal life.

“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. There is no more confusion about who you are and your self-worth when you join 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 you allow these truths to soak into your heart, the Holy Spirit will begin to cultivate and activate inside of you a desire to live out another powerful truth found in our theme verse:

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

OVERTIME

Take time to pray:

Lord, thank You for the greater promise of salvation. Help me receive Your love so that I find my identity in You.

If you want to learn more about receiving the greater promise of a relationship with God, talk to a trusted coach 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

JORDYN BOLLINGER HAYDEN

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

In my first year of coaching volleyball, I had a fiery group of 17- and 18-year-olds. Many of them were in their last season of competitive, club volleyball, and they were looking to bigger and brighter things than our club team. While some already had college offers and acceptance letters, others had nothing. Their efforts as competitive athletes went unnoticed by the college scouts. As we rounded out the last few tournaments, there was a clear divide—players who had something bigger to look forward to and others who didn't. For those who didn't, their drive, passion and zeal for the game outweighed many of their teammates. It was clear to anyone that they weren't ready to give it up. As the leader of the team, I had to bridge the gap somehow.

As a follower of Christ, I have assurance in the promise I have for my future. While not making the cut, being rejected or just being stuck in an unideal situation can be terrifying, I know that Jesus promises a safe and secure place. Throughout the New Testament, we see Jesus' story of death and resurrection recounted several times. And each time, the same message is clear: that through His sacrifice, Jesus promises eternal life, peace and happiness. What's the catch? We just have to believe in Him and follow His plan for our lives.

Before our last two qualifiers, I huddled up the girls, and we talked about the promise of our next game, the next day and even the next life. During that time my father was battling cancer and was losing, and knowing that his days were limited helped me and the girls see that the earthly promises we put so much meaning on can't compare to the promises Christ made to us. God created the perfect plan for our lives and for the lives we have after this. The next time you huddle up your players, remember that God's promise is greater than a win or a college scholarship; His promise is in Christ and it's perfect.

GO

1. If your athletes are struggling with whatever is beyond your season, how can you encourage them with Christ's Word and promise?
2. What are some ways you can align yourself with Christ's promise of salvation in your own life?

WORKOUT

Acts 4:12; 2 Timothy 1:9

OVERTIME

Heavenly Father, I praise You for the promise You have given me. I would be lost and broken without it. With Your promise I have hope. I have meaning. I have a purpose. Help me see Your promise as fuel for my everyday living as I continue to follow You. Amen.

MEETING 3 >

GREATER PERFORMANCE

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

Performance counts. It isn't a bad thing, especially when your job is tied to it. When incorrectly viewed, however, it will produce bad habits, wrong motivations and unnecessary pressures.

What if God wants to alter the way you view performance?

You no longer need to perform for your athletic director, the fans or the media. You don't even need to perform for God. As a child of God, you don't have anything to win, lose or prove. A greater performance—Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection from the dead—is what defines you. Now, how you coach can be an act of worship to God.

WARM-UP

EYES ON ME

Q: When do you feel the most pressure to perform? Do you feel the intensity of people watching your every play?

Q: Have you ever considered that your coaching could be worship unto God?

WORKOUT

AUDIENCE OF ONE

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

That doesn't mean they don't feel pressure, but for any athlete who competes with this mindset, understanding that God is the only person they need to please can certainly bring peace, joy and freedom from fear.

Q: What would it look like to coach for an “Audience of One”?

Q: How would knowing that you don't have anything to win, lose or prove to your “Audience of One” transform the way you coach?

LOSING TO WIN

When your identity is in Christ, you are no longer performing for yourself, your coaching staff, your team or your family. Once you only coach for Him, others can see Christ working in you and through you as a coach.

That's why it's so important to stay connected to “the vine” and remain in Christ (John 15:5). But that also means you must sacrifice your wants and plans and commit your life to Jesus. It may not always make sense, but for the coach, it's like losing to win.

“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 the fullness of a life-changing relationship with God. But what you will receive in return is so much greater than anything the world can offer. You will have the Holy Spirit in you, and He will transform every part of your life, including your coaching.

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 do you think “losing to win” might look like in your life?

WRAP-UP

GREATER PERFORMANCE

When you have found your new identity in Christ, it will help you unlock your full potential and lead to a greater performance for His glory. You are now coaching 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) what you need most 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 Him first allows you to stay untangled from the world’s expectations of you as an athlete and as a disciple of Christ.

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

3. Greater Fruit. More than just athletic performance, staying connected to Jesus will produce godly characteristics in your life.

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

As you allow these truths to soak into your heart, the Holy Spirit will empower you to live out another powerful truth found in our theme verse:

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

OVERTIME

Read John 12:23–26.

Then, take some time to answer the following questions with your group or one-on-one with a trusted coach or an FCA staff member:

Q: What are some things that are holding you back that you might need to give up?

Q: Why is it so difficult sometimes to fully give your heart and your life to God?

Q: How do you think doing so might change the way you approach coaching and other areas of your life?

TRAINING TIME 3 ✕

GREATER PERFORMANCE

TIM MESSAL

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

As coaches, what importance do we place on our reputation, our influence or our success? How do we measure our level of success? The answers to these questions all depend on the answer to this most important question. What will you do with Jesus?

John the Baptist, or John Bar Zechariah, was destined to be a leader from the beginning. His birth was foretold, and his name was given by an angel. He was a Nazirite, set apart to Yahweh to be the forerunner for the Messiah. The word of the Lord came to him in the wilderness, and he began to preach. People flocked to the wilderness to hear his message. Jews came. Tax collectors came. Roman soldiers came. Those moved by his preaching for repentance were baptized by him in the Jordan River. John the Baptist was perhaps the most well-known figure in the region of Palestine. He knew his mission, but more importantly, he was faithful to his calling (read Mark 1:1–11 for more context).

While John grew many crowds and influenced lots of people, he knew that none of it compared to what Jesus would do. As followers of Christ, we are called to lead in the same way.

Take John 15 for example. As the vine, Jesus provides us a way to produce/grow fruit. The fruit He calls us each to produce involves wins and losses but not on the field of athletic play. The fruit we are to produce involves wins and losses in a cosmic struggle that Christ has already won. If we accept Him, Christ will dwell in us, rendering our earthly performance minimal in comparison to what Christ can do through us.

So, when you start to think about your record or how many trophies you have in your office, remember that our work as coaches is greater than any earthly reward. Let Christ dwell in you, for your performance will shine through with Him.

GO

1. How can we give our best effort as coaches to establish a winning program and follow the mandate of Colossians 3:17?
2. How can we intentionally follow the Great Commission in our position as a coach? Does the “separation of church and state” hinder us?

WORKOUT

Matthew 11:7–19; Isaiah 40; Revelation 22

OVERTIME

Father, thank You for Your Word and for the mysteries You have revealed through our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Your ways are so much higher than our ways. I pray that we will be faithful to do the work You have prepared in advance for each one of us to do. Empower us to introduce the athletes and coaches we work with to You, Jesus. We love You, Amen!

