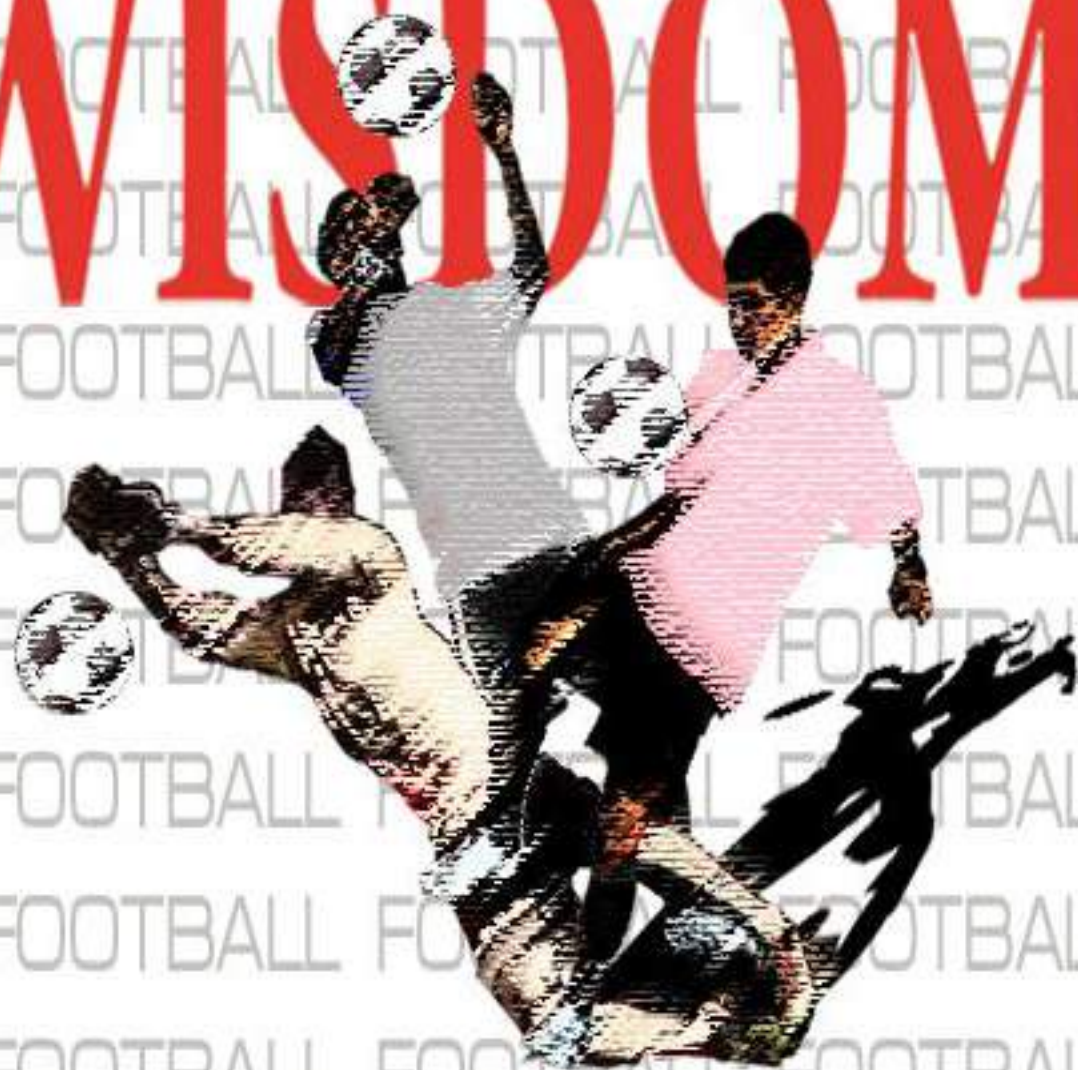


WOODEN'S

WISDOM



FOOTBALL

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INTRODUCTION

John Wooden, voted Coach of the Century by ESPN, created the powerful UCLA basketball dynasty that won 10 NCAA national championships, 88 straight games, and four perfect seasons¹. Since his passing, his wisdom lives on, encapsulated in his famous Pyramid of Success². This now continues to guide a new generation of athletes and coaches.

I remember the first time I came across John Wooden. I found a video clip of an interview he gave just before he died. He spoke for 17 minutes, sharing his philosophy of coaching with anecdotes and poetry. I was transfixed. I watched the interview another half-a-dozen times writing down some of his quotes, and started using them straight away. I ordered his books, *They Call Me Coach*, *The Greatest Ever Coach*, *The Playbook for Success*, and read them, as I tried to absorb as much wisdom as possible from this man. John Wooden had developed and used everything I believed in, but had also been successful at the highest level.

That is when I started to use his principles, and bring them into a football context. I believe everything John Wooden stood for can be applied in other sporting disciplines. Football, basketball, and other sports have so much to teach people; we as coaches just need to be pro-active in sharing this message. This message goes beyond how to get the ball in the basket, sharing how to live a truly fulfilled life. One of the stories I read about Wooden, was that he believed in family. One day one of his coaches became a father for the first time, so he wrote him a card and in the card he put a poem entitled *The Little Lad That Follows Me*³. I read that after shortly becoming a father myself, so on my wall in my little office is a picture of my little boy and I playing football, with the poem

¹ *They Call Me Coach*. John Wooden with Jack Tobin

² *The Greatest Coach Ever*

³ *The Greatest Coach Ever*. Kristy Curry

next to it. Reminding me that there is a boy at home, wanting his dad to come back and play with him. I personally have learnt so much wisdom from this man whom I sadly never met. My hope in writing this book, based on Wooden's Pyramid of Success, is that the legacy of Wooden will live on in you as a coach.

Pyramid of success

A Definition Coined

At the heart of Wooden's conviction about the way to teach values through sport was his own definition of success. He felt success being determined by how many games you won, or winning championships was not a fair, or realistic measure of true success. Wooden's own definition was,

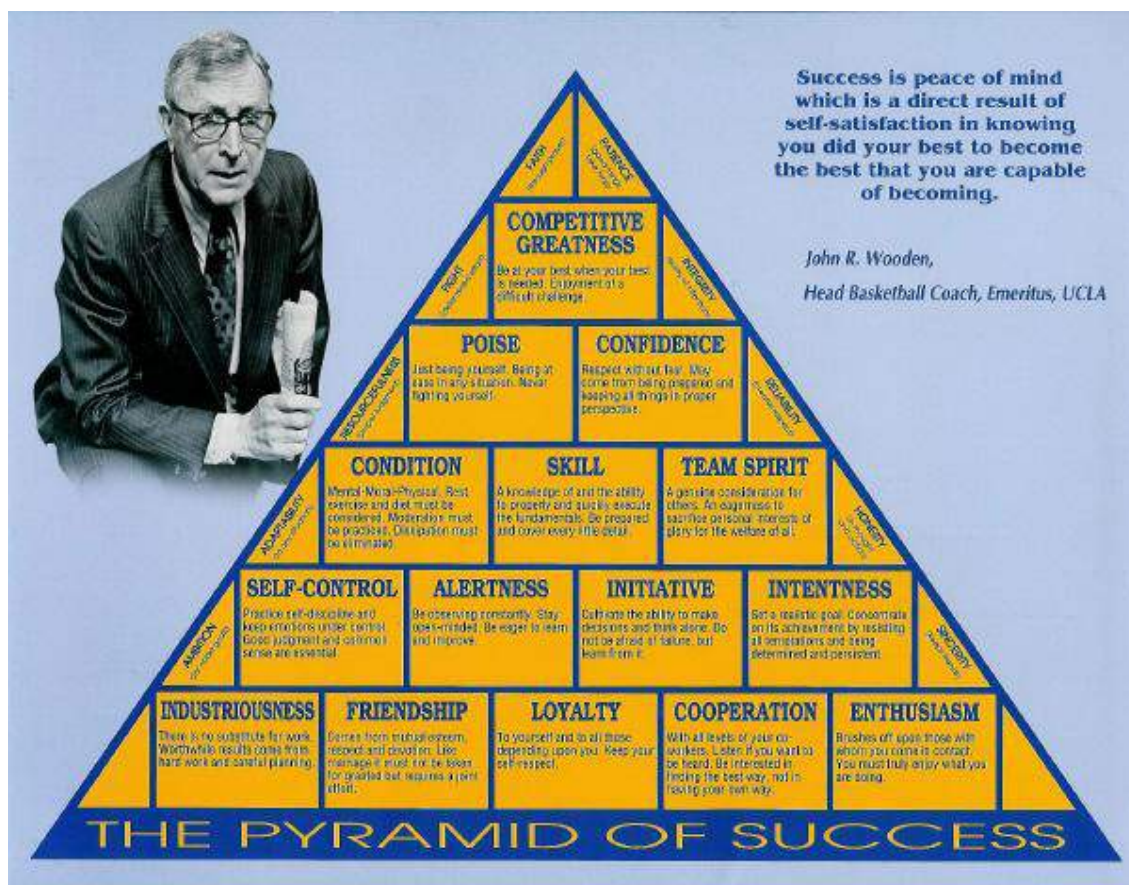
Success is peace of mind, which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to do your best to become the best that you are capable of becoming.

