

Playing With All Your Heart

**"I firmly believe that any man's finest hour,
the greatest fulfillment of all that he holds
dear, is the moment when he has worked his
heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted
on the field of battle-victorious."**

Vince Lombardi

Spiritual Development – “Playing with All Your Heart”

Overall goal – *to use the arena of sports to cast down the lies that the world teaches us about the way to play the game of life*

Overall Theme Verse *Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is the will of God – what is good, acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:3*

Devotional Focus – The focus of this devotional set is “playing with all your heart”. Playing

P **assionately**

W **ell**

A **ware**

Y **ielded**

H **opeful**

Theme Verse – “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.” Colossians 3:23,24

Guidelines – These materials cover a different aspect of this wholehearted attitude each week.

- To reinforce those concepts, the players will be memorizing this verse over the course of the season, a phrase at a time
- There are also simple object lessons for each session. Most of the materials used are common among most households.
- There is an opening exercise to each session. These times are designed to help you get to know the players and the players each other and you. As the coach, you should also answer these questions.
- These materials are designed to be used primarily at practices.
- There are sections of game materials which can be used either before, during halftime or at the end of the game or not at all. These sections just reinforce what you have covered during the practice and do not introduce any new ideas.
- Since the materials are written generically for all ages, you will need to tailor them to your specific age group.
 - o For example, the materials may call for asking a question of the players. These questions are in **BOLD letters** and may or may not be appropriate for the younger ages to answer fully.
 - o If not, just substitute you telling them the principle in age appropriate terms that is the answer or answers to the question.

- Be sincere and tell as many of your own stories as possible. Be brief.
- Look for ways to involve players from your church during this time – ie read the passage, pray, ask a specific question, etc.
- Remember that this time is primarily to explain the philosophy of the league and the way you are acting as a coach. It just reinforces your example. Your life is the most powerful message.

Week 1 – Getting an Attitude

Development Truth – *I am to play with all my heart.*

Goal – for each player to adopt this attitude of “playing with all my heart”

Passage – “*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.*” Colossians 3:23,24

Object lesson – a picture of one of your favorite athletes

Opening exercise - The Name Game

- 1) Have each player give his/her name and tell you the athlete they would most like to be and why.
- 2) You, the coach, now try to go around and name each of the players and the athlete he wants to be like – this may be challenging
- 3) Have each player go around and try to name all the players with the hero’s name.

Practice

The reason we did this little game is to help us reinforce that we are a team. For the next several weeks, we will be working together as a team.

One of the things I want this team to be know for is our attitude. I want this team to have an attitude. I want it to be a particular attitude. We will be working on developing that team attitude for the whole season.

Before I tell you what attitude I want, what attitude marks the athlete you picked to be like?

(Hold up your picture and tell who it is) One of the things I admire about this person is their wholehearted attitude.

The attitude I want for our team is found in the Bible in Colossians 3:23 – whatever you do, work at it with all your heart.” Say the verse with me.

I want everyone to play with their whole heart. **Play with all your heart.** That is the attitude.

We will talk about what that is and what it isn't. We will talk about how to have this attitude, how to play that way, why we should play that way, when we should play that way, what keeps a team from having this attitude and how we can encourage each other in this attitude.

Our team attitude again is – play with all your heart.

Pray

Game -

This week, I want you *to play with all my heart.*

Hold up your picture – I want each of us to learn to play like this guy – with all your hearts.

Today as you play (or played) I want you to think about this attitude.

PWAYH – that is our motto

PWAYH – say it with me

PWAYH – play with all your heart

Verse again – whatever you do, do it with all your heart

Our team marked with this attitude - PWAYH

Week 2 – Playing Passionately

Development Truth – *Playing with all our heart is playing hard but not just playing hard.*

Goal – For the players to see the difference between going through the motions and getting into the game

Passage – “*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.*” *Colossians 3:23,24*

Object lesson – play the game in slow motion, walking

Opening exercise –

Let's do the name game again – only this time you tell your name and the position you most like to play.

Coach go around and tell the players name and positions
Anybody else think they can do this?

Practice

Last week I asked you to develop an attitude as a team. An attitude that would mark us.

Can anybody tell me the initials for that attitude – PWAYH?

What does it stand for? Play with all your heart

Comes from Colossians 3:23 – whatever you do, do it with all your heart. Say that with me.

This week I want us to begin to understand what it means to play with all your heart. We will use the initials **PWAYH** to represent different words that will help explain what it means.

