



South Hampton Roads Mission Project

**SPORTS  
MINISTRY  
5 MINUTE  
LESSONS**

## Day1

### **You Can Do It!**

Philippians 4:13

*I can do all this through him who gives me strength.*

Training can be boring and difficult. In order to be the best players they can be, athletes must perform plays and moves over and over until they are perfected. They also spend long hours in the gym in order to get stronger and faster and better.

Sometimes such tedious training is unbearable; the hours are too long, the challenges too difficult and the athletes feel like giving up.

It is the same with anyone that chooses to follow Jesus. We don't just become perfect Christians overnight. The process takes a lifetime. Anyone that chooses to follow Jesus will experience many difficult moments in their lives that present some hard challenges.

This scripture from Philippians is a much-loved verse used by many Christians to encourage themselves and push through the difficulties. With Christ's strength, they can overcome the hardest challenges! It is not that they do it by themselves, but that Jesus stands alongside them as they face these difficulties.

## Day 2

### **Play With Purpose!**

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

***Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.***

In team sports, it's important to "keep your eye on the prize." Without a focus on the goal, an athlete's efforts may become aimless.

Paul tells the Corinthians in this scripture that this practice is as true in life as it is in sports. As believers, we must be disciplined and have self-control. We must also faithfully keep our focus on God's work in order to be at our best and play the game to completion.

### Day 3

#### **Focus and Endure!**

Hebrews 12:1

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*

Have you ever been to a live sports event. Sports stadiums and arenas are often crowded and loud. There's music playing, fans shouting and many other distractions. If a player focuses on the action off the field, he or she may miss an important play, a special call, or even let the game clock run out.

When on the field, it's vitally important for a player to leave all the day-to-day distractions behind and have his or her "head in the game."

It's the same in life. There are so many things around us trying to distract us from God. We can become so fixed on things that don't matter, that we sometimes forget there's a God who is looking out for us and working for our good.

We must not let ourselves get distracted by the noise of the World around us, but must focus on God and endure faithfully to the work He has for us.

## Day 3

### Never Forfeit

Jonah 2:8

*Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them.*

Professional fighters must maintain a steady regiment in order to qualify and enter a ring. If something in their training is slightly off, it can cause them to be disqualified and force them to forfeit their match. It can be something as simple as being injured because the fighter was distracted or the fighter not maintaining their food intake, so they gain weight.

The simple truth is that when you forfeit a match, you give up any hope to be achieving the reward that the match would bring. You give up the money, the belt, and your ranking.

What victories and opportunities are you forfeiting in your life.

To be a follower of God means keeping the eyes on the prize, giving up the things that keep you distant from His presence. It requires a steady diet of godly things: reading His Word, time in prayer, and putting those things into working in God's kingdom.

We don't want to forfeit God's peace in our lives or His blessings. We want to show up. In His goodness, He chose us, the least of these, to be on His team. We want to be all in. We can't do it by our own strength. Nor can we do it by ourselves. God promises to be alongside us all the time.

## Day 4

### **In His Hands**

Isaiah 64:8

*Yet you, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.*

I love playing sports. As good as I am, I will never be as good as the professionals that do it for a living. Think about it, what does a basketball do in your hands. You can dribble it, shoot it, or even pass it. But what if that ball was in the hands of LeBron James or Steph Curry? In their hands, the basketball transforms into a work of art that we cannot pretend to achieve on our own.

In the hands of a master craftsman things become art. In a carpenter's hand wood is transformed into furniture. In a master's hand, paint and canvass become a living portrait. In my hands, those very same things look like a finger painting, that only a mom would love, and a lot of splinters.

We were created by the Master's hand. God formed us. He breathed life into us. He cares for us and shapes us into a version of us He calls a work of great art. We are the clay and God is the potter. The potter shapes the clay until it is something good, useful, and priceless to the world. But we first must choose to be the clay the potter needs.

John 3: 16 tells us, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

A true master loves his creation. God loves us and in order for us to be handled by the Master, we must choose to believe in what Jesus has done for us. Jesus took on our sins and died on the cross. Jesus resurrected three days later. Jesus went to heaven to prepare a place for us. And Jesus will return one day to take us home.

Believing in this is what keeps us in the Master's hand. It is what makes us a work of art for His kingdom and His glory.

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## Day 5

### Thirst for God

Psalm 63:1

*You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.*

At least one thing is guaranteed to happen while playing a sport: You'll get thirsty. As your body exerts effort to perform at your best, you sweat and expend nutrients and energy that must be replenished. Failing to do so will at first simply result in poorer performance. Continued neglect, however, will lead to dangerous dehydration and, eventually, death.

Thankfully, our bodies "tell" us that we need to drink by getting thirsty. It's a universal human experience, even for non-athletes.

King David, who was inspired by God to write Psalm 63, used the experience of thirst to communicate a deep truth about his need for God's presence. He writes, "I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you."

The sensation of thirst is an all-consuming one, and David communicated his all-consuming need for God. His mind fixated on it. His whole body cried out for it. All of David's other desires retreated to the background when compared with his desire to know God and be known by God.

Also, David recognized that he lived in "a dry and parched land where there is no water." He wasn't ignorant about the broken state of the world, as broken then as it is today. He knew others sinned, and he knew the sinful heart within himself (Psalm 51). The world is "dry and parched" and it desperately needs God, like an exhausted athlete desperately needs water. David felt this need deeply, and it added to his thirst all the more.

So what did David do about it? He sought after God.

"Earnestly I seek You," he wrote. He sought after the Living Water of the Holy Spirit. He sought true spiritual nourishment — the nourishment that only comes from abiding in God's presence — with his whole body and his whole soul. David needed God more than he needed water.

Do you echo David's words and long for God like you long for water? As everyday life drags on, we can begin to rely on ourselves alone for our provision, to treat time with God as a luxury rather than a necessity, to call on His name only when we need a favor.

Today, acknowledge your desperate need for God. You need His sustaining grace more than you need water — indeed, more than you need life itself. Seek to cultivate a healthy thirst for God that is only satisfied by abiding in the loving arms of your Heavenly Father.