



## *To The Lord First*

***“And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.”***

2 CORINTHIANS 8:5

If you want your hard work to mean something beyond this lifetime, it must first of all be given to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to others. Hard work for self gain is barely remembered for a season before it is quickly forgotten when the new season comes. But when we first give ourselves to the Lord and all that He has gifted us to bless others, God begins to be glorified through our life and work. Anything that glorifies our Lord Jesus Christ will last far beyond a simple season - it becomes eternally significant.

If you have never given your life to Jesus, you can do that today with a simple prayer - *“Jesus, please come into my heart. I give you my life, my talent, and all of my hard work to use it for your eternal glory in Heaven and on earth.”* Then as you continue to work hard, allow your motivation to be for Him. Be your best and do your best to bring Him glory through the gifts and opportunities He has given you.

Lastly, love Him by loving others - *“then by the will of God also to us”* - this is what lasts beyond this lifetime.

If your child is an athlete, the same principle can be applied to their sport. God intentionally gives the gift of a game to some children so that they would use it for His Kingdom purpose. It is our job as parents to keep a Godly perspective with the gifts and talents He has given to our children. When parents begin to worship the abilities of their children - life can get messy and off track. Relationships will eventually crumble under the altar of your child's ability that you have been worshipping. Sacrifices will be made to the sport, praise will be given to experts in the sport, and a lot of money will be offered to continue to excel in the sport. Idol worship.

As believers, all things are to the Lord first - and then we work as hard as we can to be the best at whatever gift God has given. We are made to succeed, as long as what we succeed at doesn't compete with God for first place in our lives. If we, as parents, keep God first, chances are our athletic children will do the same.

### Coaching Perspective

Coaching can be a thankless job for sure, but it doesn't have to be meaningless. When you put the wins aside and put God's perspective into your coaching motivation - then you will find eternal purpose no matter what the outcome of the game becomes. A coach with a Kingdom mindset can see beyond the scoreboard and find wins in the building of character, commitment, and faith of his or her players. When we first give ourselves to the Lord - only then can we give the kind of time, talent, and hard work to our players that really means something past the game. Without God first in our motivation for coaching, our efforts will eventually sway into self gain and compromise of God's principles in one way or another. Occasionally, I have found myself behaving crazy in the midst of a heated game and I have to step away for a moment to ask myself why I am so emotional right now? Why do I care more about this game than I do about my witness in this game? My priorities can slip like every other coach and that is why I have to work so hard on keeping my priorities in alignment. Putting the Lord first will stabilize your emotions so that you can fulfill your job as God intended - to serve Him by serving your team.