If I asked you to do some drills this week, and you did them real sort of half-way, kind of lazily, would you call that playing with all your heart? (Give them a visual example of a drill you either will do or have done.) We call that going through the motions. Not really into it.

To illustrate – do a drill at walking speed

How does this feel? What if you played a game like that? Any fun? The fun comes in giving yourself to the game. Yet, some players look like they are walking through the game.

So playing with all your heart calls us to not just going through the motions – to play hard, to give lots of effort to what we are doing, to **get into the game**. We adults call that playing **PASSIONATELY**. That is what the P stands for in PWAYH. Play Passionately. Play hard.

At the same time, if you did a drill and you did it hard but wrong, is that playing with all your heart? (Give them an example of doing something hard but wrong – destructive – like tackling the goalie on a play or running over a player.)

PWAYH - Playing with all your heart is playing hard but it is not just playing hard. **It is getting into the game in a good way.**

That is what I want you to learn today – playing passionately, playing hard is the beginning but not all there is to playing with all your heart.

Pray

Game

PWAYH – that is our attitude. What does the P stand for? Passionate. Playing with all your heart starts with playing passionately. Today, focus on playing hard, giving that extra effort to what you are doing. Get into the game.

(Point out from practice or game where you saw that.) These are great examples of playing with all your heart.

Playing with all your heart is getting into the game, playing hard. This looks different for different players. I am aware of that. I won't ask you to play hard like (point out someone real intense on the team). I will ask you to play hard and you be your own example.

Are you trying to play harder than you have played in the past? Are you playing hard within the role/task/position you have been given on the team?

These are the ideas I want you to think about. They are the ones I will ask you about.

PWAYH – the opposite of going through the motions. It is playing hard, getting into the game.

Week 3 – Playing Well

Development Truth – *Playing with all your heart involves understanding how to play the game.*

Goal – For the players to understand their need to learn about soccer in order to play with all their heart

Passage – “*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.*” *Colossians 3:23,24*

Object lesson – A schoolbook - Doing homework vs. practicing soccer

Opening exercise – What subjects do you study in school? Which ones do you like? Not like? Which ones do you have to do homework for? Any ones that you like to do homework for? Why?

Practice

We are a team with an attitude. That attitude is PWAYH – play with all your heart. Last week, we talked about playing with all your heart is to play PASSIONATELY, hard, to get into the game.

Let's go over the verse again – Whatever you do, do it with all your heart, as working for the Lord – added a new phrase – as working for the Lord

Today I want to talk about playing with all your heart involves learning about and understanding the game.

Hold up the schoolbook. **How is practicing sports different than doing homework?**

We think of sports as primarily a physical activity. However, sports involve more than just our body. Playing with all our heart is playing hard, but we can get into trouble if we just play hard and don't understand the game we are playing.

**What might happen if a person played hard but didn't understand the game of soccer?
(Get hurt, hurt others, get penalized, hurt the team)**

What parts of your body are used when playing soccer?

Basketball more than just our hands, arms, our legs. It involves our mind as we think about how to use our arms, hands, when to shoot, how to defend, how to pass.

What if a person didn't understand these skills? Even if he or she played hard, played passionately, we would say that person couldn't play very WHAT? (very well)

The more we learn about the basics of the game the more we can play hard but also play well. The more we use our mind and understand about basketball, the more we can get into the game well. The more we learn, the more we can use our minds to guide our body. The more we guide our bodies, the more our hard play can become smart, hard play – good play. Play that contributes to the team, to our own enjoyment.

This is a part of playing with all our hearts – using our minds to play not just PASSIONATELY but play WELL. WELL is the word the W stands for. P Passionately, W Well. Learning about the game. Thinking how to play hard in a good way. Getting into the game.

However a player needs to learn not just about the basic skills but also the rules of basketball.

What would happen if a player didn't understand the rule about walking or double dribbling? What if every time a player was passed a ball he would run a few steps before he started dribbling because he didn't know you couldn't do that? (referee would call walking and game would stop)

Then let's imagine that no one told this player why the game stopped so he never learned about basketball. **How much fun would he have? (not much) What would he feel? (confused)**

So to play with all our heart, to play passionately and to play well, we need to learn about the basics and the rules of basketball.

Playing with all your heart. This is what God wants. This is what I want. So this season I am committed to teaching you about basketball. As you learn, you will not only play hard but play well.