A Pyramid Created

The definition satisfied Wooden for a short while, but he quickly realized it was insufficient. He needed something more concrete – more visual. So he spent the next 14 years identifying 25 behaviors he believed were necessary to achieve his idea of success. This search culminated in a simple but profound diagram Wooden called "The Pyramid of Success", which he completed in 1948. Nearly six decades later these foundational

INTRODUCTION

behaviors have weathered the test of time - unchanged, full of wisdom, and as rock-solid as the first day he established the cornerstones of Industriousness and Enthusiasm⁴.



⁴http://woodencourse.com/woodens_wisdom.html

How to use the material

The material has been designed in such a way to give you, the coach, as much information as you need. Please pick and choose what works best for your situation, and the needs of the players.

When you start to do this with your players, you need to motivate them into believing in the process you will take them through. The best way to do this is to explain who John Wooden was. Acclaimed the greatest ever coach, his philosophy has proved to be successful in creating great champions, which is what your players will primarily care about. As you go through the resource you will be building each player up, but also importantly the team. Using this material it doesn't mean you're guaranteed to win trophies, or leagues, as Wooden himself would agree. It will give you the foundation as the coach to get the best out of your team, and in turn build the character of your team and players.

The resource has also been designed to suit the needs of older teenagers and young adults. If you are coaching a younger team, you may need to be creative how you use the material. The course touches on topics which older teenagers are facing, such as alcohol use, peer pressure, choosing the right wife or husband, choosing your friends wisely.

The material can be used in two primary ways,

1. Team Talk
2. Cell group

1. Team talk

The material is designed so you can deliver a team talk, at any point during a training session. During this team talk you can use the material, and therefore explain about the value you want to share. When you look at the resource you can see that each value has been split into 6 sections,

1. Wooden's definition: John's own definition for the value you are going to share
2. Football World: Questions to bring each value into the football context. This we hope will mean the young people will start to open up, engage with the topic and internalize the value.
3. Proverb: This is a proverb that supports the value from Wooden from the book of Proverbs. Even if it is inappropriate for you to use the questions that follow, often in our schools and colleges, people want to hear wisdom, and the book of Proverbs are just short bits of wisdom to help us with our lives.
4. Going Deeper: This is the last section where we find out Jesus' teachings on these topics, and we take a story from the Gospels that compliments what has been shared before.
5. A closing prayer

If you are doing a coaching session you may only have 10 minutes in which to share, therefore you will never have enough time to go through all the material so pick what you think is most relevant. Depending on your context, you may decide it's not right to share about Jesus directly. Therefore, the Going Deeper section may well be better suited to be used in a Football Cell Group style setting.

During your team talk time, then, you would share the definition from Wooden, then pick one or two questions from the Football World to get your players talking, and interacting. You then can share the Proverb, but again pick two or three questions from the questions provided and be open to where the group wants to take the discussion. As a coach you will be sharing about sensitive things. Look to see how your players react, as this may give you a chance to share about something on a one-to-one basis afterwards. Then finish with the prayer.

Throughout the session, keep emphasizing the value. If you are talking about patience, keep using the word, and as you close your session, again re-emphasize the value. So the players hear, understand, and use the value on the field but also in their lives.

That is the first way to use the material, on the field, with your team, as short team talk style question and answer based discussion with your team.

2. Cell Group

If you share these values with the players they may want to know more. We have seen that with the young men I work with. Asking them to go to church, or a traditional cell group is a step too far. However, if we can make a group based on football, this may attract a new group of people who otherwise wouldn't normally be interested in going to Church. Therefore, a cell group should be based on the following principles:

- Football: always try to play before or after you have the Cell Group. This will be the thing your players will be attracted to, and will make the group appealing.

- Food: footballers like to eat, therefore by providing food you are meeting a need they have, and it helps provide a relaxed environment where people can open up and share. You don't need to provide a full meal, fruit, popcorn and cake all help create a relaxed and warm environment to share.
- Friendship: everyone needs friends, so make the time fun. Make it also a safe place where people can open up and share their struggles, concerns or worries. By making a place that is based on creating strong friendships this will give you the foundation to take the group deeper.
- Faith: the cell group's purpose is to strengthen the players' faith. In seeing the teachings of Jesus apply to their sport and football, I hope they will be encouraged to see just how practical Jesus was, and how life-changing his teaching is. Always remember the main purpose of the group is to take the players towards becoming mature men and women in Jesus.
- Forgiveness: young men and women will make mistakes, like us all. Therefore, always ensure the group is free to share about the mistakes it has made, and the group is a safe place where this issues can be confessed, and then prayed for.
- Family: your group should start to become like family. The players Wooden coached time and time again went back to him asking for advice, because they saw how much he loved them, and they in turn loved him. Love your team, and they in turn will love you, that is why it gives you as a coach a wonderful opportunity to shape the player, and person they will be.

INTRODUCTION

Billy Graham once said, "A coach has the opportunity to influence more lives in one year than most others do in a lifetime".

I hope this resource allows you to influence the lives of the next generation of players, and carry on the legacy of a greatest coach, but also a great man John Wooden.

**There is no substitute for work.
Worthwhile things come from hard work
and careful planning.**

Wooden always expected his teams to work hard. There is no substitute for time on the futsal court or football pitch working at your game and your physical condition. In soccer you have to work hard and train properly if you want to be the best you can be.

Section 1 | Football World

- How many miles do pros run on average during a match? *10 miles*
- Which players run the furthest? *Midfielders*
- When are most goals scored in a game? Why is this? *Last 10 mins, players tired*
- When have we as a team tended to concede goals this season?
- If we train hard could we exploit other teams physical weaknesses?

Within the game of soccer we have to work hard. Players say that at the start of pre-season training they don't see a ball for two weeks as they have to run and work hard, to get ready for the season ahead.

Section 2 | Proverb

"All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty."

Proverbs 14 : 23

Section 3 | **Going Deeper**

- If we work hard as a team, what will be our reward?
- What could we achieve if we all decided to train hard, take care of our bodies and work hard at our game?
- Working hard does not just mean when we train and play, we also need to plan well. How can you work hard at ensuring you are ready to play at your best?
- What should you expect from your coach so we can train hard?
- We all know the phrase, 'actions speak louder than words', and we often talk about wanting to work hard for each other, but are we really prepared to do that? The writer of the proverb said that if we don't work hard, it will lead to poverty. What does that mean in our context as soccer players?

All of us can look back with regret on our past, thinking about an aspect of our lives we realize we didn't work hard at, maybe soccer, school, work, relationships with our parents, wife or husband etc. We can't change what is in the past, but are we prepared to work hard now? The writer of the proverb doesn't promise that we will be wealthy if we work hard, however he does say that poverty will come if we don't.

- What one aspect of your life do you need to work hard on, in order to achieve in life?

industrious¹

Section 4 | What Did Jesus Say?

Matthew 25 : 14 – 30, “Parable of the Talents”

- What did Jesus say about working hard in this parable?
- Jesus taught that some of us have been given many gifts, some have been given fewer, but what God cares about is how we use what He has given us. Have you used what God has given you well, or have you wasted it? Have you buried it like the person in the parable?
- Sometimes it is hard to know what God has given us. Can you tell another teammate a talent or gift they have?
- Is there anything that sets this team apart from other teams? How has God gifted this particular team?

Section 5 | Final Thought

Each of us has been given a talent, and we need to work hard to use it. If we don't, the road ahead is bleak, just as the writer of the proverb said. We as a team have been given talented players, and the only way we are going to win and be successful is if we work hard. The choice is ours. Let's choose to work. Even into his 90s Coach Wooden was working hard, trying to be best he could be. Surely that is an example to us all of a man that worked hard, and got the results, praise and acclaim he deserved.

Section 6 | Pray

“Jesus, help us to be people who choose to work hard. We thank you for the talents you have given us. Help us to use them to their full potential. It's so easy for us to be lazy, so help us have the motivation to be the best we can. Jesus, help us also to train hard this season so we can fulfill the team's potential. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.”

**Comes from mutual esteem, respect and devotion.
A sincere liking for all.**

Section 1 | **Football World**

- Often national team managers say they try and create a club-like atmosphere amongst their players, why is this key for success?
- Why do you think having solid friendships is vital if we are going to have a good season?
- Uruguay finished 3rd in the last World Cup, and surprised everyone by winning the Copa Del America, beating Brazil and Argentina in the process. Surazez, one of the stars of the team, says it feels like family when they get together. Why is mutual respect and devotion to one another going to be key if you want to be successful?
- How do we make friendships stronger on the team?

Section 2 | **Proverb**

*"He who walks with the wise grows wise,
but a companion of fools suffers harm."*

Proverbs 13 : 20

friendship²

Section 3 | **Going Deeper**

- Here the writer of the proverb is talking about choosing your friends wisely. Why are the right friendships a key to a successful life?
- When you're a teenager, who is the biggest influence in your life?
Friends
- Therefore, if we want to succeed as a footballer, we need to make sure we choose good friends. If you were to become a famous footballer do you think it would be easier or harder to make good decisions about who your friends are?
- When Wayne Rooney left Everton to join Manchester United, Sir Alex Ferguson made sure he moved in just round the corner from Sir Alex, as he was worried about the influence of his old peer group. Good friends will do what they can to help you achieve your goals. Who is your best friend and does he help you or distract from achieving your goals?

Section 4 | **What Did Jesus Say?**

John 15 : 9 – 13

Verse 12 : "My command is this love each other as I have loved you."

- Jesus himself said quite clearly that we are to love one another. We are asked to put the needs of the others first. What would this football club feel like if we all did that?
- Would that club be easy to beat?
- Would that environment be a safe place to try new things and make mistakes? Wooden wanted his players to make mistakes as it meant they were pushing themselves to the limit. Do you make mistakes? What is the response of your teammates if you do?

2 friendship

Section 5 | Final Thought

Friendship is key in all walks of life. We need friends around us, and this team needs us to be close. If we can get friendships right here, we are close to understanding what is to be team. However, if we do that we must put others before ourselves, and that is the hard bit.

Section 6 | Pray

“Jesus, thank you for my friends. Thank you that I have people around me who want the best for me. Help me to choose friends wisely, so I can have a group of people around me that will inspire me, and help me be the best I can be. Jesus, you had a group of friends that helped you when you lived here, help me also find a group like yours that was loyal to you and your teaching. Amen.”

**To yourself and to all those dependent upon you.
Keep yourself respect.**

Wooden demanded loyalty: to the team, to the game of basketball, and to himself as the coach. For him, loyalty was a key foundational pillar for creating a good team.

Section 1 | Football World

- Who do you think are the most loyal people in football? *Fans, never change their team and watch them play week after week.*
- Loyalty is something that is often forgotten in professional football these days, as players are only loyal to one club until another club wants to give them a higher wage, and then they move. Who are some of the players you know who have been loyal to their club? Gerrard(Liverpool), Terry (Chelsea), Cassis (Real Madrid), Maldini(AC Milian).
- Can you think of any managers who have been loyal to their club, or who choose to honour their contract? *Arsene Wenger when Real Madrid wanted him. Pep Guardiola when Chelsea wanted him.*
- How do you view players like Luis Figo, who left Barcelona to go to Real Madrid, the enemies of Barcelona, or Carlos Tevez who moved from Manchester United to Manchester City?
- Do you think players are more loyalat amateur level,?
- Do you think that at the professional level players are loyal to the game of football and play in the right manner?

3 loyalty

Section 2 | Proverb

"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."

Proverbs 17 : 17

Section 3 | Going Deeper

- The writer of the proverb is saying here that loyalty is about loving at all times. When is it hard as team to get on with one another?
- The proverb goes on to say that we should love in adversity, when times are tough. How do we react when we are down 3 v 0 at half time? How do we react when we get a player sent off?
- Is it easy to love a player new to the club if he plays in your position? How do you react to being dropped or substituted by your manager? Are you loyal, or do you argue?

Section 4 | What Did Jesus Say?

Mark 2 : 1 – 5, "Paralytic Man on the Mat Through the Roof."

- In this story we see true friendship. We see guys that desire to love their mate in adversity. He was paralyzed, but they still cared. Do we care and go and see our teammates when they can't play, and are injured?
- The man's friends take a huge gamble and make a hole in the roof to lower the man into the room to meet Jesus. This was an extreme show of friendship and care. What can you do to show your loyalty to your team, family and friends?

3 loyalty

- Steven Gerrard is regarded as one of the best midfield players of his generation. He could have played at many clubs, but stayed at Liverpool for his entire career, a loyal servant to Liverpool. Will you be loyal to your club?
- You find out who your friends are when you need them the most. Are you going to be a friend that goes the extra mile when your mates need it?

Section 5 | Final Thought

Loyalty is a value that we see less and less within football today. However, we have seen that it is key to becoming a successful team player. If we can be loyal to the team and loyal to one another, that will be the foundation of having a good team. Loyalty is also choosing to love when it's hard, when your mates need it. That is when loyalty matters, and it is my hope that you will be a person who will be loyal to the bitter end.

Section 6 | Pray

"Jesus, thank you that you are always loyal to us. Thank you that you have promised to listen to this prayer, as you love me, and love when I speak to you. Jesus, thank you for those friends in the story today, who were loyal to their mate. Help me to be a friend like that, who will go the extra mile.

Amen."

4 cooperation

WOODEN'S QUOTE

**[Cooperate] With all levels of your co-workers.
Help others and see the other side.**

Section 1 | **Football World**

- What's the most important position in a team? GK, striker etc? *All equal.*
- What starts to happen in a team if the strikers think they are more important than the rest of the team? *Disunity.*
- There has to be team spirit – that we all defend as a team, we all attack as a team. How can strikers help us defend better as a team? *Closing down defenders, not allowing full backs to come out with the ball, coming back to help defend corners, etc.*
- Within our own team, what can we do to ensure we help each other on the field achieve our best?

Section 2 | **Proverb**

*"Those who are kind benefit themselves,
but the cruel bring ruin on themselves."*

Proverbs 11 : 17

4 cooperation

Section 3 | **Going Deeper**

- Here the writer of the proverb says that our own soul is nourished, we feel good, when we do good. Is that true for you? If yes, when?
- When was the last time you did something nice for someone you cared about?
- How does it make you feel when someone does something unexpected for you?
- What for you is more important, your team winning even though you personally have played badly, or playing well yourself even though the team loses?

How can we try to become a team and individuals that want to do good more often, as often our desire is to be selfish?

Section 4 | **What Did Jesus Say?**

Luke 14 : 12 - 14, "Banquet For the Poor"

- Here Jesus said, if you have a banquet, open it up for the poor. Jesus often spent time with the poor, the drunks, and the down-and-outs. He was a man they loved, and he loved them. Could we as team doing something to help some of the disadvantaged in our team or community?
- Do you think Jesus would have liked to watch a football match? Where would he have watched it, in the VIP boxes, or with the people?
- If you helped the disadvantaged and your team became known as a team that does good, would you be proud to be part of that team?

4 cooperation

Section 5 | Final Thought

If we want to have an effective team we need to be able to work together. No one here is greater than the team. That value is also the same in everyday life; people who have more money are sometimes more valued than the poor. This was not the case in Jesus' thinking. He valued the poor, he loved them, and respected them. Therefore, we need to cooperate with all people from all different economic backgrounds.

Section 6 | Pray

"Jesus, help me to learn from everyone, and to understand that you value everyone the same. Jesus, help me be a person that cooperates with different people, helping me be a true team player. Amen."

Your heart must be in your work. Stimulate others.

Wooden did not want to have to motivate his players, he wanted his players to have inner drive, the self-motivation to train and play hard. He wanted his players to be excited about coming to play. If you are enthusiastic about your work, you will work hard.

Section 1 | **Football World**

- Have you ever been paid to play football? Would this affect the way you view football and play?
- You come every week, as you love the game. Why are you so excited about football?
- What do you feel when you score a goal, or block a shot?
- What motivates you to be here?
- Which pro players play because they still love the game?

Section 2 | **Proverb**

"The labourer's appetite works for him; his hunger drives him on."

Proverbs 16 : 26

5 enthusiasm

Section 3 | **Going Deeper**

- Here the writer talks about the worker having a hunger, what drives you to succeed?
- Do you think you can have an appetite for something you do not love?
- Do you think you can be successful in football playing a position you don't like?
- What are the goals you would love to achieve this year?
- What are you excited about achieving?

Section 4 | **What Did Jesus Say?**

Matthew 15 : 32

Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way."

- What was Jesus' motivation to help the people? **Compassion**
- Do you think it's possible to be enthusiastic about being compassionate to others?
- Is it hard for you to do something for others?

5 enthusiasm

Section 5 | Final Thought

Jesus was passionate about compassion. He had compassion for people, and he still has compassion for you and me. This was his motivation for doing all the good he did. My hope is that you will be enthusiastic about playing the game of football, but also about loving others.

Section 6 | Pray

“Jesus, help me to be like you. You loved people, so help me to be a person who is enthusiastic about compassion, enthusiastic about football and about being the best I can. Amen.”

Ability to resist temptation and stay with your course. Concentrate on your objective and be determined to reach your goal.

Section 1 | Football World

- What are some of things football players can be tempted by?
- If you were a coach, what would you worry about most for your players?
- As players here, what could tempt us, and lead us not to hit our goals this year?
- Do you think young men or women know how to resist temptation?

Section 2 | Proverb

*"The man of integrity walks securely,
but he who takes crooked paths will be found out."*

Proverbs 10 : 9

6 intentness

Section 3 | **Going Deeper**

- Sadly too often we hear about professional football players whose lives don't have integrity, and it emerges that they are having affairs with teammates' wives. What would that do to team spirit if it came out that this was happening in our team?
- If you were drinking too much alcohol what effect would that have on your performance as a player?
- How can we as a team help keep teammates accountable to each other so that we can have integrity and resist temptation?
- Sexual immorality is a danger for young people today. HIV-AIDS is growing rapidly, spread through people being unfaithful, and not living a life of integrity. Kaka said on his wedding day that he was a virgin, but sadly so often we hear stories of broken relationships. Giving in to the temptation of sex outside of marriage could ruin your life, your football and your future. What do we need to do as a team to protect each other from this danger?

Section 4 | **What Did Jesus Say?**

Matthew 4 : 1 – 11, "Temptation of Jesus"

- Jesus himself was tempted, so being tempted is not wrong, but falling into temptation is. How did Jesus stand firm?
- Even though Jesus was on his own, he stood firm. What was his solid platform that helped him stand firm?
- What will be your foundation and your values, that will help you stand strong in face of temptation:
 - an individual?
 - as a team?
- How would have Jesus handled the temptation of sex outside of marriage? How should we handle it?

6 intentness

Section 5 | Final Thought

Throughout your life you will face temptations, just as Jesus himself was tempted. However, the way you deal with those temptations will determine your own destiny. If you want to achieve in soccer and in life you will need to determine the values you will stand upon, and allow these to help you resist the temptations that come your way.

Section 6 | Pray

“Jesus, help us as we face many temptations. We thank you that you set us a great example of how to deal with temptations in our lives. Help us to live lives that are based on solid foundations so we can stand firm when the temptations come. Jesus, help us to say, ‘no,’ to temptation and to stay true to who you want us to be, as individuals and as a team.

In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.”

Cultivate the ability to make decisions and think alone. Desire to excel.

Wooden would often say that the team that makes the most mistakes often wins. What he meant by that is that players need to be free to try new things and to express themselves on the Basketball court. As a result they will make mistakes. However, if they learn from these mistakes they will go on to become better players.

Section 1 | Football World

- Name some of the players around the world that have the ability to make the right decision under pressure.
- Every manager is looking to find a new Rooney, Messi, or Ronaldo; players that seem to see things others don't. Why are players like this so important for a team to succeed?
- What do we do in training to encourage this? Do you think it helps players if their coach or parents are screaming at them what to do?
- As Wooden says, if you are frightened of making mistakes you are never going to be free to try things. Do we as a team allow guys to make mistakes?

Section 2 | Proverb

"A wife of noble character ... She is worth more than rubies."

Proverbs 31 : 10 – 11

7 initiate

Section 3 | **Going Deeper**

- Here the writer of the proverb talks about choosing your wife, why is this such an important decision?
- Why would a noble, honest wife of good character, be worth more than precious stones?
- What do you look for in a wife/husband?
- Do you think that if you start to have the confidence on the pitch to make decisions, it will help you to make decisions about girlfriends, choosing a wife, job etc?
- However, this is not just about making good decisions, but also about having that desire to excel. How should the desire to excel affect your decisions?

Section 4 | **What Did Jesus Say?**

Luke 23 : 26 – 43, “The Crucifixion”

- In the middle of this passage we see two other characters, the two criminals. One rejects who Jesus said he was, the other accepts him. We are talking about making decisions, important decisions. At some stage you need to make a decision about who Jesus is, as he claimed he was the Son of God. Will you reject that, or will you accept it?
- Do you think that decisions you make here on earth will have eternal consequences?
- Do you think as Christians we should have the desire to be the best Christian we can be? If so why?

7 initiate

Section 5 | Final Thought

We see in today's study that one of the criminals took the initiative to ask Jesus to remember him when he was in heaven. The other criminal didn't. Jesus claimed he was the Son of God, he claimed that if you wanted to have eternal life in heaven it came through knowing Him. Are we going to take the time to really find out who Jesus is, and what he said about himself? As if he was truly the Son of God, then we need to make a decision whether we will believe and follow him.

Section 6 | Pray

"Jesus, thank you that you took the initiative to come to earth to die for us. I want to pray for all these guys, that they will come to know you in a real and passionate way. I also pray that they take the time to make wise choices in their life, like the person they choose to spend the rest of their lives with. Jesus thank you that the door to being a part of your family is always open. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

Be observing constantly. Be quick to spot a weakness and correct it or use it as the case may warrant.

