



BECOMING AN ATHLETE OF GOD

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APPRAISAL OF YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Competition is, in essence, an opportunity to appraise your abilities in comparison to others. It is also good to have our spiritual life appraised to find out if we're measuring up to what God wants us to be.

Read Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

1. What does the seed symbolize? (Mt. 13:19; Mark 4:14; Luke 8:11)

2. What are the four different soils and what kind of person does each soil represent?

a) (Mt. 13:4,19; Mark 4:4,15; Luke 8:5,12)

b) (Mt. 13:4,20,21; Mark 4:5,6,16-17; Luke 8:6,13)

c) (Mt. 13:7,22; Mark 4:7,18-19; Luke 8:7,14)

d) (Mt. 13:8,23; Mark 4:8,20; Luke 8:8,15)

3. What causes people to be like roadside soil? (Mt. 13:19; Luke 8:12)

4. What are the pressures that athletes face which would make them like rocky soil?

5. What are the pressures that athletes face which would make them like thorny soil?

6. What will make athletes good soil?

7. **Read Psalm 1.**

Hebrew poetry often develops word pictures in order to convey the truth in the passage. Picture in your mind a tree growing near flowing waters. What adjectives come to mind as you picture that tree? (vs.3)

What are the applications for the Christian athlete?

8. Why does the tree in Psalm 1 grow so well?

9. How can I develop good roots, and make sure they receive enough moisture?

10. What are the things in your athletic world which keep you from developing firm roots?

11. What is the result of the seed planted in good soil? (vs.8,23; Mark4:8,20; Luke 8:8,15)

ASSIGNMENT

a) Which soil do you identify with? Who do you want to be? Talk to God about your desires.

b) Read and meditate on Psalm 1 this week and pray about its message.

GOD'S GOAL FOR THE CHRISTIAN ATHLETE

If we were recruited by the nation's top coach in our sport, we would consider it a privilege and honour. If the coach began to outline his high aspirations and goals for us, we would need to decide if we wanted to pursue those goals faithfully. We are recruited by the King of Kings (Col. 1:12-14) and He has laid out goals for us. Should we not find out what they are and commit our lives to their fulfilment?

1. What does our athletic world tell us we should be like? _____

Read Romans 8:28-29; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; Gal. 4:19

2. What is God's ultimate goal for me? _____

3. What do you think it means to be conformed/transformed into the image of Christ?

4. How can my other goals in life, including athletics, fit into God's goal for me?

Read Phil. 1:6

5. What is God's commitment to His goal for me? _____
6. When did His commitment begin and how long will He be working toward it?

Read Phil. 3:4-14

7. What are some things that Paul was willing to give up to pursue God's goal for his life? (v.5-8). How much did he actually give up? (v.8) _____

8. What are some of the benefits Paul believed he would receive as a result? (7-12)

9. What are the parallels in our lives from this passage? How does God want me to arrange my priorities in light of His goal for me? _____

ASSIGNMENT

1. Have I decided to pursue God's goal for my life? _____

2. Where have I placed my athletic goals in light of His desires for me?

3. If you are struggling with the decision to follow God's plan, spend time this week meditating on Who it is who has these goals for you. (Psalm 23, Psalm 139, Jer. 29:11, Rom. 11:33-36).

LIVING THE SPIRIT EMPOWERED LIFE

All of us feel the pressure to embrace our culture's worldly values. In this lesson we'll look at God's power source which, when applied, allows Christians to live a life pleasing to God.

A. The Frustrating Life of Self-Effort (Read Romans 7:14-25)

1. What are some things that Paul says about his desires to do right?

2. What are some reasons that Paul gives for having this dilemma?

3. Read Galatians 5:17. What similarities do you see between Gal. 5:17 and what we found in Romans 7?

4. Why does God not want you to live a life of self-effort and defeat?

B. God's Solution to a Life of Self-Effort and Defeat

1. Read Gal. 5:16-25. What do you see in these verses that describe God's solution to a life of self-effort?

2. Read Eph. 5:18-21. In Eph. 5:18 we are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Paul contrasts being drunk with wine with being filled with the Holy Spirit. How does this help us understand what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

3. Verses 19 & 20 describe the results of being Spirit filled. What differences do you see between a Spirit-filled Christian and one who is trying to live by his own efforts? (Rom.7)

C. Prerequisites to Being Filled with the Holy Spirit

1. Read Matthew 5:6. Why is it important to hunger and thirst for righteousness?

2. Read 1 John 1:9. Why is it important to confess our sins?

3. Read Romans 12:1. Why do you think it is necessary to surrender every area of your life to God before He will fill you with His Spirit?

4. What role does faith play in being filled with the Spirit?

a) According to Eph. 5:18, what has God commanded us to do?

b) His Promise:

"And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."
(1 John 5:14-15)

If we were to pray in faith to be filled with the Holy Spirit, how could we be confident that God would answer our prayer? _____

5. **Application:** The following is a suggested prayer. It is one way of expressing your desire to be filled with the Spirit.

"Dear Father, I need you. I acknowledge that I have been directing my own life and that, as a result, I have sinned against You. I thank You that You have forgiven my sins through Christ's death on the cross for me. I now invite Christ to again take His place on the throne of my life. Fill me with the Holy Spirit as you commanded me to be filled, and as you promised in Your Word that You would do if I asked in faith. I pray this in the name of Jesus. As an expression of my faith, I now thank You for directing my life and filling me with the Holy Spirit." Does this prayer express the desire of your heart?