Playing with all your heart is playing passionately and playing well.

Pray

Game – Go over the verse – Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.

PWAYH – play with all your heart.

What does the P stand for?

What does the W stand for?

Playing with all your heart is both playing passionately and playing well. .

What are some basics and rules you need to learn about basketball? Examples:

Skills – dribbling, shooting, passing, defending, rebounding

Rules about

- proper inbounds plays
- walking
- double dribbling
- fouling

What did you learn about basketball this week that you can use in this game?

What have you learned in this game so far?

Learning about basketball – the rules of the game and the skills of the game. The more we learn, the more we can use our mind, the more we can play smart, we can play well, the more we can play with all our heart.

Week 4 – Playing Aware

Development Truth – *Playing with all my heart involves evaluating where my thoughts and emotions are during the game.*

Goal – For the players to learn to test their thoughts and feelings when they play.

Passage – “*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.*” Colossians 3:23,24

Object lesson – Hold up several objects and ask them to tell what they feel

- a candy bar/something sweet
- a video/DVD game
- a video/DVD movie for kids – like Finding Nemo
- a video/DVD movie for adults (they would think is boring)
- a soccer ball

Opening exercise –

Do the object lesson as the opening exercise – Today I want you to learn to test what you are feeling, what emotions you have during a game.

We all have emotions.

Object Lesson - Let me illustrate (Hold up the various objects)

What feelings do you have when you see this?

What about this? (show how their feelings are determined by what they see and what they believe about what they see)

Practice

We are a team with an attitude – PWAYH. That stands for – ??? What does this mean? P =
W =

Our verse is – Whatever you do, do it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, **not for men**
New phrase – not for men. Go over again.

We are learning about playing with all our hearts - getting into the game physically and mentally
- learning about the game. Playing passionately and playing well

Today – playing well is more than just knowing and doing the skills involved. It involves being
AWARE of what is going on in your heart. A stands for AWARE.

Thoughts and motions are an important part of playing with all our hearts.

What do you feel when you play? Think?

- Ever get excited? When?
- Ever get bored? When?
- Ever get really happy? When?
- Sad? When?
- Ever get mad? When?
- Ever get jealous? Frustrated? When?

Sports like basketball provides an opportunity to feel all kinds of emotions. Some good, some
not so good.

What might be some good ways to express those emotions? Bad expressions?

Playing WELL involves needing to handle and express those good and bad emotions properly?

To do that, we first need to understand what we are thinking and feeling and why. This week
during practice ask yourself right now

- what am I feeling? What am I thinking?
- Why am I feeling this way?

This is a part of playing with all your heart. Being AWARE.

Why? The verse tells us work with all our hearts – not just our bodies, or our minds, but our hearts. God wants us to play passionately, play well and play AWARE. What I think and what I feel.

Pray

Game – Depending on when you do this

What are you feeling now – (before game, after game, during game)?

Why?

What do you want to do with that emotion? Is that good or bad for you, the team?

Our verse again is – whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord not for men. God wants us to work for him. He wants us to do that by playing with all our hearts – get into the game physically, mentally and emotionally.

To get into the game emotionally means we also need to figure out what we feel and what we want to do or are doing with those emotions so that we will do good and not bad to ourselves, the team, the referees, the other players.

Next week, we will talk about what to do when we want to do something bad or something that will hurt the team. For now, be thinking about what you feel while you play and what you want to do with that feeling.

Week 5 – Playing Yielded

Development Truth – *Playing with all your heart leads to letting out what is good and keeping in what is bad according to God’s standard, not ours.*

Goal – Each player would accept the challenge to play yielded to God’s definition of playing well.

Passage – *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.” Colossians 3:23,24*

Object lesson – Flashlight

Opening exercise – What have been some good things that have happened this season with this team? For you?

Practice

We are a team with an attitude – PWAYH. That stands for – ???

Our verse is – Whatever you do, do it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, **not for men**
Go over again.

We are learning about playing with all our hearts

- Playing hard, smart and passionately
- getting into the game physically and mentally and emotionally – play WELL
- Playing Aware – understanding what I am feeling and thinking while I play
-

Today – I want to talk about playing yielded – making sure that our passions, our emotions, are channeled correctly.

Last week we added this phrase as working for the Lord not for men. This means that we are out here to do what God wants as we play with all our heart, not just what we or others want. That means there are ways to play that God wouldn't want.