MEETING 4 **×** **GREATER PURPOSE**

WELCOME

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

When the season isn't going as planned, it might be hard to stay motivated to push through it all. When life gets tough, it is easy to question God.

But darkness, doubt and despair don't get the final word. That's because when you coach and live for God, you can be confident of your greater purpose.

WARM-UP

WHAT MATTERS MOST?

Q: How do you motivate your team when the season isn't going as planned?

Q: When a season is in a rough patch for you personally, who/what/where do you turn?

WORKOUT

WHY DO I COACH?

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

Usually that question comes up when dealing with adversity like job loss, losing seasons, team struggles, weariness, relational or family issues or life's many distractions.

And when you're not sure, tangible results like personal achievement, team goals and long-term dreams (expanded career opportunities) tend to be the default motivation.

Q: So, why do you coach?

Q: How often is your purpose as a coach at the forefront of all that you do?

WHO IS IT ALL FOR?

In John 17, Jesus was a few days away from being crucified, buried in a tomb and raised from the dead. He knew that He had limited time with His followers. That's why Jesus spent a lot of His remaining time on Earth praying for the disciples and all people who would one day believe and commit their lives to telling 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 teach them how to be a disciple of Jesus:

“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 are you tempted to coach or live for yourself?

Q: How do those passages in Matthew challenge you to compete and live for a greater purpose as a disciple of Jesus who makes disciples?

WRAP-UP
GREATER PURPOSE

When your motivations in life come into question, always know that you have been called to coach and to live for Someone and Something greater than yourself. Here are three ways your greater purpose will manifest itself in your life:

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

“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 launch you into a new mission and will exceed your wildest expectations.

“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

As you begin to understand your greater purpose, God will continue to cultivate and activate inside of you a desire to live out a powerful truth found in our daily theme verse:

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

OVERTIME

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

| | <u>Sports</u> | <u>Everyday Life</u> |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| 1. Glorify God: | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Love God: | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Love others: | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Make disciples: | _____ | _____ |

TRAINING TIME 4 ✕

GREATER PURPOSE

FLECEIA COMEAUX

READY

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

SET

Have you ever felt that God has called you to something greater?

A few years ago, I realized that God was calling me to something greater, which was coaching. The one job that’s so public that other people get to ridicule you and think of all the ways they could do it better. I knew God was going to ask me to do this differently. I remember sitting in my house, praying about this open door to coach, to mentor, to lead and to position a captive audience for eternity in Heaven and abundant lives on Earth. I knew He was going to challenge me to put Him first, above program, above norms and above culture.

I also knew I did not want to dishonor God by putting Him on the shelf and never mentioning Him to my players. I knew I would have to relinquish control of what I thought I knew about basketball and allow Him to lead and coach through me. As the weeks went by, I prayed, *Why do You want me in this?*

The answer showed up years later in hindsight. Because God is a God of timing when He positions you, He is positioning others before you so their lives will intersect with your life. At that intersection we walk into Greater Purpose. My “yes” to coach led to countless players being saved, baptized, transformed, changed and redeemed all because I was a willing vessel in a given moment. In John 14:12 Jesus told the disciples they would “do even greater works.” What if the greater work is what God wants to do through you as a coach? What if the only thing keeping the greater from coming is your yes? What if someone is waiting on you to instruct, encourage and lead them? The greater is waiting on you. Are you ready for it?

Kingdom Coach Mindset + Captive Audience + A Desire to Transform = Lives Changed and Coaching for a Greater Purpose

GO

1. Are you ready to walk in God’s greater purpose for you as a coach?
2. Are you willing to put Him above program, norms and culture?
3. Are you living out the Greater Purpose equation?

WORKOUT

Ecclesiastes 3:1; Jeremiah 29:11; Jeremiah 32:19

OVERTIME

Dear God, thank You for creating me to be a vessel for Your greater plan. Help me remember this greater purpose daily as I coach and compete. Amen.

HUDDLE 1 ✕ GREATER POTENTIAL

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

During the previous season, competition or opponent always seemed like a defining moment. Maybe it went great, and your team won; maybe you didn’t. These fleeting feelings associated with the scoreboard often dictate perspective, which affects your family, your livelihood and even your job.

You start to sacrifice more time to prepare your team, believing that more effort will create additional victories. You give it your all—even at the expense of your family or stress level—but even then, it still never seems satisfactory. Surely there’s something greater than this.

Coach, we’re here to tell you there is. Through Jesus Christ, you can experience greater potential in your life than what you and others say about your identity as a coach.

Let’s begin.

WARM-UP UNDER PRESSURE

- Q:** When do you feel the most pressure in coaching? Share a few instances with your Huddle.
- Q:** How do you handle that pressure? Describe your process and even resolution to these situations.

WORKOUT UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

As a coach, it’s natural to feel like you have more potential than what is showing up in practice or the heat of competition. And when you don’t feel like you’re living up to expectations, the pressure starts to build.

Living up to your potential is more than what you can do on your own. There’s more to life than coaching for the scoreboard. Your potential shouldn’t just be measured by championships, trophies or banners. It should be measured by *who God says you are*. Greater purpose is wrapped up in your potential when your potential is wrapped up in Him!

- Q:** How do you define your identity? Who or what is it based on?
- Q:** What are some things that cause you to base your identity on coaching?

TRUE LIGHT

The Gospel of John shares the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. His cousin, a fiery preacher known as John the Baptist, prepared the people for Jesus’ arrival. John did great things, and even the people thought he was great, but John knew Someone was coming who was greater.

As John preached about the coming of Jesus, many religious leaders were anxious about this greater One. They were comfortable living under a system that emphasized the pressure to perform. If you were good at your job, then you 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

Therein lies the problem: “The world did not recognize him.” Similarly, we often don’t reach our full potential because we don’t recognize that He is the true Source of our potential.

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

Q: How do you think having a deeper understanding of Jesus would unveil more of your potential as a coach?

WRAP-UP **GREATER POTENTIAL**

There is more to coaching than just winning. It’s an easy trap to fall into, especially when your job can depend on it, but it’s life-changing when you begin to recognize your full potential through Christ.

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 embrace the truth of Jesus, you experience freedom from the pressure to perform and see the purpose behind the gifts that God has given you.

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

3. Greater Life. This is what Jesus offers you through a relationship with Him: more joy, peace and purpose through a life focused on Jesus.

“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 understood what it meant to live your greater potential in Jesus. It’s not what you do but who you are. As you allow these truths to soak into your heart, pray that God will activate a desire to live for Him as exemplified in our theme verse:

“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 together. If you haven’t surrendered your heart to Jesus Christ, talk to another trusted coach or FCA staff member about making that life-changing 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

Your athletes make mistakes—that shouldn’t be a surprise! As a key authority figure in athletes’ lives, you have a front-row seat to witness their behavior in sport and in life. Mistakes do not (and should not) define an athlete. With a correct viewpoint, mistakes catalyze learning opportunities for an athlete to grow.

The same is true for you. In your profession as a coach, you’ll make mistakes, and you should know that those mistakes do not and should not define you. But when you try to take control and do things in your own way, it can create a multitude of problems. Thankfully, there is a greater way that will lead you to the ultimate solution.

WARM-UP

MIXED-UP

- Q:** Have you ever had unclear direction or expectations on how to coach? Describe those times and your feelings associated with those times. Were you frustrated, lost or unsure?
- Q:** What is your typical reaction when you make a mistake as a coach?

WORKOUT

WRONG WAY

During the 1929 Rose Bowl, Roy Riegels, an All-American center for the University of California, grabbed a fumble on defense and headed toward Georgia Tech’s goal line. But when the opposing players tried to tackle him, he got turned around and started running the wrong way!

Riegels thought he was going the right way and had every intention of scoring a touchdown. Instead, he ended up at Cal’s one-yard line before his teammates could stop him. Can you imagine his coaches’ responses?

Just like Riegels’, you might find yourself trying to make the right call or play but doing the wrong thing because you’ve tried to do things on your own.

- Q:** What are some mistakes you’ve made as a coach because you went about things the wrong way or tried to do things on your own?
- Q:** How did doing things the wrong way affect your relationship with your players, your coaching staff or your family?

PREPARING THE WAY

As John the Baptist was preaching about Jesus, 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 understand what "the way of the Lord" meant. They thought if they performed certain rituals 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.

The Apostle Paul reinforced this truth in one of his letters to a young Christian from Greece.

"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 are some ways you, as a coach, can align yourself with Christ more? What are some ways you can influence your coaching staff or peers to do the same?

WRAP-UP **GREATER WAY**

It's great news knowing that we have a greater way 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 lead to confusion and frustration.

"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 and ultimately to destruction. 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. Following God's way through a personal relationship with Jesus is the only way that leads to 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

Spend time memorizing today's main verse in John 14:6. Write it down and place it somewhere visible that you will see it throughout the day. Meditate on its significance and apply it to your life as a coach.

If you want to learn more about following the greater way into a relationship with God, talk to a trusted coach or another FCA staff member about making that life-changing decision today. You can also turn to page 2 and go through "The FOUR."

HUDDLE 3 >

GREATER TRUTH

WELCOME

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

The pressure to perform often stems from lies, not truth. Lies are often disguised as half-truths, but they're full of deceit. You believe the lie, and then your thinking changes, and perspective is hindered. Before you know it, you act on the lie, and you're stuck in a cycle. Not only does this affect you as a coach, but it affects your athletes, coaching staff and even your family.

When was the last time you paused to consider the lies in your profession?

Consider where your heart and mind go after losing a competition—or your job. The host of lies at hand often feeds the lie that you need to perform better. If only you can perform better—win more, recruit top talent, hire stronger staff—then you'll be at peace. Validation and approval are only a performance away (and hopefully promotions, paychecks and prestige). You will have made it!

Or so the lies say. There's a greater truth that can tear down lies and unleash the freedom you deeply desire.

WARM-UP

BETWEEN THE TRUTHS AND THE LIES

Q: What are some of the worldly lies that affect your role and livelihood as a coach?

Q: Is it easy or difficult to identify lies?

WORKOUT

MORE THAN A COACH

There's a lot of talk these days about how competitors shouldn't be defined by their sport. It's a positive conversation that has helped free up many competitors from the pressure to perform.

But for those who are still stuck in the performance trap, there's a nagging feeling that the wins and losses, the statistical outcomes and the awards and achievements are tied directly to self-worth.

No matter where you land on the performance spectrum, the tension between those two mentalities will always follow you. The good news is that God does not care about your performance. He only cares about your heart.

Q: What lies are you currently believing about yourself?

Q: Where did those lies originate?

MORE THAN A CARPENTER'S SON

As Jesus emerged to begin His ministry, the religious leaders didn't understand the truth. They didn't believe God's Son was standing right in front of them. They saw Him as a simple carpenter's son who had little to offer with His teachings.

But Jesus was more than a carpenter's son. He had been sent to Earth to do away with the old way of religion. Jesus was there to reconnect people with God through a personal relationship. When they didn't believe Him, 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

Sadly, Satan has created the illusion that there are many ways to God, but none of them are based on the truth of God’s Word. He has done so to confuse people into believing lies and to steer them away from Jesus. It’s like walking in darkness instead of the light.

But when we know the truth and that truth gives us freedom from the lies of performance, self-worth and identity, we can feel protected from the lies of the world.

Q: What are some instances where you’ve struggled with self-worth and identity based on your coaching performance?

Q: How do you think embracing the truth of who you are in Christ can change things?

WRAP-UP

GREATER TRUTH

When you embrace the truth, you will experience freedom from that pressure and better grasp the purpose behind the gifts and talents God has given you.

Here are three key points to help you remember this powerful concept:

1. Seek Truth. You can find Truth in God’s Word—the ultimate source for every question you might have about 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. Allow the Holy Spirit to make God’s Word active and real in your competition 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:

Lord, help me understand the difference between the world’s lies and the greater truth that Jesus came to share with the world. Give me a stronger desire to study Your Word and to live by what it says. Amen.

Write down a plan for how you can be more consistent in learning the truth through daily time in the Bible and then share it with others.

HUDDLE 4 >

GREATER LIFE

WELCOME

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

Today’s instant gratification culture emphasizes living your best life now. The world’s system stresses consuming as much as you can, as often as you can, wherever you can. Everything offers relief—to meet some longing or desire in our souls that we never quite name. It doesn’t take too long to realize that getting more doesn’t always make you full. The things that promise to give you life seem to end up taking it away.

For you as a coach, the temptation is to base your life on gaining achievements, awards and accolades. It’s easy to get wrapped up in coaching and all that happens during competition. In other areas of your life, you may feel the pressure to find assurance in relationships and possessions. When good things turn into ultimate things, life quickly becomes imbalanced.

What if you can live your best life now and forever with Someone that gives abundant life? It’s true—a greater life is found in God through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

WARM-UP

BEST LIFE EVER

Q: How would you describe your best life as a coach?

Q: How do you think having that best life would impact your daily existence?

WORKOUT

BIGGER THAN LIFE

You might watch a prominent coach and wonder what his or her life is like. But what you often learn over time is that these coaches have the same problems as you do—and sometimes even more so. They might be “bigger than life,” but they aren’t always experiencing their best life.

After the confetti falls or rings are given, many are left wondering, *Is that really it?*”

When you realize the emptiness of the world’s definition of greatness, you’re left searching for something greater. You’ll soon discover that what you really need is Someone greater to redefine coaching and your purpose in life.

Q: How do you think reaching the pinnacle of 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 that this man had received a new perspective on life through Christ. A conversation with the Pharisees and Jesus continued into John 10 where He explained that being blind doesn’t just mean physically.