Section 1 | Football World

- Can you think of a goal that David Beckham scored that came about because he saw the goalkeeper off his line?
- Can you think of other goals like this that happen as a player exploits a weakness in the opposition?
- What are the weakness in these teams:
 - Arsenal
 - Brazil
 - Manchester United
 - Barcelona?
- If you were playing against any of the teams above, what would you do to ensure you won?

Section 2 | Proverb

"Above all else guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

Proverbs 4 : 23

Section 3 | Going Deeper

- The writer of the proverb here talks about guarding, or protecting, your heart. What do you think that means?
- The proverb puts this as the one of the most important things in your life. Where is it in your list of priorities?
- Is your heart good, or is it bad? Your heart can either bring life to you and to others, or it can be bad and ruin your life and the lives of people around you.
- How can you guard your heart? For many men one area they struggle with is pornography. Why is this a bad thing? What can it lead to?
- If you were to look at, or watch a lot of pornographic films or magazines, what would be the consequence?
- How do you react when your friends are looking at websites they shouldn't be, or watching a film that is not helpful?

Section 4 | What Did Jesus Say?

Matthew 25 : 1 – 13, "The Parable of Ten Virgins"

- In this story Jesus talks about ten virgins; five were ready to go into the wedding party, five were not. Jesus was asking whether we are ready for the day we will face God. Are you ready? Are you alert? Are you prepared for that moment to come at any time?
- Five virgins entered the wedding party, whilst five were left outside. What this means is that five entered heaven, whilst the others missed out. If you meet God tonight, where will you be going?
- God takes people as they are, so even if you're struggling with pornography or going through other struggles, God is ready and waiting. He just needs you to say yes to him, and then he will help you deal with the rubbish in your life.

8 alertness

Section 5 | Final Thought

Last time we talked about when Jesus died on a cross for us. He wants to have a relationship with you and me, but are you ready? If your life ended tonight where would you be heading? In the parable that Jesus shared, out of ten virgins, five entered the party, while the others didn't. Being alert is about taking opportunities. I encourage you to take the opportunity of coming to know who Jesus is. I also encourage you, if you're struggling with pornography, be alert to its danger, and ask for help now.

Section 6 | Pray

"Jesus, thank you for my team. I pray for all of them that they will be open to being in relationship with you. Jesus I pray that if any of them are ready you will help them make that decision today to follow you, so they are ready no matter what tomorrow brings to meet you and enter the celebration in heaven. Amen."

**Emotions under control.
Delicate adjustment between mind and body.
Keep judgment and common sense.**

Section 1 | Football World

- The World Cup Final in Germany in 2006 was between Italy and France. It was Zidane's last game ever. He brought the French team through to the final, then, in one moment of madness he gave the advantage to the Italian team and tarnished his reputation by head-butting one of the Italian players. What was your reaction when you saw it?
- Why do professional players need to keep their emotions under control?
- What other examples can you think of when players have not had good self-control?
- Can you perform at your best if you are not in control of your emotions?
How do you react if you get fouled and your opponent could have injured you?

Section 2 | Proverb

"Now then my sons listen to me; do not turn aside from what I say. Keep to a path far from her. Do not go near the door of her house."

Proverbs 5 : 7 – 8

9 self control

Section 3 | **Going Deeper**

- Here the writer of the proverb talks about having the self control to keep away from potential dangers. What are some of the dangers you struggle to keep away from in your life?
- Alcohol, sex and drugs all seem exciting. However the reality is that if they are not used wisely, they can destroy you. What can we do as a team to ensure alcohol doesn't lead us down the wrong path?
- Have you ever played a game of football whilst you have been under the influence of alcohol, or hungover from drinking too much the night before?
- Do you have the self control and the courage to say no? If you say no, how do people around you react?

Section 4 | **What Did Jesus Say?**

Matthew 26 : 36 – 41, "Gethsemane"

- This was when Jesus needed his friends, and they went missing. They did not understand the seriousness of the situation. Jesus asked them to pray with him, but they slept. It's sometimes so hard to do what God has asked us to do, but we need to have the self-control to do it. Has God asked you to do something specifically? Did you do it?
- What has God asked us to do when we read his Bible? Have we kept those commandments?

The great thing is that even though we make mistakes, God still loves us and we can have a relationship with him. For that to happen, what do we need to do?

**May not help us make friends,
but it will help us keep them.**

Without sincerity, we will alienate people needlessly.

Section 1 | Football World

- Probably the hardest thing a professional coach or manager has to do is share with a player he is not good enough to receive a new contract. Why would this be hard for a coach?
- Many players want to know if they are going to make it to play professionally, what would you prefer as player: to know the truth, or to be lied to if you were not good enough?
- If you knew your coach was always going to tell the truth, and be sincere, would that make you respect them?
- Wooden's players would come back to him with questions about basketball, life etc. years after leaving his team, why would they ask him about matters to do with their lives?
- Who in your life is someone who is sincere?

10 sincerity

Section 2 | Proverb

“Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.”

Proverbs 27 : 6

Section 3 | Going Deeper

- Do you trust all your friends to tell the truth to you?
- If one of your teammates came up to you and said you needed to work on a particular aspect of your game, how would you react?
- Do you think the proverb is right? Can you trust comments made by your mates, even harsh ones?
- Do you know people, who praise you all the time, but are not really friends?

Often professional footballers can be quite shy, as everyone tells them they are ‘great.’ How would you react to that?

Section 4 | What Did Jesus Say?

Matthew 10 : 37 – 39

“Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.”

- Do you think Jesus wants everyone to follow his teaching and thinking?

10 sincerity

- In this passage, he says follow me and you will need to pick up a cross, what does this seem to suggest if you become a follower of Jesus?
- Why would Jesus want to suggest it was hard to follow him, what was he telling his followers?

Section 5 | Final Thought

Sadly so often in the world and within football the value of sincerity is lost. We are frightened of telling people the truth, as we are scared people will reject us, and what we are saying. However, good friends who speak into your life are special. We are looking for people who are sincere with us, and Jesus was open and honest with us from the start. He knew it could be hard following him, so he wanted to be open and honest for the people who would follow him afterwards. As a result, even though it's hard sometimes, we know we can trust him as he guides our path now.

Section 6 | Pray

"Jesus, thank you that were a sincere person, help us to be also. You have asked us to love others. Jesus, this week help us to do that. We want to be a club made up of people who will be remembered well, and for that to happen we need to be sincere people, help us this week we pray. Amen."

11 ambition

WOODEN'S QUOTE

Ambition is a feeling or a desire to achieve a goal.

John Wooden believed the best type of goals and desires are not that we as individuals would become great, but that the team would become successful.

Section 1 | Football World

- What are the goals for this team this year?
- What are your personal goals this year?
- What do you think Messi's goals would be at the start of the season?
- What will be Manchester United's goal for this season?

Section 2 | Proverb

"Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways. Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil."

Proverbs 4 : 24 – 26

11 ambition

Section 3 | Going Deeper

- The writer of the Proverb says we must be fixed upon our goals. If my goal is to score twenty goals this season, what does that mean I will have to do to achieve this?
- If my goal is to get good grades so I will be able to go to the university I choose, what will that mean for the choices I make when it's time to study etc?
- The writer of the proverb seems to say that evil is there to stop you from reaching your goal. Do you agree with that?
- Are there short-cuts to reaching your goal?
- How close are you to achieving your goal?

Section 4 | What Did Jesus Say?

Matthew 27 : 45 – 56, "The Death of Jesus"

- The goal of Jesus' life was to die. Why did he need to die?
- What is the importance of the curtain in the temple being torn in two? *The curtain had separated people from the most holy place where God would meet with the High Priest. There is now no barrier between us and God.*
- The Centurion that was standing there, said, "Surely this was the Son of God." Even in the way Jesus died, he led people to him. What do you think this soldier saw?
- Jesus' purpose was to die. What is your purpose, and how best can you fulfill it?