What do you think would be some of those ways of playing with all our heart that God would not want? (ie venting anger, being poor sports when lose, making winning the most important thing)

What would be some good ways that God would want us to play with all our heart? (ie getting excited about a good play – either you make or someone on your team, caring about the others on the team, appreciating the competition)

So we see that we can be play good or we can play bad. WELL or not well.

Imagine this in a game – **(Dirty play during a basketball game) How might you react that would be well according to God or bad according to God?**

How does playing for God not yourself or others help you react in a good way? (You can trust God to deal with the person.)

Object lesson – Hold up the flashlight. What makes this light? If you needed light, a flashlight would be good way to use electricity. What about when a lightning bolt strikes a house, what happens? This is not a good way to use electricity.

Your emotions are like that electricity – can be for good or bad, to help or to hurt.

Up to you to decide how you will use that energy, those emotions, that passion. To use it according to God's way is to play YIELDED to him.

Example – What does a YIELD sign look like on the road? What is the purpose?

When you YIELD you allow the other person to go before you. They have priority. You give in to their movement.

Playing YIELDED is a part of playing with all your heart as playing for God. It means knowing how God wants us to express those thoughts and feelings, what are good and bad ways to express them and to YIELD to God's desires.

Pray

Game –

Where is your heart right now?

How is your body, your mind, your emotions?

What do you feel like doing?

Is this good or bad? Is this something God would want or not want in your playing with all your heart?

Will you choose to be a flashlight or a lightning bolt?

Going through this exercise while we are playing is very important to playing with all your heart.

Week 6 – Playing Hopeful The Highest Prize for Playing

Development Truth – *Playing with all your heart for God promises GREAT REWARD!*

Goal – Players would play hopeful by realizing the promised reward for playing with all their heart for God.

Passage – *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.” Colossians 3:23,24*

Object lesson – Bring a trophy or ribbon that you or someone in your family has won

Opening exercise – The object lesson

Practice

Hold up the trophy and explain how it was won.

Anyone here won a trophy or ribbon?

We are learning about playing with all our hearts

- Playing hard, smart and Passionately
- Playing WELL - getting into the game in a good way
- Playing AWARE – more than just physically but mentally and emotionally - knowing what is going on inside not just outside

- Playing YIELDED - channeling that excitement, that passion into playing well, as God would desire us to play

Today – I want to talk about why we would want to play with all our heart for God.

Every one of you has a reason for playing basketball. They are not all the same but you all have a reason.

Why are you playing? (have fun, win, win a trophy, make some new friends)

A reward is something you get for doing something specific. This is your hope in playing.

What are examples of rewards? (smiley face at school for good work, money for good grades, privileges for good behavior)

Do something – afterwards you get a reward. Always after, not before.

What you said before - those are the rewards you play for. Those are the rewards that bring you to practice, to do the drills.

When God calls us to play with all our heart for him, he gives us a reward.

Our verse is – Whatever you do, do it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, **since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.** Notice the new phrase.

(Go over the phrase again)

Who gives us a reward? (The Lord, God)

What do you think is that reward? (look at the verse – you will receive an inheritance)

The reward God promises to someone for playing with all their heart for him is an inheritance.

What is an inheritance? It is something willed to you by someone who has died, usually someone in your family. (Give a personal example of this if you can.)

God has an inheritance - something he possesses that he wants to pass on to anyone who will play with all their heart for him.

What is that inheritance? We will talk more about this later.

He tells us this so that we will play Passionately, Well, Aware, Yielded and HOPEFUL. That is our H.

Game –

(Go over the verse. Ask them where their heart is.)

Remember God wants to reward anyone who will play with all his or her heart. Comes after we play with all our hearts.

What is it – an inheritance.

Next week we will find out what that inheritance is.

For now – PWAYH –

Week 7 – Play HOPEFUL - The Air of an Heir

Development Truth – *The greatest thing we can receive from God is his glory.*

Goal – Players would understand that what God possesses he passes on to his kids, the greatest of which is his glory.

Passage – “*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.*” *Colossians 3:23,24*

Object lesson – **bring three vegetables or foods that have an odor. Ask the players to close their eyes and hold their noses and guess what they are. Then open their noses and wave this around them – guess. Do this with all three.**

Opening exercise –

Who is the greatest basketball player you can think of?

Would you like to have his ability?

Why?

Could he or she give it to you if they wanted to? Why not?