OBEDIENCE AND PERSONAL PURITY

Today's culture has drifted a long way from God's design for sexual relationships. Instead of sex only being in the confines of a married heterosexual relationship, our culture has adopted the view anything goes. Yet, for the Christian, it is important not to use culture as our model, but to discover God's design for our lives. The purpose of this lesson is:

1. To show that immorality originates in the mind, and that God must give us victory there by his Holy Spirit.
2. To show that the Bible teaches that the sexual relationship should be confined to the proper area -ie. marriage.
3. To show that our gracious God forgives and cleanses in this area as He does in all others, so that we need carry no unnecessary load of guilt.
4. To show that in all our conduct towards the opposite sex, we must set the highest example, and give no occasion for others to question the consistency with our Christian beliefs.

A. Purity and the Mind

1. What does Christ say of impure thought? (Mt. 5:27,28)

2. List the things on which we are to think (Phil. 4:8) _____

Why does the human find it difficult to think of these things? (Ro. 8:6,7)

3. How then do we obtain victory over impure thoughts? (Gal. 5:16-25)

4. What else should we do to avoid thinking impure thoughts? (Ro. 13:13-14)

5. What practical things can one do to keep a pure mind? _____

Note: Temptation is not the same as sin in the thought life. Impure thoughts may pass quickly through the mind, but sin comes from **dwelling** (and acting) on the thought.

B. Purity and the Opposite Sex

1. What does the Bible say about the sexual relationship in its proper place? (Heb. 13:4) _____

2. What are some good reasons God would want people to wait for marriage to have sex? _____

3. When tempted by immorality, what should you do? (1Cor. 6:18-20)

4. List 3 things you can know when tempted sexually? (1Cor. 10:13)

5. What does 1Thes. 4:3-8 teach us in order to be pure? _____

6. What kind of people should Christians be dating and why? _____

C. Purity and Forgiveness

1. If we fail in this area, what do the following verses say about God's forgiveness?
 Psalm 103:10-12 _____
 1 John 1:9 _____

LIFE APPLICATION

1. What area of impurity in your life do you need to deal with? _____

2. Choose an appropriate verse or passage from this lesson, apply it to your situation and write the result you expect to attain. _____

THE POWER OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is an amazing book. It is a compilation of 66 different books, written by nearly 40 different human authors, ranging from merchants to labourers from clergy to farmers. Each writer wrote independently of each other over a 15 century period. Yet, it is a single subject and is coherent in content. As well, historians and archaeologists have found the Bible's historical reliability to be exact.

Not only is the Bible an amazing piece of historical literature, but also, through it the Lord speaks to us in a powerful way. In this study we will examine the power of the Bible and the essential part it plays in our Christian life.

A. Read Psalm 119

1. What does the psalmist call God's Word in the following verses of Ps. 119?

Verse 1 _____	Verse 7 _____
Verse 2 _____	Verse 43 _____
Verse 3 _____	Verse 72 _____
Verse 4 _____	Verse 89 _____
Verse 5 _____	Verse 124 _____
Verse 6 _____	

2. What does this tell you of the importance of knowing God's Word?

3. What value does the Word have for us and why? (v.72)

4. What is God's part in us learning the Word? (v.73)

B. How God's Word Meets our Needs

1. The psalmist found that respecting and learning God's Word resulted in:

Verse 7

Verse 9

Verse 11

Verse 20

2. From verses 10-16, list the attitudes of the psalmist that reflect his love for the Word of God.

C. Results of Appropriating God's Word

1. What the Word does for us

2. Knowing and memorizing the Word makes us (v.98)

3. Meditating on it gives us (v.99)

4. Why is this? (v.105)

LIFE APPLICATION

1. What impresses you the most from Psalm 119?

2. Write three ways in which you recognize your personal need for God's Word today.

THE CHRISTIAN AND OTHERS

Why Share Your Faith?

In the last decade, many high profile athletes have appeared in the media talking about their relationship with the Lord. What motivates them?

What motivated Christ to leave heaven and come to die in our place on the cross? He did it as an expression of His desire to "seek and save the lost." He was "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

The same concern for people motivated Paul, a prominent Jewish intellectual and leader, to give up his position in society to persuade people within the cities in Asia and Europe to follow the Lord.

The aim of this lesson is to discuss why it is important to share Christ with others.

1. Read carefully Romans 3:10-12 and 3:23:

a) Why does the writer use terms like "all", "none", or their equivalents?

b) Why do you think he repeats these terms so often?

c) What does this tell you about moral, respectable people?

2. What is the result of sin? (Romans 6:23)

Note: The Bible teaches that death does not mean a cessation of existence. Death is separation of the soul, the spiritual part of man, from the physical body. Spiritual death means the separation of man from God after physical death.

3. Read John 3:16-18 carefully:

a) What two kinds of people are described here?

b) What is the only reason that one kind is condemned?

4. Read 2 Corinthians 5:21:

a) How good does it say Christ was?

b) But what happened to Him when He died?

c) What was the result for you?

5. Why did Jesus come into the world? (Luke 19:10; Mark 10:45)

6. Read Acts 20:24-27, 31-32:

a) How important would you say sharing his faith was to Paul?

7. Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

According to verses 14 and 15, what motivated Paul to share his faith?

a) What are we called to do according to 2 Cor. 5:20?

b) As a representative of Christ, what would your message be to those who do not know Him personally (2 Cor. 5:18-20)

LIFE APPLICATION

1. What did Jesus command you to do? (Mark 16:15; Mt. 28:19-20)

2. What does Christ say about the one who is ashamed of Him? (Luke 9:26)

3. If you are faithful to follow Jesus, what does He promise to do? (Mt. 4:19)

4. State the reasons you feel it is important for you personally, to be a witness for Christ?

5. What are some ways you can share God's love with those around you?

6. Make a list of five people you would like to share with:
