

Basketball Devotionals

NOTE ON PRACTICE DEVOTIONS:

- All practices will stop at the half hour and gather for a team devotion.
- Devotions should last no more than 5 minutes.
- After 5 minutes teams are free to resume practice even if other teams are not finished.

SEASON VERSE: 1 Corinthians 10:31: “Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

**Encourage your players to memorize this verse. It will be the focus of all the practice devotions.

Week 1 - Getting to Know Your Players

Purpose: Get Acquainted

- Have players introduce themselves.
- Why did you sign up to play basketball?
- Why do you like to play?
- Do you have a favorite basketball team/player? - Have every kid answer these questions.

**As you can see, the first week is very much an introductory week. The goal for week 1 is just to get to know your players and have them become comfortable with you as well as become comfortable sitting down and doing a devotional time.*

Week 2 – “What’s The Point?”

Purpose: Basketball, like everything else, is a place to glorify God

Scripture Verse: 1 Corinthians 10:31: “Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

(Ask questions about the verse.) What God is saying? He is telling us that everything is to be done for him – for his glory. For his glory means to make him

better known or more famous. The Bible tells us that our goal in life should be to bring God glory in everything we do. With that in mind, what are some ways you could glorify God as a student in school? Or how could you glorify God at home? When we do everything the way God would do it, we show Him off, make him more famous for others to see what he is like. Your homework for next week is to think about ways we can show God off in the way you play basketball. What does that look like? Come prepared to answer those questions next week.

Let's repeat 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

Week 3 - "Aim For The Goal!"

Purpose: We need to aim at the right target.

Every time you shoot the ball, you have a target. What is that target? Since the aim of basketball is to score, then your target needs to be the basket. Why? Because where you aim is where the ball will ultimately go. If you want the ball in the basket, you need to aim at the basket.

Just like in basketball, you need the right target in life, something to aim for.

Last week we talked about what that target should be. What is that? It is to bring glory to God. So what should be aiming for in life? It is to bring glory to God.

So if this is the point, then we are aimed correctly when our target is to make God famous in all we do.

This is what we are to shoot for. We need to make this our target.

With the right target in basketball, we score. With the right target in all our life, we win.

Let's repeat 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

Week 4 - "Seize the Moment!"

Purpose: Prepare to bring glory to God.

When a player is fouled while shooting he/she gets to shoot free throws. Play is stopped and while everyone watches the player gets to shoot at the basket. Some do it well and some not so well. The players who shoot free throws well have a routine they have practiced consistently. Shooting free throws in a game

is about establishing good form and routine in practice; then doing it over and over. So when it is game time, you are just going through the routine and form from practice. Preparation in practice makes for good free throw shooting in games.

We have been talking about glorifying God in all our lives – school, family, even here in basketball. What does this mean again?

Just like the player who has to shoot free throws while everyone watches, there will be times, special times where you will be tested to see if you will bring glory to God or not. People will be watching and you will either show off God or yourself.

One of those times will be when you do well, when you succeed. Others may come up to you after a game, at school, with your friends, where you have done well and congratulate you. Tell you what a great job you did. Tell you how awesome you are. What will you do? How will you come through in that key moment? Will you show off yourself at that point or will you show off God?

The key to being ready for that time is just like shooting a free throw. Preparation; with a form and a routine. The form we have talked about - taking aim at the right target – glorifying God. The routine is thinking about how you will handle that moment.

In other words, plan to focus the attention on God. This shows off God as the one who made it all possible rather than focusing the attention on yourself.

Let's repeat 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

Week 5 - "Feel for the Ball"

Purpose: You learn to trust by purposely letting go of your ability.

Contrary to what many young players actually do, dribbling is not done while staring at the ball. You dribble with your fingertips and pads of the hands without looking at the ball. Keep your head up at all times. Keep your eyes focused on what's happening on the court.

You feel where the ball is with your fingertips. You don't look at the ball. Look at where you are going. To be a good dribbler you must feel the ball. To get that feel for the ball you need to learn to trust your hands over your eyes. To do that, you purposely put aside another sense – your eyes. You force yourself not to

look down. You need to dribble over and over with eyes up – until you learn to trust your hands feel.