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 best life ever for everyone is the life that is surrendered to God. That’s the only life where our full potential can be reached through a relationship with God. It’s the only life that is rooted in truth.

As Jesus tells us in John 10:10, we can have an abundant, overflowing life through Him. It’s a life with greater joy, greater peace, greater purpose and greater freedom from the pressure to perform.

Q: In what areas of your life could you use more joy, peace, purpose and freedom?

Q: Is anything holding you back from surrendering those areas to God?

WRAP-UP

GREATER LIFE

There is no greater life than a life that is surrendered 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. It’s a state of contentment in all things, the good times and the bad, that only greater life in Christ can bring.

*“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 come by inside the performance trap. But God’s peace will overcome all of your fears and anxieties.

“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, achievements or material gain that comes through competition or a career. God’s purpose is life-giving and life-changing.

“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 and coaching where you would like to experience these benefits of a relationship with Jesus. Then ask God to help you apply the truth of His Word so that you might truly experience greater life.

HUDDLE 5 >

GREATER PROMISE

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

Guarantees are fickle in an ever-changing world; in sports, they’re just as fragile. Victories can’t be guaranteed, nor can any premature claims originate with recruiting, playing time or offseason workouts. (Okay, there are usually guarantees for one or two crazy parents every season!) Though various factors are out of your control in sports (and life), one thing is in your control. It’s a decision you need to make that will forever alter your eternity. No one can do this for you. The catch? It’s not actually based on you. The decision focuses on receiving a greater promise made available to you today.

WARM-UP FOR THE PRIZE

Q: Besides winning, what’s your motivation to compete?

Q: When things go awry in sports and life and you don’t win, what is your typical reaction? How does this make you feel as a coach?

WORKOUT ON THE LINE

No matter the competitive situation, it always seems like something is on the line—the game, your bigger salary, a better recruit, a better title, etc. But Oklahoma softball coach Patti Gasso has become known for encouraging her athletes to celebrate the greater promise they have through their identity in Christ.

The team’s rallying cry throughout its 2021 NCAA championship run was “BATL” or “Boast About The Lord.” Focusing on God allowed them to play without fearing a negative result. They saw beyond the short-term promise of competitive success and instead saw the bigger picture of why they were competing in the first place.

Q: When was a time that you coached with something on the line?

Q: How did you feel when you had that pressure on you?

IN THE LIGHT

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

Nicodemus’ identity was wrapped up in his job and his status. Nicodemus felt the pressure to perform, but what he really needed was the truth. Until that point, Nicodemus knew all about God but didn’t truly know Him. Fixating on the rules of his religion prevented him from having a relationship. But Jesus showed Nicodemus the Light of truth and revealed a greater promise of 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

Nicodemus came to Jesus in the cover of darkness, but spiritually he was about to step into the Light thanks to these powerful words:

“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 stepped into the Light of God’s promise. After meeting Jesus, he was no longer wrapped up in what he could do but instead was compelled to see what God could do through him and for God’s glory.

Q: Why do you think Nicodemus could know so much about God and yet not truly know Him?

Q: What stands out to you about Nicodemus’ encounter with Jesus?

WRAP-UP

GREATER PROMISE

More than anything you can find through coaching, God wants to give you the greater promise that comes from Jesus. Here are three amazing things His greater promise will bring:

1. Greater Love. God’s promise is only possible because of His great love for you—even to the point of sacrificing His own Son.

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

2. Greater Gift. Salvation is the key to a relationship with God and the promise of eternal life.

“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. There is no more confusion about who you are and your self-worth when you join 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 you allow these truths to soak into your heart, the Holy Spirit will begin to cultivate and activate inside of you a desire to live out another powerful truth found in our theme verse:

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

OVERTIME

Take time to pray:

Lord, thank You for the greater promise of salvation. Help me receive Your love so that I find my identity in You.

If you want to learn more about receiving the greater promise of a relationship with God, talk to a trusted coach 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 for your team: arrive early to set up drills; go to bed late after watching film and making extra phone calls; connect with local businesses to fundraise for new initiatives; perhaps even wash your team's uniforms! Coaching is a labor of love.

What's the purpose, though? If this “love” is solely aimed to win the next competition, it's quickly diminished and reclassified as being both *transactional* and *cheap*. A greater love is available, one that is *transformational* and *costly*.

WARM-UP

DEDICATED LOVE

Q: What was the most sacrificial act of love you ever did for your team?

Q: Reflect on your love. Think about your team, your family and your spouse (if you have one). How would you describe your love? Transactional or transformational?

WORKOUT

SELFLESS LOVE

In a world where competitors often feel the pressure to achieve greatness at all costs, it is common for individual achievement to overshadow personal sacrifice and selfless love.

But it's so inspiring to hear stories about coaches giving up a bigger salary, refusing to take advantage of an opponent's weakness, resisting the temptation to take credit for someone else's hard work or gloating over another team's failure. We are encouraged by sacrifice and selflessness.

A great example of this took place in 2014 when Eckerd College softball player Kara Oberer hit a three-run homer against Florida Southern College pitcher Chelsea Oglevie. When Oberer rounded first base, her knee buckled, and she fell to the ground in pain. What happened next was an absolute display of love and respect. Oglevie and a teammate rushed to Oberer's side. They helped her get up and carried her around the diamond, stopping so she could tap each base and home plate.

Whether publicly recognized or not, those actions ultimately stemmed from the selfless love that originates with God. We first see this love in Scripture:

“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 was the most inspiring act of selfless love someone did unto you?

Q: How do you view sacrifice?

SACRIFICIAL LOVE

No greater love is known to man than the love Jesus displayed when He died for us. His purpose in life was to live without sin and become the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Jesus Christ was brutally whipped, tortured, publicly humiliated and then nailed to a cross. And even through all of that, He showed love and forgave His executioners before taking His final breath.

God sent Jesus to earth knowing this would happen. It was all part of His plan to redeem mankind back to 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

Not only can you experience God’s love through Jesus’ sacrifice, but you can also remain in His love every day and experience the blessings Jesus pours out. The Apostle Paul 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 Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, God’s love can be an extension of who you are as a coach and through every aspect of your life.

Q: What does Jesus’ sacrifice mean to you?

Q: How does His sacrifice transform your life and the way you coach?

WRAP-UP

GREATER LOVE

God’s promise of salvation is only possible because of His greater love for you—even to the point of sacrificing His own Son. Here are three ways that accepting and embracing that love should be expressed in your life:

1. Love Gives All. Sacrifice 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 aspects of love, but God requires 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 adversity, opposition and even hatred in this world, but God’s sacrificial love gives you the strength to overcome everything that comes against you.

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

OVERTIME

Transformational love is costly. It doesn’t see people as a means to an end. This type of love is selfless and sacrificial.