11 ambition

Section 5 | Final Thought

Ambition is a good thing as it propels us to be better than we are today. If we can harness ambition so we become more dedicated then this will help us and also the team. However, it's also important you know what your goals are not just in football, but also for your life. Jesus knew what his goal was, to die. In doing so he took the shame and sin in my life, and in your life, upon himself. However, we know the story did not end with his death, as three days later he defeated sin and rose again. We all have goals, but in order for those goals to be attained we need to make wise choices.

Section 6 | Pray

“Jesus, thank you that you were a man of ambition. You knew your goal and purpose in life, and on the cross you accomplished your goal. Help us to know what you have created us to do, and to make the best choices so we can reach that goal. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.”

An eagerness to sacrifice personal interests or glory for the welfare of all. The team comes first.

Section 1 | Football World

- Barcelona play some brilliant football. However they also work really hard playing a high pressure game when they don't have the ball. If only half the team presses, what happens? So we see that Barcelona work together for the common goal of being the best.
- Thierry Henry said, "I had never run so far in my life, till I starting playing for Barca." How do you get professional players like Henry wanting to work harder than ever before?
- Team spirit is key for success, which teams do you think look really tight and have good team spirit?
- What can help to create team spirit within a team?

Section 2 | Proverb

**"Do not withhold good from those who deserve it,
when it is in your power to act."**

Proverbs 3 : 27

Section 3 | Going Deeper

- Who in this team deserves something good to be done for them?
- Is there anyone in your life who you need to honor, and do something for?
- Sadly so often people never take the chance to say thank you or appreciate the important people in their lives, who should you appreciate this week?
- Why should we do good to people?
- Why should I do something good to people in the team?

Section 4 | What Did Jesus Say?

Luke 10 : 25 – 37, “The Parable of the Good Samaritan”

- Jesus asked us to not only do good, but to be good news to people in need. So often we give people a little, but this story shows us we are called to go the extra mile. Is it fair for Jesus to expect us to go the extra mile for our teammates/the opposition?
- What would our community feel like if people followed that teaching? What would football feel like?
- Do we as a team want to be a team that lives out the Good Samaritan story? It will be hard but if we do this we will build a strong team with a good team spirit.

Section 5 | Final Thought

Having a good team spirit is vital to having a good team. No player is bigger than the team. Even when Ronaldo played at United, they sold him when he was seen as the best player in the world, and the next season they won the league again. One way we can create team spirit is by doing good to the people within the team who need it. We can also decide to do good to others as a team. By deciding to work together in this way it will help us create that spirit within us.

Section 6 | Pray

“Jesus, you want us to be people who bring good news. Help us as a team and as individuals to live that out. As we do, help us as a team create a spirit that brings people together and helps us to be the best we can.
Amen.”

A knowledge of and the ability to properly execute the fundamentals. Be prepared. Cover every detail.

Section 1 | Football World

- What is the difference between skill and technique? *Skill is the execution of technique under pressure.*
- Why is it that some players can have great technique but struggle in a game?
- What amazing bit of skill can you remember that you saw from the professional game?
- When Wayne Rooney was playing for Manchester United vs Manchester City, he produced an amazing overhead kick that won United the game, and even caused Sir Alex to stand up and applaud. How was he able to execute the overhead kick so well?

Section 2 | Proverb

“Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men.”

Proverbs 22 : 29

13 skill

Section 3 | Going Deeper

- How do you become skilled at a trade, or football?
- Many people want to play football professionally, but sadly only a few get that opportunity. If you can't play football professionally, what plan do you have?
- If we want to be skilled, and reach the top of our profession, it takes time and hard work. What might you have to sacrifice to be able to put this effort in?
Education is key to being a skilled man. How much priority do you give to continually learning and to improving yourself?

Section 4 | What Did Jesus Say?

Mark 14 : 43 - 51, "Jesus Arrested"

- Jesus was under huge pressure; he knew his death was coming soon, and still he was focused on loving people, even those who had come to arrest him. Why is it that under pressure we see a person's true character emerge?
- What would have been your reaction when Peter cut off the soldier's ear?
- Skill is about executing the right technique under pressure, if we want to be more skilled we have to invest in our education; if we want a more Christ-like character to emerge when we are under pressure, what do we need to do?

13 skill

Section 5 | Final Thought

We all want to be skilled people. We all want to have a talent that sets us apart, whether that is as a footballer or in another trade. If we want to maximize that talent, we will need to study hard to refine it. Skill is also applying our ability when we are under pressure. Jesus knew he was going to be arrested, but even in this intense time he stayed true to who he was. Let's make sure we do likewise when we play this week.

Section 6 | Pray

“Jesus, help us to be more like you. Even under intense pressure you showed kindness. Help me to show that sort of quality. Help us all to work hard at being the best we can, always looking for new ways to learn how we can do things better. Amen.”

Mental – Moral – Physical. Rest, exercise, and diet must be considered. Moderation must be practiced.

Section 1 | **Football World**

- What do you think is the basic diet of a professional player?
Carbohydrates and proteins
- Why is it key they look after their diet?
- If a professional player is playing an evening match like the Champions League, what do they normally do in the afternoon?
Sleep
- Why would sleep be key to playing well?
- Do you think it's important that players have a rest from playing football as the demands on them from clubs and national teams seem to increase?

Section 2 | **Proverb**

"Listen my son, and be wise, and keep your heart on the right path."

Proverbs 23 : 19

14 condition

Section 3 | **Going Deeper**

- How do you aim to stay focused?
- Here the proverb says we should keep our heart on the right path. What do we need to do as a team during a long season to maintain pursuit of our goal?
- If we are successful at achieving our goals what should we do? Wooden said that 'winning was never final, and losing was never fatal.' He wanted his players to enjoy success, but then re-focus quickly.
- Is it wrong then to celebrate if we have a victory?
- The writer of the proverb also says to listen, who do you listen to for advice and direction?

Section 4 | **What Did Jesus Say?**

Matthew 16 : 24 – 28, "The Cost Of Following Jesus"

- In this passage Jesus talks about the cost of following him. Why would Jesus say that we need to lose our lives if we want to follow him?
- Jesus goes on to say that if we lose our lives, we gain life. What did he mean by this?
- One day Jesus will judge people for what they have done. If Jesus were to judge you, what would he find?

14 condition

Section 5 | Final Thought

Jesus said that to follow him is going to be hard. He made no promise of an easy life. Therefore, we need to make sure we are in top condition if we are going to make it as Christian. We need to make time to pray to Jesus, read the Bible etc, just as for us as a player we need to be in good condition if we want to play at our best. Let's stay true to what the Proverb says and be wise, focused on the path laid ahead.

Section 6 | Pray

"Jesus, you know that to follow you is not easy. Thank you that you understand. Help me to make wise choices so I can stay close to you, and follow the path you have laid before me. Amen."

The ability to adapt to any situation

Section 1 | Football World

- Steven Gerrard is an amazing player. For England, he has played right back, left midfield, right midfield, centre midfield, and upfront just behind the striker. He is an amazingly adaptable player. Can you name other players like that?
- What country was famous for creating total football? What was the principle behind it? *Holland, players were expected to play in every position, so they could adapt.*
- Sadly too often we put children in positions and tell them that that is where they are to play, instead of giving them time to adapt to new positions, and in the process make them better players. Who here as played the same position all their lives?
- How can you learn to play other positions successfully?

Section 2 | Proverb

"My son keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching. When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you."

Proverbs 6 : 20 & 22

15 adaptability

Section 3 | Going Deeper

- What is the proverb saying will help you when you walk, wake and sleep?
- Why do you think the Proverb places such a high respect on honoring your father?
- How has some of your dad's thinking guided you?
- Does your father's thinking help you in just one area?

Section 4 | What Did Jesus Say?

