

THE ULTIMATE TEAMMATE

For generations coaches have spoken to athletes about the characteristics of a great team. At the core of every outstanding team is good team chemistry. During my 37 years of coaching high school athletics, I worked with teams that had a lot of physical talent and teams that did not possess as much. I also worked with teams that had excellent team chemistry as well as teams that were fractured by dissention among the players and coaches. What I learned is that regardless of physical talent, teams that do not have great team chemistry will not be able to beat the toughest teams on their schedule, and when big games are on the line, teams with poor chemistry seldom perform in the clutch. Conversely, I observed many times that teams with less physical ability but possess great chemistry are much more inclined to perform to the best of their ability when the game is on the line. I firmly believe most coaches would rather have a team with average ability and great chemistry than a very talented group with wavering attitudes. Obviously, the very best teams are those that possess great talent and chemistry!

So what characteristics create great team chemistry? I believe at the core of it all is LOVE. If the players love each other, if the players love the coaches and vice versa, and if everyone genuinely loves the sport, then TRUST will permeate the locker room and extend to the playing field or court. If a team possesses love and trust for each other, WORK ETHIC will take care of itself. Everyone will work as hard as they can because they don't want to let each other down. They will fight like crazy to defend the "FAMILY." If a team has love, trust, and great work ethic, everyone will maintain a great ATTITUDE as they commit themselves to playing with a sense of DUTY and HONOR. Finally, if a team is built on a foundation of FAITH, they will practice and play each day as a family with a sense of HIGHER PURPOSE. Each individual on the team will realize that they are playing for more than just themselves and that they are playing for those they love and those who love them as well. This sense of LOYALTY to others will cause them to SACRIFICE and give absolutely everything they have, their heart and soul, to the team. If we could take all of the attributes underlined above and combine them all into one person, we would certainly have the perfect teammate. Who would not want someone who possessed all of these traits on their team?

God sent us this perfect teammate 2,000 years ago. His name was Jesus. Beyond doubt, LOVE was at the core of His existence. FAITH and TRUST were the cornerstones upon which He built his FAMILY of disciples. The team He assembled maintained great ATTITUDES and WORK ETHIC, as well as a strong sense of DUTY and HONOR, as they traveled together to help lead others in this great tournament of life, with the championship game being held at the Pearly Gates of Heaven.

Jesus showed an obvious sense of playing for a HIGHER PURPOSE and displayed the ultimate sign of LOYALTY as He SACRIFICED everything! He could have surrendered to the pain, fatigue, misery, and ridicule and called it quits, but instead He chose to see it through to the end. Ultimately, He sacrificed His own life for the sake of the team... and for me and you!!

Each day as we play this game of life, we get to choose whether we want Jesus, the ultimate teammate, to be on our team. We get to decide if we want Him on our side as we face the toughest opponents life has to offer. He is alive and well and desperately wants to help us win this game today, tomorrow, and every day as we advance through the tournament of life. With His help we can win the ultimate championship and gain admission permanently into Heaven's Hall of Fame.

Will we let Jesus be a part of our team and help lead us to victory? THE CHOICE IS OURS EACH DAY!!

"A VICTORY WON OVER SELF, IS THE ONLY VICTORY ACCEPTABLE TO GOD." - Charles Nelson Douglas