Take some time to read about the crucifixion of Jesus (Matthew 27:27–44 and John 19:1–37). Pause to reflect upon His sacrifice. Then, write down a couple of ways His greater love challenges you 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

Winning never fully satisfies your heart. Now, it may bring momentary happiness, excitement and relief, but the ache in your heart continues to cry out: *“More, more, more!”* Therein begins the elusive race to fill a never-ending void. Think about it. What’s the heartbeat behind the desire to win? Is it to prove something (either to others or to yourself)? Are you obsessed with the prestige, power or pageantry? Does the insecurity surrounding your job become an idol that gets all your attention and affection?

Larger than any win, a greater gift is provided to you—today—that can fulfill your deepest desires and unwavering yearnings. And this Gift lasts forever.

WARM-UP

A SHORT-LIVED GIFT

Q: Do you view coaching as a gift? Consider the gifts God gave you that feed into this calling. Explain.

Q: How has the unsteadiness of coaching affected your soul?

WORKOUT

TEMPORARY GIFT

It’s the thing that all competitors dread—those moments when an injury or getting older exposes the fact that everyone’s athletic gifts are temporary.

Basketball Hall of Fame inductee Tamika Catchings experienced that reality at the worst moment possible—midway during her senior season at the University of Tennessee. A torn ACL robbed her of a chance to play in the NCAA tournament and forced her to sit out her first WNBA season with the Indiana Fever.

There was no guarantee that Catchings would recover, and that hit her hard. So she spent the next few months not just rehabbing her knee, but also working on her relationship with God. The injury was a harsh reminder of Catchings’ temporary gift. For dedicated competitors, it’s a tough thing to face. But those who understand that sports are just one aspect of earthly life, rather than the only thing, find a clearer path to obtaining lasting contentment.

Q: How do you feel when one of your athletes is sidelined by an injury?

Q: If sports are a temporary gift, why do we put so much hope in them and seek their fulfillment in our lives?

ETERNAL GIFT

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

Jesus explained to Nicodemus that all of humanity had been born with sin in their hearts and needed to receive a new spirit through 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 will wear out and die one day, we have the greater promise of an amazing, unending life with God. Unlike our short-lived, temporary physical gifts and earthly lives, the greater gift of Heaven will last forever.

Q: How often do you think about what happens when you die?

Q: What comes to mind when you think about what happens after death?

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 attached to that promise:

- 1. The Gift of Hope.** We will always have difficult times in this world, but the greater gift is the knowledge 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 experience in this world will lack in comparison to the unimaginable blessings we will experience in our forever home.

*“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 in God’s presence. There will be nothing greater than that never-ending reality.

“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

The Greatest Gift that you can ever receive is a relationship with Jesus Christ. Since it’s eternal, it starts now and lasts forever. This same gift is also the greatest thing you can ever give your players. Often we allow the pursuit of temporary gifts (wins) to overshadow the ultimate gift.

Use the space below to list some of the areas of your life that you need to focus on the eternal and not the temporary:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

If you want to receive the greater gift of eternal life through a relationship with Jesus, talk to a trusted coach 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 8 >

GREATER IDENTITY

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

“Coach.”

It’s more than just a title or profession. For many of us, it’s our name and our identity. This role as a coach is so intertwined with how God created our souls. It’s what we’re supposed to do in life!

Yet when what we do is the definition of who we are, we quickly believe several lies about ourselves. We serve the scoreboard. We pursue power. We bulldoze barriers. We pursue performance—again and again and again.

Thankfully, we are defined by a greater identity. When correctly realized, it will forever change the way we view our identity as coach.

WARM-UP

Q: What is it like for you to hold the title of “coach”? Describe your experience.

Q: What lie(s) shape your identity as a coach?

WORKOUT

PROPER ID

Patrick Ewing is one of the greatest NBA centers of all time. But when he visited his old home arena in 2021, Madison Square Garden security repeatedly asked to see his photo pass before allowing him to access different parts of the building. Ewing was not happy and felt like everyone should have recognized him without asking for proper ID.

It’s a common feeling among popular athletes, coaches and other celebrities that who they are and what they’ve accomplished should allow them to gain access without any official proof.

This can even be a trap that lesser-known competitors might fall into—the need to be seen, known and treated well. That’s because it’s easy to get wrapped up in sports and allow competitive success to 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 who you are as a coach from other areas of your life? How does this play out in wanting to be seen, known and treated well?

Q: How often do you let your coaching success define who you are? Describe how this affects your outlook on life.

GOD’S ID

Not long after Jesus was gone, a man named Paul (also known as Saul) had a lot of pride in his many titles and descriptors. He was Jewish. He was Roman. He was a Pharisee. He was educated. He was an elite. He was a successful businessman.

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

But when Paul had an encounter with Jesus (in Acts 9), something inside him changed dramatically. He no longer held onto those parts of his identity so tightly. He was now, first and foremost, a child of God and a disciple of Christ:

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

Paul now understood these important truths 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: In what ways can you relate to Paul's need to be recognized for his background, his heritage and his accomplishments?

Q: What does it mean to be a child of God?

WRAP-UP

GREATER IDENTITY

There is no more confusion about who you are when you join God's family. 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 a trusted coach or an FCA staff member:

Q: What are some areas of your life do you struggle with your identity?

Q: What lies or false narratives do you believe about yourself? About God?

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

HUDDLE 9 >

GREATER PERFORMANCE

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

Performance counts. It isn’t a bad thing, especially when your job is tied to it. When incorrectly viewed, however, it will produce bad habits, wrong motivations and unnecessary pressures.

What if God wants to alter the way you view performance?

You no longer need to perform for your athletic director, the fans or the media. You don’t even need to perform for God. As a child of God, you don’t have anything to win, lose or prove. A greater performance—Jesus’ death on the cross and resurrection from the dead—is what defines you. Now, how you coach can be an act of worship to God.

WARM-UP

EYES ON ME

Q: When do you feel the most pressure to perform? Do you feel the intensity of people watching your every play?

Q: Have you ever considered that your coaching could be worship unto God?

WORKOUT

AUDIENCE OF ONE

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

That doesn’t mean they don’t feel pressure, but for any athlete who competes with this mindset, understanding that God is the only person they need to please can certainly bring peace, joy and freedom from fear.

Q: What would it look like to coach for an “Audience of One”?

Q: How would knowing that you don’t have anything to win, lose or prove to your “Audience of One” transform the way you coach?

LOSING TO WIN

When your identity is in Christ, you are no longer performing for yourself, your coaching staff, your team or your family. Once you only coach for Him, others can see Christ working in you and through you as a coach.

That’s why it’s so important to stay connected to “the vine” and remain in Christ (John 15:5). But that also means you must sacrifice your wants and plans and commit your life to Jesus. It may not always make sense, but for the coach, it’s like losing to win.

“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 the fullness of a life-changing relationship with God. But what you will receive in return is so much greater than anything the world can offer. You will have the Holy Spirit in you, and He will transform every part of your life, including your coaching.

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 do you think “losing to win” might look like in your life?

WRAP-UP

GREATER PERFORMANCE

When you have found your new identity in Christ, it will help you unlock your full potential and lead to a greater performance for His glory. You are now coaching 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) what you need most 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 Him first allows you to stay untangled from the world’s expectations of you as an athlete and as a disciple of Christ.