Luke 5 : 27 – 31, "Jesus Calls Levi"

- Jesus was an amazing man, as he loved to hang out with the marginalized, as well as with the upper classes. He was able to adapt and get alongside different social groups and classes. What does that tell us about the character of Jesus?
- Levi would not have been a popular man as he collected taxes. Why does this seem an odd choice of person to become a disciple of Jesus?
- After Levi met Jesus, accepted the chance to be a disciple and follow Jesus, he had a party. Why was he having a party?
- Jesus was at ease in all situations, he could adapt easily, and this made it easy for him to meet new people. Jesus treated people the same whether they were viewed by the world as important, or not important. How do you treat people who others may regard as being of lower status than you, or higher status than you?

Section 5 | Final Thought

Jesus was a man for all occasions. If he lived today he could sit down with the most important people in the world and be at ease, and could walk into the poorest slum in the world and give the same care and attention to the people there. One way for us to learn to be at ease with people is to honor our parents and listen to their teaching. Jesus himself lived in a family and honored his mum and dad. Let us follow that example, so we can adapt to the ever-changing circumstances we will find ourselves in.

Section 6 | Pray

“Jesus you showed us that all people are important. Let my life and attitude be the same. Help me to honor my mum and dad, and listen to their advice. They may not get things right all the time, but they still are my parents, so help me to learn and listen to them. In Jesus name we pray.
Amen.”

Honesty is doing what is right and not giving into temptation to do what we know is wrong.

Section 1 | Football World

- Why is cheating so much a part of the game now?
- How do you feel when you see your star player fake an injury or dive for a penalty?
- Sadly, as the games get bigger, and what is at stake higher, often the behavior gets worse. Why is this?
- How do you react when someone is trying to cheat you in a game?
- Have you ever overreacted to a foul to get a player sent off? Is this good play, or cheating?
- Are there times when it's OK to foul a player for the team?

Section 2 | Proverb

*"Kings take pleasure in honest lips;
they value a man who speaks the truth."*

Proverbs 16 : 13

16 honest

Section 3 | **Going Deeper**

- Why is honesty given such a high value?
- Do you think people are more or less honest now than they were 100 years ago?
- Why would a King take pleasure in honest lips?
- Do you find it easy to speak the truth?
- Can lying become addictive?

Section 4 | **What Did Jesus Say?**

Matthew 5 : 33 – 37, “Oaths”

- Here Jesus says to let your yes be yes and your no be no. Are you an honest person?
- Do you struggle saying no to people? Sometimes because we want to please people, we say what they want to hear instead of saying no. Jesus tells us to be people of integrity. If you say you’re going to do something, do it. Do you struggle saying no to people? Why?
- People say “honesty is the best policy”. Why?
- Jesus valued honesty, so did Wooden, and the writer of the proverb. Do you?

16 honest

Section 5 | Final Thought

Honesty is a virtue that is being lost in football and in society. The first person we need to be honest with is ourselves. We are the ones who truly know if we are working as hard as we can, putting in the time for our studies and being true to our word. Therefore, when you look in the mirror tonight, will an honest person be looking back at you, or someone who bends what he says to get ahead? Honesty is key, so let's all set out to live honest lives.

Section 6 | Pray

"Jesus, please help us to be honest. At times it seems easier to tell a lie, or not do what we have agreed to do, but please help us to let our yes be yes, and our no be no, just as you commanded. In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen."

**Just being yourself. Being at ease in any situation.
Never fighting yourself.**

Section 1 | Football World

- How do you feel when you play in a cup final, a big match, or if you are on trial at a new club?
- Can the excitement of the game affect your performance?
- Why is it hard at those times to play your natural game?
- Can you play your natural game if your parents are shouting at you and putting pressure on you?
- Can you think of any pro players who have played in a big match but not had the poise you would expect?

Section 2 | Proverb

**"The wise fear the LORD and shun evil, but a fool is
hotheaded and yet feels secure."**

Proverbs 14 : 16

17 poise

Section 3 | **Going Deeper**

- Name players who have been reckless on the football pitch?
- If players are hotheaded on the pitch, do you think they will be hotheaded in everyday life?
- What causes players to be hotheaded, and make rash decisions?
- Are there any situations where you have been hot-headed and regretted your actions?
- Is it wrong sometimes to get upset and show your emotion?

Section 4 | **What Did Jesus Say?**

Matthew 5 : 43 – 48, “Love Your Enemies”

- Here we see Jesus saying that if you want to have poise, and to be able to handle different situations you should love your enemies. Who are your enemies?
- If you love them, how will that affect your actions towards them?
- Can you love your opponent?
- If you can, does that change the way you view them? If we don't have an opponent we can't play, so, rather than the opposition being our enemy, we need them to play the game we love. Does this affect the way you view them?

Section 5 | Final Thought

If you enter the football field with a heart to love your enemies and love your opponents it will help you keep your head, and focus on the goal of playing as well as you can. The moment you change your focus to trying to hurt your opponent, you have lost - maybe not the match - but the joy of the game. Therefore, try to love your opponent this week, as without them you can't play the game you love.

Section 6 | Pray

“Jesus, we want to be people and players that keep our head at all times. Even under intense pressure we want people to be able to rely on us. Jesus, help me to be that person. Jesus, help me to love my opponent, and by doing so, help me show the right character as I play this week. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.”

**Respect without fear. Confident not cocky.
May come from faith in yourself
in knowing that your prepared.**

Section 1 | Football World

- Confidence can easily lead to someone becoming cocky, who do you think are cocky teams or players/managers?
- Jose Mourinho, is a very confident manager, and many would argue he is cocky. Is he good for the game or bad for it?
- How can you have confidence in your ability and the teams, and not get too cocky?
- Why is confidence important for a player?
- What happens when a player loses their confidence?
- If a player loses their confidence, what should a coach do?

Section 2 | Proverb

“Do not exalt yourself in the King’s presence and do not claim a place among great men; it is better for him to say to you, “come up here,” than for him to humiliate you before a nobleman.”

Proverbs 25 : 6 - 7

18 confidence

Section 3 | **Going Deeper**

- What is the writer of the proverb saying here?
- Have you ever been accused of being cocky? Was this fair?
- Do people like people who are cocky?
- The writer of the proverb is saying the way to ensure you don't become cocky is to be humble. How do you remain humble?
- Do you think humility is a value that fits with being a footballer?

Section 4 | **What Did Jesus Say?**

Matthew 18 : 2 – 4, “The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven”

- Why would Jesus say we need to humble yourself like a child?
- Jesus wanted people to think differently to other people, to put other people before themselves. If you're confident in yourself, and your ability you also can be humble. Is this true?
- If you have to shout about yourself, and tell people you are wonderful at this and that, it probably hides a deep-felt insecurity. What can we do to help people who do this?

18 confidence

Section 5 | Final Thought

Every player, even the very best, sometimes struggles with confidence. They can doubt themselves from time to time. Confidence is an important part of the game, and when you cross the white line to play you need to be confident in your ability and in your teammates. However, we also need to ensure that confidence doesn't breed cockiness, as Jesus taught that we need to be humble people.

Section 6 | Pray

"Jesus, help us to be a humble team. Also help us to have confidence in our ability. Help us this week get the right balance so we can go out and play in a manner that will please you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen
."

**When we are reliable others know
they can depend on us.**

Section 1 | Football World

- Having a reliable goalkeeper is essential for any good team. Who would you want in goal for your team?
- What do reliable goalkeepers do well?
- What do they give to the players around them? *Confidence*
- What happens when goalkeepers start to make mistakes? *Your centre backs start to make mistakes also.*
- Reliability is also about doing what you're supposed to, such as turning up on time to training and matches etc. Are you reliable in this area?
- John Wooden took one look at one of his players when he arrived on the coach to go to the airport and told him to go and get changed, as he was not 'neat and clean.' Wooden had high standards and wanted his players to match them, do you think that is important?