Practice

We are learning about playing with all our hearts. PWAYH

What is our reward for playing with all our heart? The answer is in the verse we are learning.

Our verse is – **Whatever you do, do it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.**

The reward is an inheritance from the Lord.

Who are some of the richest people you have heard of or know? (Bill Gates, Oprah Winfrey, Donald Trump, Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods)

Now imagine you are a child of one of these people. As a child, what would you inherit from them if they were to die? (all their possessions)

What happens if there are other children? (You split the inheritance.)

Value of the Inheritance = the resources of the one you are inheriting from. Greater the resources, the greater the inheritance.

What resources does God have? (the whole universe, everything)

Do his children get everything?

OBJECT LESSON – three fruits or vegetables

More importantly, God has glory. His beauty, his aura, his air. Like Michael Jordan has an air about him because of how he played, so God has glory, a beauty, an aura because of who he is and what he has done. Like the odors we smelled, God has a beauty we see – this is his glory. It just pours out of him like the odor does from these vegetables.

However, Michael Jordan can't pass his air to his kids. He can only pass his things. God's kids inherit many things but the bible says this glory, this beauty, this aura is the greatest inheritance. It is not just a thing but a trait that his kids possess in their hearts.

While God created every person, not everyone is a member of his family, one of his "kids", members of his team. This privilege only goes to certain people.

These certain people who make God's team aren't better than others, they don't make it because of their ability. In fact, they are people who recognize they aren't better and could never make God's team on their ability. They need help to make the team. The Bible says – To all who receive Jesus Christ, who believe in his name, he gives the right to become a child of God.

Becoming a child of God, to make his team, is something only Jesus makes possible. He makes it possible to those who believe in him as the one who alone can make qualify us for this team. When he does that the Bible says he gives us a new heart and comes to live in this new heart that we have been talking about.

If you would like Jesus to make you a child of God, to give you a new heart, and have him come live in that heart, you could pray along with me

“Jesus, I want to be one of God’s kids. I want to be on his team. I believe I cannot make that team on my ability. I can only make it on Jesus’ ability. I ask you to give me a new heart and come and live in it.”

Game –

(Go over the verse.)

Athletes compete to win. That is why we play.

When we are on God’s team and play with all our heart, we win something more valuable than a trophy or a ribbon. We receive God’s glory. We end up as heirs with the air of God around and in us.

Therefore, PWAYH – get into the game, play hard, play smart, play well and remember there is a reward worth playing for – not only to those who win but to all who PWAYH.

Week 8 – Now is the TIME!

Development Truth – *There is never a time to not play with all your heart. So, always play with all your heart!!!*

Goal – For the players to set as their goal to play with all their heart all the time

Passage – *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.” Colossians 3:23,24*

Object lesson – Watch

Opening exercise –

When do you go to bed on school nights? When do you get up?

When do you go to bed on weekends? When do you get up?

Practice

We are learning about playing with all our heart. This means what?

Object Lesson – (Hold up the watch.) What is this? What is it used for? Why do you want to know what time it is? (So you know when to do something – sleep, eat, go to practice)
When is the time to play with all our heart? What time on the watch? That is what I want us to talk about today.

Let’s begin by repeating the verse. *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.” Colossians 3:23,24*

When does the verse tell us to work with all our heart? (in whatever we do)

So when would this be? (All the time)

God wants us to PWAYH ATT – Play with all your heart all the time.

That means there is never a time not to play with all your heart

- not when you are winning by 6 goals
- not when you are losing by 6 goals

PWAYH is an attitude that is to be in place no matter what the score.

PWAYH isn't just for the starters and the stars. It is for everyone – when you are playing or when you are cheering from the sidelines. Whatever you do, PWAYH.

How do you stand on the sidelines and PWAYH?

(stay in touch with the game, watch, cheer, encourage, learn, don't get angry b/c you are not in)

What would a player look like who wasn't playing with all his heart?

- in the game?
- on the sidelines?

You can tell it – and again, if you are on God's team there is never a time or place or position when you shouldn't be PWAYH. Every activity you are involved in on this team has meaning to God. Therefore, no matter what you do – PWAYH.

Let's make the goal this week is to do it all the time.

Pray

Game –

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.” Colossians 3:23,24

PWAYH – when? All the time. ATT

What is our goal today? PWAYH ATT – play hard, play smart, play passionately – for the whole game.

That is what I want you to focus on today.

(If you want to ask them about being on God's team again, this would be an appropriate time.)