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

3. Greater Fruit. More than just athletic performance, staying connected to Jesus will produce godly characteristics in your life.

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

As you allow these truths to soak into your heart, the Holy Spirit will empower you to live out another powerful truth found in our theme verse:

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

OVERTIME

Read John 12:23–26.

Then, take some time to answer the following questions with your group or one-on-one with a trusted coach or an FCA staff member:

Q: What are some things that are holding you back that you might need to give up?

Q: Why is it so difficult sometimes to fully give your heart and your life to God?

Q: How do you think doing so might change the way you approach coaching and other areas of your life?

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 a coach, you’re always looking for the best ways to fuel your team. How many times do you remind your players about proper hydration, nutrition and rest? Good in, good out. It’s a simple equation.

Now consider the ways you’re personally fueling them through your words and behaviors. When you heap shame for underperformance and create fear of punishment, you attempt to produce great outcomes with bad deposits.

God doesn’t pursue you that way. In fact, He promises to empower your faith and life through the Holy Spirit. A greater fuel is available to you, and it will transform every part of your life.

WARM-UP

GOOD FUEL, BAD FUEL

Q: What are some bizarre foods or drinks you’ve witnessed your athletes consume prior to practice/competition?

Q: When you seek to personally fuel up your team, is it positive or negative fuel? Give some examples.

WORKOUT

NATURAL FUEL

Coaches and athletes are always looking for a competitive edge, and now more than ever, the sports world is emphasizing what you put inside your body. Olympic gold medalist Allyson Felix is a prime example of an elite competitor who extended her career far beyond the norm, and now many others are following her lead.

Unfortunately, many coaches and athletes are tempted to take unethical and even illegal shortcuts that might have an immediate benefit but end up causing long-term and potentially life-threatening problems.

Q: What are some natural ways today’s athletes are trying to get the most out of their bodies and extend their careers? What are the shortcuts you’ve seen that are detrimental?

Q: Describe your personal integrity when it comes to bad fuel being consumed by athletes.

SPIRITUAL FUEL

The world has fuel for your body, mind and spirit—things like drugs, alcohol, godless entertainment, false religions and self-serving ideologies—that can keep you from getting closer to God. The world’s fuel can also have damaging, long-term effects on your mental and spiritual health.

But when your life is consumed with Jesus (the Bread of Life), His fuel will bring peace, freedom and joy, and you will have a greater ability to share that fruits with others. The Apostle Paul taught there are three most important spiritual gifts:

“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 coach, but it will also empower you to fulfill 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? What are their effects on your soul?

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 glorify Him. Here are three ways Jesus’ greater fuel will impact all areas of your life:

1. Jesus Fuels Your Faith. While the world is offering fear, God is offering belief in something bigger and better that goes beyond confusion and doubt.

“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. While the world is offering hopelessness, God is offering the promise of a better today, a brighter future and an unimaginable eternity.

“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. While the world is offering anger and hate, God is offering unconditional, sacrificial and selfless love that can flow to you and through you.

“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 review some of the things the world has to offer as mental and spiritual fuel. Write some of them in the spaces provided below, and then use the other column to list God’s greater fuel that counters each of those things:

The World’s Fuel

God’s Fuel

Example: Fear

Faith

Q: Through what avenues or outlets is the world’s fuel inhibiting God’s fuel in your life?

Q: How can you begin to eliminate or limit access to the world’s fuel?

Q: How can you begin to spend more time and energy receiving God’s fuel?

HUDDLE 11 ✕ GREATER FREEDOM

WELCOME

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

Everyone has expectations for you as a coach—including you. The more expectations, the more you feel trapped. Guilt and shame are quick to jump on your insecurity, followed by fear and doubt.

Often this narrative gets played out with God too. Perhaps you believe the lie that you need to somehow appease His anger, even if you’ve already received Jesus as Lord and Savior. The journey God has for you is one of freedom. You are free from the penalty and power of sin, and you’re becoming increasingly free of the presence of sin through the transformational power of the Holy Spirit in you.

Think about being freed up in all aspects of your life. As disciples of Jesus, we are equipped to be the freest people in the world. Realizing this greater freedom will revolutionize every part of you, empowering you to be unstuck and unhindered.

WARM-UP ALL TIED UP

- Q: How do words like *unstuck* and *unhindered* sit with you? Are you experiencing those in your relationship with God? Your family? Your team?
- Q: What do you think it means that God has a greater freedom available for you?

WORKOUT ALL MIXED-UP

A lot of things might go through your mind while you coach, and many of those thoughts can involve your expectations, others’ expectations and maybe even God’s expectations. To make matters worse, there are often persistent feelings of comparison—trying to be like someone else or wanting what another coach has.

There’s no freedom to do your best with that kind of conflict, tension, confusion and doubt swirling around inside of you. It’s easy in those moments to feel trapped by your own thoughts and unsure of what to do.

- Q: What are some expectations that make you feel stuck and held back from reaching your full potential as a coach (and in life)? Where do those expectations originate?
- Q: What would it look like for you to coach and live “free” from worldly expectations?

ALL FREED UP

There is no difference between freedom in your coaching and freedom in other areas of your life. You won’t find true freedom anywhere without Christ.

That was His 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 because they were thinking about their natural freedom, but Jesus was talking about their spiritual freedom and how being trapped in their sinful behavior can limit their growth as followers of Christ.

God has greater things in mind for you, and His expectations for your coaching 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 fear of what others think. He wants you to give your best in all things and trust Him for the outcome.

Once you fully surrender those expectations and any other things in your life that are holding you back, that's when you can experience true freedom. That's when God will begin to unlock your full potential and help you fulfill His purpose for your life.

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

— 2 Corinthians 3:17

Q: What would your life look like if you to fully surrender your expectations and other things that hold you back?

Q: How do you think being free of any expectations other than God's might help you coach your best?

WRAP-UP **GREATER FREEDOM**

When you surrender everything to God, you can fully embrace your identity in Christ and stay untangled from all other expectations and become free to do your best no matter what. Here are three benefits you will experience through God's greater freedom:

1. Freedom from Worry. There is no more pressure to perform when your main concern is living for God.

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

2. Freedom from Doubt. There is no room for disbelief when your trust is wholly 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 more need 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

Either in your group or at another time with a trusted coach or an FCA staff member, answer the following questions:

Q: What are some areas of your life you haven't fully surrendered to Jesus?

Q: In what ways do you think those things might be keeping you from experiencing God's greater freedom?

Q: What do you need to do today that will help you surrender those things to Jesus and begin to experience true freedom in Him?

HUDDLE 12 **×** **GREATER FRUIT**

WELCOME

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

The true measure of your coaching impact may not be instantaneous. It’s the age-old adage that you’ll need to wait 20 years to see which players come back to talk to you and share about the difference that you made in their lives. The fruit (outcome or result) of coaching is undoubtedly powerful. As a key influencer in your athletes’ lives, it’s imperative for God to produce a greater fruit in you that overflows into theirs.

WARM-UP

THE FRUIT YOU PRODUCE

Q: So, how do you know the seeds you’re planting today will produce good fruit in your athletes’ lives in the future?

Q: What are some aspects of fruit cultivation (soil, planting, harvesting, etc.) that translate to your life and coaching when it comes to character development?

WORKOUT

UNDER THE JERSEY

Back in 1973, Tom Osborne took over as Nebraska’s head football coach and took full advantage of NCAA rules by having 180 players on the roster (compared to 105 players allowed today)—many of them walk-on, nonscholarship players.

Some of them would stick through preseason camp long enough to be in the team picture but would eventually quit as practice got tougher and more demanding. From the photo and the jerseys they wore, they’d be on the team, but in actuality their time was short-lived.

Osborne understood that competition reveals character. He was more concerned about what was represented under the jersey. Osborne knew that their character would make or break their performance on the field, their impact in the locker room, their results in the classroom and their future away from athletics.

Q: What are some aspects of your character that sports can sometimes reveal (good or bad)?

Q: Is God pinpointing anything in your character right now that He wants to refine?

UNDER THE SURFACE

When Jesus was traveling from town to town and teaching the truth about God, religious leaders were good at looking good on the surface. They wore the right clothes, said the right words and performed the right rituals. But Jesus was far more interested in what was under the surface and inside a person’s heart. He cared about inward character over outward performance. In John 8, we see this principle carried out in a metaphor—what Jesus describes as the vine, the branches and its fruit.

Many years later, the apostle Paul would list nine characteristics a follower of Christ 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 coach, 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 player is messing up.
- Embracing **goodness** when other teams or coaches are breaking the rules.
- Choosing **faithfulness** when coaches give up or betray.
- Demonstrating **gentleness** when opponents are talking trash or slandering.
- Focusing on **self-control** when things don't go your way.

Q: Which Fruit of the Spirit do you struggle with the most?

Q: How may God be cultivating this Fruit inside you? How would its growth change you?

WRAP-UP GREATER FRUIT

More than just changing your perspective on coaching, staying connected to Jesus will allow Him to cultivate lasting, godly characteristics inside of you. Here are three kinds of greater fruit He wants to produce through your life:

1. Fresh Fruit. Godly characteristics can be produced no matter what the circumstance—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 characteristics are for your benefit and the benefit 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 characteristics can be produced consistently and have a long-term impact on those 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 scenarios you might face as a coach. Under the two columns provided, write down a good Fruit (from Galatians 5:22–23) and a bad fruit for each:

| <u>Athletic Scenarios</u> | <u>Good Fruit</u> | <u>Bad Fruit</u> |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Ex: Winning big | Love, respect, self-control | Pride, disrespect, bragging |
| Winning big | _____ | _____ |
| Losing badly | _____ | _____ |
| Opponents cheating | _____ | _____ |
| Getting fired | _____ | _____ |
| Coaches struggling | _____ | _____ |

HUDDLE 13 **×**

GREATER PURPOSE

WELCOME

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

When the season isn't going as planned, it might be hard to stay motivated to push through it all. When life gets tough, it is easy to question God.

But darkness, doubt and despair don't get the final word. That's because when you coach and live for God, you can be confident of your greater purpose.

WARM-UP

WHAT MATTERS MOST?

Q: How do you motivate your team when the season isn't going as planned?

Q: When a season is in a rough patch for you personally, who/what/where do you turn?

WORKOUT

WHY DO I COACH?

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

Usually that question comes up when dealing with adversity like job loss, losing seasons, team struggles, weariness, relational or family issues or life's many distractions.

And when you're not sure, tangible results like personal achievement, team goals and long-term dreams (expanded career opportunities) tend to be the default motivation.

Q: So, why do you coach?

Q: How often is your purpose as a coach at the forefront of all that you do?

WHO IS IT ALL FOR?

In John 17, Jesus was a few days away from being crucified, buried in a tomb and raised from the dead. He knew that He had limited time with His followers. That's why Jesus spent a lot of His remaining time on Earth praying for the disciples and all people who would one day believe and commit their lives to telling 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 teach them how to be a disciple of Jesus:

“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 are you tempted to coach or live for yourself?

Q: How do those passages in Matthew challenge you to compete and live for a greater purpose as a disciple of Jesus who makes disciples?

WRAP-UP

GREATER PURPOSE

When your motivations in life come into question, always know that you have been called to coach and to live for Someone and Something greater than yourself. Here are three ways your greater purpose will manifest itself in your life:

- 1. Greater Glory.** Understanding your greater purpose reminds you that the glory goes first and foremost to God!

“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 launch you into a new mission and will exceed your wildest expectations.

“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

As you begin to understand your greater purpose, God will continue to cultivate and activate inside of you a desire to live out a powerful truth found in our daily theme verse:

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

OVERTIME

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

| | <u>Sports</u> | <u>Everyday Life</u> |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| 1. Glorify God: | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Love God: | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Love others: | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Make disciples: | _____ | _____ |

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

If coaching can be an act of worshipping God, then we must evaluate heart posture (focus, direction, motivation) toward Him. Get honest for a moment. Is God solely a means to an end? Meaning, do you view Him as the lucky genie that will help you win if you try to do the right things in hopes of earning His favor? It's easy to glorify God when you want something from Him or when the scoreboard says what you want it to.

But does God still get your worship at the low points?

Moreover, transacting with your players isn't beneficial in coaching; God doesn't require that type of relationship with you, either. Rather, He's focused on transformation in both your coaching and your relationship with Him.

As the Holy Spirit works in your heart, He will reorient your heart posture to be one of continual worship. A greater glory is available and accessible. You trade in the cheap praise for the costly praise—even when it doesn't make sense. Why? Because God deserves our greater glory.

WARM-UP

INWARD GLORY

Q: How would you describe your heart posture toward God? Is your inner glory for yourself or for His greater plan?

Q: Is it easier to worship (praise, glorify, trust, focus, etc.) when things go well or when things go badly?

WORKOUT

OUTWARD GLORY

It's a common scene at most collegiate or professional athletic events and is becoming increasingly common in sports everywhere. Coaches and athletes are always setting the bar, and it's pretty high.

When a great athletic feat or accomplishment is made, the accolades roll in—the high fives, the roaring of the crowds, the announcer booming through the speakers. It's easy to live for praise.

And of course, after the competition, how you respond to praise and whom you credit 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 competitors are either thinking about themselves or spending time with God.

Q: Consider the moments where things go right. What's your natural predisposition to praise?

Q: How might God be challenging you to reorient your coaching to authentic glory?

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. Another part of His purpose was to bring glory to God through His teachings, His compassion and His miraculous works.

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 lowered Himself to wash the disciples' feet—something a servant would do, not something you would expect from the Son of God. Jesus' ultimate glory to God came through in His death, burial and resurrection, which was God's plan for His life:

“I have glorified you on the earth by completing the work you gave me to do.”

