

***A Note to Coaches:  
What is a Teachable Spirit for an Athlete?***

The discipline of a teachable spirit is central to the Christian life, and the team sports setting is a perfect place to learn and practice this concept. Although the phrase “teachable spirit” is not found in Scripture, God’s Word is filled with passages that speak of the importance of a desire to learn, grow, and develop.

This discipline — the quality which enables a person to set aside his own routines and thoughts, in preference of learning the habits and wisdom of godliness — is in stark contrast to the prevailing habits of our modern athletic culture. Pride is the norm for many athletes — demonstrated by professional athletes who believe that what they say or do is above the code established for mere mortals, and trickling down to collegiate and high school athletes who often enjoy a “privileged” status and demonstrate that self-centeredness in their treatment of coaches, officials, or anyone else who thinks they might have some wisdom or experience to impart.

What is sorely needed in athletics, then, is the spirit of teachability. A player who looks you in the eye and listens without interruption, and then puts that teaching into practice, is a joy to coach. This discipline is the fuel for improvement and growth, and should be a subject of every coach’s prayers for his team.

Our hope is that this season-long study will take your team beyond a self-motivated attempt to improve a character trait. We pray that your players will grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ and will desire to glorify Him in all they do, because that relationship is what will produce a teachable spirit in them. As your team reads Scripture passages together and discusses their implications, you will have opportunity to lead them in an understanding of many truths — what a teachable spirit is and how it acts, how anger and pride block a teachable spirit, how wisdom and humility are its partners, and *most importantly* that a teachable heart attitude comes from God and is dependent on a genuine relationship with Him.

Every athlete, whatever the depth of his faith, can benefit from considering what Scripture teaches about this discipline; the truths contained in God’s Word are critical not only to success in the athletic realm, but also to growth in every area of a young person’s life. We deeply appreciate your efforts and willingness to take the time to focus on the spiritual growth of your team, as we have seen and experienced — on a personal level — the importance and example of a godly coach who teaches excellence in his sport, and who encourages and accompanies his athletes in their walk with Christ. We pray that the young people under your guidance and care will desire to glorify Jesus Christ and will develop the willingness to be *taught* by God and submit to the godly teaching of others. Thanks for your work, and our prayers are with you!