Now take this idea to life. Let's think about learning to trust our feel for the ball as learning to trust God in life.

How do we learn to trust Him? Same as learning the feel for the ball - by purposely putting aside our ability and trusting His ability. When we are feeling overwhelmed, afraid, worried, instead of thinking we can do it, we can handle it, we purposely put aside our trust in ourselves and instead trust God.

In order to be a Christian we must trust that Jesus can save us from sin. We must put aside our abilities and know that only what Jesus did when He died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins is able to enable us to be forgiven of our sins and have a relationship with God.

Faith is not trusting what we can do but what Jesus can do. Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. He said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no comes unto the Father but by me." We must trust what Jesus says and what He did on the cross. We must trust Him to save us. When we do we are forgiven of our sins, we become a child of God and we give glory to God.

Let's repeat our memory verse: 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

Week 6 – "Pass It!"

Purpose: Sharing brings glory to God

Passing is an integral part of the game of basketball. Being a good passing team creates more opportunities to score and makes basketball a true team sport. To be a good passer though, you must be willing to give up the ball and let your teammates score.

Sharing is a part of all our lives. If you have brothers or sisters, you've learned how to share—right? What are some of things you've shared before? Toys? Games? The reason we share is not punishment or to not have fun. It's the opposite. We should share not only so other people enjoy what we give them but also because we can enjoy giving. If you do not give or share, you are selfish and that brings no joy. Greater joy comes from sharing rather than keeping for ourselves.

We also share because God wants us to. When we obey Him by sharing we do it for His glory. Matthew 5:16 says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

We have talked about playing basketball in a way that shows off God, that glorifies him. This idea of sharing is one of those ways we show off God. Jesus is calling us to serve just like he did. We show him off when we also serve like he did – take what we have and share it with others.

Let's repeat 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

Week 7 - "Go For It!"

Purpose: Growing requires great effort.

Rebounding is about effort. The best rebounders in basketball haven't necessarily been the best players or greatest athletes but were rather the people who gave the greatest effort. Being good rebounders allows our team to shoot more shots and the other team to shoot fewer.

Much like rebounding, success in life can often be attributed to hard work. So, in order to get good grades at school, you must work hard: do your homework, listen to your teachers, etc. Whether it's school or work or anything in life, a person must work hard to achieve.

The same is true for us in our relationship with God. God wants us to grow in our relationship with Him. That will take effort. We must be willing to read the Bible, spend time in prayer and attend church so we can grow. Our faith in God should drive us to do good works to bring Him glory. Working hard to rebound in basketball helps our team win. In much the same way, if we keep God at the center of our lives and allow our faith to drive us to good works, we will grow in our relationship with God and we will bring Him glory.

Let's repeat 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

Week 8 - "Play Your Part!"

Purpose: Playing my part is important to others.

When you are on defense, your job is to keep yourself between the basket and the player you are guarding. If she has the ball, you keep him from going by you. This is your part. This is your role on the team. If each player does his part, then we will play good defense. If one player doesn't, it doesn't matter how good everyone else plays, the defense breaks down and the other team scores.

Just like you have a role on defense in basketball, you have a role in your family, in your friendships, in your church. When you do your part in those places, your family, your friendships, your church succeeds. However, just like in basketball, if one person doesn't play his or her part, if they let down for sometime, it hurts the whole family, your friends, or your church. Each person is important and needs to play his or her part wherever they are.

In the book of the Bible called Ephesians, the writer, Paul, says that the church is like a physical body, that people are then like different parts of the body – the hands, the feet, the eyes, the ears. He says that we all grow as "each part does it work."

Another way we glorify God or show him off is when we play the part he has given us to play in life. How do we do that? By being ourselves. He made us to play a specific part and we show him off as this wonderful creator designer when we play the way that only we can play. God has given you certain abilities and when you use those gifts you bring glory to God.

Quite an important role to play, don't you think?

Let's repeat 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."