— John 17:4

While Jesus was glorified upon His resurrection, He was glorified to bring greater glory to God. In the same way, when we receive glory for things we have done through Jesus, we are to 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: How would you describe the glory Jesus gave unto the Father?

Q: What is the significance of Jesus glorifying the Father?

WRAP-UP GREATER GLORY

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

- 1. Glorified Life.** God didn't just create us, 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, 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 taste of what our eternal lives will be like 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 pray the following prayer:

Lord, thank You for the opportunity to coach. Transform my heart to authentically glorify You no matter what. Help me to always give You the glory first. May I recognize that everything I do is by You, from You and for You. Amen.

HUDDLE 15 >

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

It takes a team. Every person doing his or her duty, all while focused on the team’s mission at hand. No obstacle is too large; no trial too tough. Learning and growth are simultaneous. Whether victory or defeat, the team remains faithful and focused on the fight.

Coach, as a disciple of Jesus, you’re on a team of like-minded believers, each with a specific gifting aimed to fulfill the Great Commission—to make disciples who make disciples. You cannot *go* alone. You cannot *grow* alone. A greater team awaits. The team needs you. And you need them. It takes a team.

WARM-UP

POWER IN NUMBERS

- Q: What attributes comprised the greatest team you ever coached or have dreamed about coaching?
- Q: What does it mean that you cannot go alone or grow alone in your faith?

WORKOUT

DREAM TEAM

In 1992, the International Olympic Committee allowed NBA players to compete in the Summer Olympics for the first time. USA Basketball assembled one of the greatest collections of athletes ever, and they became known as the “Dream Team.” To no one’s surprise, they dominated the competition all the way to the gold medal.

But there are more aspects to a team than athletic ability and talent. In fact, a team can be gifted and not be successful if its individual members don’t have chemistry and unity—two key factors determined by loyalty, selflessness, sacrifice, honesty and trust.

- Q: Do you have intentional strategies to build team cohesion? If so, what are they?
- Q: Is the Lord challenging you when it comes to building into your team? Explain the challenges you see or feel.

GOD’S TEAM

One of the first things Jesus did when He began His ministry was to put together a team. He found 12 ordinary men to become His disciples. Several other people also joined the team—men and women who gravitated to Jesus because of His wisdom, compassion and miracle-working power and believed He was the Messiah.

But Jesus’ team was never meant to be limited to just a handful of people. When Jesus went back to Heaven, around 120 of His followers were ready to take on the challenge of building the Church.

In Acts 2, a smaller group gathered to pray for God’s direction during the Jewish faith’s annual Feast of Weeks. The promised Holy Spirit arrived to empower them to witness to the many people in Jerusalem at the time. Within a matter of hours, God’s team grew to more than 3,000 people!

Now, with billions of Christ followers 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 on your behalf in the days before His death and resurrection:

“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

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

Q: Why did Jesus assemble a team?

Q: Why is this team important to your spiritual vitality?

WRAP-UP GREATER TEAM

Understanding your greater purpose means you spread God’s love to others in an effort to glorify God’s Kingdom. Here are three ways the world will know that you are a part of this greater team:

1. Sacrificial Team. People will see a difference in you and God’s team when they see the love you have for 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—limited to no one and open to everyone who chooses 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

Take time to evaluate who’s on your team—not your actual team or coaching staff but your spiritual team. Has someone disciplined you? Do you have a mentor? Is there a go-to person in your life that will challenge and encourage you as a disciple of Jesus, husband/wife, father/mother, coach, etc.? Are you under the leadership of a local church?

Is God calling you to get on someone else’s team to do the same? Using the spaces provided below, write down your notes to the above prompts.

My Team:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

God is calling me to get on this person’s team: _____

HUDDLE 16 >

GREATER THINGS

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

God is passionate about your transformation. He desires to do a work *in* you to make you look more like Jesus, and He wants to do a work *through* you to share Him with a hurting world.

As we wrap up this journey together, know that your journey is only the beginning. God has a greater purpose for your life—and He can do greater things *in* and *through* you as He becomes greater in your life.

WARM-UP

BIG DREAMS

Q: What is your largest dream in life?

Q: How is God doing a work *in* you and *through* you right now? If you're unsure, how can you ask God to be doing a work *in* you and *through* you?

WORKOUT

CHAMPIONSHIP RINGS

Many experts and fans consider Michael Jordan to be the greatest basketball player of all time. Ironically, Jordan 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, Jordan 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 an NCAA All-American, won an NCAA title and, of course, won seven NBA championship rings.

Like Jordan, there's something to be said about not limiting what God wants to do through you. When you embrace His purpose, you will experience all of the greater things He has planned for your life!

Q: How often do you put limitations on what you can do as a coach?

Q: In what ways 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 empowered those disciples and other close followers to do greater things than they could imagine through the Holy Spirit. Jesus knew there was so much more a mobilized, empowered group of His followers could do.

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 through your obedience and faithfulness to God, through instruction from His Word and through the empowerment of His Holy Spirit, which you receive when you 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 will launch you into a new mission that will exceed your wildest expectations. 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 1:8a

2. Greater Mission. There’s no better way to spend your time, talent and treasure than to share God’s life-changing and life-saving love with others.

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

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

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

— Philippians 3:14

OVERTIME

As we conclude this journey, take a moment to reflect on the reason we started walking together in the first place—to fulfill the words John the Baptist spoke when Jesus’ ministry was about to begin:

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

Spend a few moments writing down different areas where God is challenging you to do things for (and with) Him.

Now take time to pray:

Lord, I want to do greater things for You. I want my life to make a difference that will last for eternity. Holy Spirit, transform me from the inside out and do a work in me and through me. Create a deeper desire to make disciples. You provide the greater things. Let me do them with You each step of the way. Amen.

GET INVOLVED WITH FCA

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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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GREATER



COACH'S MANDATE

PRAY as though nothing of eternal value is going to happen in my athletes' lives unless God does it.

PREPARE each practice and game, giving my utmost for His highest.

SEEK not to be served by my athletes for personal gain, but serve them as Christ served the church.

BE SATISFIED not with producing a winning record, but with producing winning athletes.

ATTEND carefully to my private and public walk with God, knowing that the athlete will never rise to a standard higher than that being lived by the coach.

GLORIFY Christ in my coaching, trusting the Lord will then draw athletes to Himself.

DESIRE to have a growing hunger for God's Word, a transformed heart and daily obedience.

DEPEND solely upon God for transformation, one athlete at a time.

LIVE OUT Christ's word in a Christ-like manner, on and off the field of competition.

RECOGNIZE that it is impossible to bring glory to both myself and Christ at the same time.

ALLOW my coaching to produce the fruit of the Spirit, thus producing athletes who are authentic followers of Christ.

TRUST God to reveal to my athletes His chosen purposes, regardless of whether the wins are clearly visible.

COACH with humble gratitude, as one privileged to be God's coach.