Section 2 | Proverb

*"Love and faithfulness keep a king safe;
through love his throne is made secure."*

Proverbs 20 : 28

19 reliability

Section 3 | **Going Deeper**

- How do we keep the King safe according to the proverb?
- Being faithful is not often talked about, are you faithful to your faith/family/team?
- Why is it hard to be faithful?
- The same way a reliable goalkeeper brings confidence, so faithful people bring safety to a king. Who has been faithful to you during your life? Do they make you safe?
- Have you ever stopped to appreciate the people that make you feel safe?
- Have you ever been unfaithful? Do you need to apologize to someone?
- Have you ever been unreliable to this team?

Section 4 | **What Did Jesus Say?**

Luke 15, "Parable of Lost Son"

- The youngest son was unfaithful to the father, but he returned out of a sense of desperation. Why did the father receive him back?
- The parable is a picture of God and us. We have turned our back on God, but he longs to have us back with him. Are we prepared to admit that we need God, and come back to him?
- Do you know that no matter what you have done, God is looking to see if you will come back to him? If you do there will be a party in heaven. The choice is yours.

19 reliability

Section 5 | Final Thought

Reliability is being a person that people can depend upon. Every team and organization is looking for people like that. We often struggle being reliable. In fact in the story Jesus told the son of the man in the parable turned his back on his own father. However, in Jesus we have a God who is faithful to us, even though we are not faithful to him. He opened up his arms and invited his son **back** in. Jesus offers the same chance to you if you want to take it.

Section 6 | Pray

“Jesus, thank you that you are reliable. That you are always faithful to us. Help me to be a person like that. Help me to be a person who others can rely on and trust in. Jesus, thank you no matter what happens, we know you will always open up your arms to us as you’re a good father
In Jesus name we pray. Amen.”

**Fight is a determined effort to do
the very best we can do.
When we fight we are ready to respond.**

Section 1 | Football World

- Wooden is not talking about us fighting with our fists, he is saying that we press, push and do all we can to respond to our opponents. Has there been a game when you have fought well as a team?
- Name some of the great fight-backs you can remember.
- Why does winning when we have been behind feel so special?
- Why is it key that we are in the right frame of mind to respond when we start losing?
- Have we ever fought all the way to the end of the game, given everything, and still lost? How did you feel?

Section 2 | Proverb

"It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of Kings."

Proverbs 25 : 2

Section 3 | Going Deeper

- Here the writer of the proverb says that sometimes God hides things from us. Why would He do that?
- We have the chance to search matters out, how can we do that?
- How often do you struggle with God?
- If we do this we have that sense of doing what kings do, as we enter the inner place with God. Is that an exciting place to be?
- The proverb gives us the idea that God has revealed everything, but is waiting to open it up to us, we just need to engage with Him. Are we open to that?

Section 4 | What Did Jesus Say?

Matthew 9 : 20 – 23, “Jesus Heals a Sick Woman”

- A lady had to fight through the crowd to see Jesus, but she just touched his cloak. Why do you think Jesus asked who it was when he would have already known? *If he had not, no-one would have believed her she was clean from this unclean disease.*
- This lady knew she had a chance, but had to have faith, and also fight the crowds to get to be near Jesus. Do you have faith that Jesus wants to work in your life?
Are you going to give Jesus the chance to be in your journey, are you going to spend time with him seeking out the plan and purpose he has for your life?

20 fight

Section 5 | Final Thought

We all need to work hard, and to fight to the end. We are all on a journey, and sometimes it's hard to keep moving forward. However, asking Jesus to come with us on our journey, we will move forward, getting closer to him. The devil though will try everything he can to stop us. There is a fight out there for you, but Jesus is ready to win that battle if you journey with him.

Section 6 | Pray

“Jesus, we need to fight for the things that are important to us. When we play football, we need to work hard, to fight to the end. We also need to fight to the end of this journey which is our life. We need you in our lives, help us to spend time with you, so you can reveal to us the future you have in store for us. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.”

Purity of intention.

Section 1 | Football World

- Can you name a player you think has integrity?
- Why is it hard for players to stay true to who they were when they grew up?
- If you had a daughter would you want them marrying a footballer?
- How would you handle the pressure of being a pro footballer?
- Do you think you have integrity? Would your friends agree?

Section 2 | Proverb

*"The integrity of the **upright** guides them,
but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity."*

Proverbs 11 : 3

21 integrity

Section 3 | **Going Deeper**

- If you have integrity how will it guide you?
- Do you think it makes it easier to make tough decisions if you have integrity?
- Why will lack of integrity destroy you?
- Is it sometimes tempting to try to do something that is against our values, just to try it? If so what?
- What could be the consequences if you went down that road?
- Have you seen friends go down that path?

Section 4 | **What Did Jesus Say?**

Matthew 22 : 15 – 17, “Paying the Imperial Tax to Caesar”

- Jesus was known as a person who taught in line with the truth of the Bible. His beliefs guided him and the decisions he made. The Pharisees were trying to trap him. Why was it so difficult for them to do so?
- Jesus stood up for what he believed in. Do you? How can you do so this week?

21 integrity

Section 5 | Final Thought

So often our intentions are not good. We often hope to promote ourselves, but Jesus way' is a different way. He always had pure motives. Even when people tried to trap him, his answer was in line with his belief system. Jesus was a man of integrity and this is one of the reasons so many people were attracted to him.

Section 6 | Pray

“Jesus, help us to be more and more like you. Help us to be in line with your teaching, so that when others speak of us, even people that don't agree with us, they say we are people of integrity.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.”

Resourcefulness is using our wits, proper judgment and common sense to solve problems and meet challenges.

Section 1 | Football World

- What are some the different ways you can improve your game?
- Is there anything we can do as a team, apart from training, that will help us get better? *Watch other teams play etc*
- If you are a manager of a club, what would you do to help you become a better manager? *Get coaching badges, watch training sessions at the local pro club*
- What can you do as a player that can help you get that extra 1%?

Section 2 | Proverb

"He who gathers crops in the summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son."

Proverbs 10 : 5

Section 3 | **Going Deeper**

- In the summer, when the sun is out, what are the things you want to do?
- However, the proverb says it's the wise that will gather their crops, or put another way, it's the wise that will work, why is that?
- What are ways you can be resourceful to maximize your opportunities at school/college/work?
- How can you be a resource for young people, so they can learn from you?
- How can we share our knowledge within this team, so we are a resource for one another?

Section 4 | **What Did Jesus Say?**

Matthew 14 : 13 -21, "Feeding of the 5,000"

- Jesus took the little he had and did a miracle. Maybe you think, "Can Jesus use me?" However, if he can use some bread and fish, he can use you. Has God used you before in an amazing way?
- What do you think God might want you to do in the long term for Him?
- If we are prepared to give Jesus everything, he can do great things through us, are you prepared to give him everything?

Section 5 | Final Thought

The people that succeed do all they can to become better at what they do. While others are relaxing, they are thinking about how they can gain that extra 1%. As your coach, I try to do that, to enable us as team to be the best we can, and I hope you as players also do this so you can be the best player but also the best student/worker you can be. The great thing with Jesus is that the little we can give to him, he can use to do many miracles like in the story we heard today.

Section 6 | Pray

“Jesus, help us to be resourceful people who are prepared to go that extra mile be the best we can be. Jesus thank you that when we give you our lives, you can use the little we give you to do many, many thing. Help me give my whole life to you. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.”

**Be at your best when the best is needed.
Real love of a hard battle.**

Section 1 | Football World

- What is better - winning 5 v 0 or winning 2 v 1? Why? *You test yourself when you play and it's a tight game.*
- What are the games every player wants to play in? *Important games that win cups or trophies*
- If you have a player who plays really well against weak teams but never quite performs against strong teams, what do you think the coach feels?
- If your life depended on it, who would you choose to take a penalty? Why that person?

Section 2 | Proverb

"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens one another."

Proverbs 17 : 7

Section 3 | **Going Deeper**

- How can a man sharpen another man?
- What happens when you play against a player slightly better than you?
- Does playing against better players make you perform better?
- Does our training feel like iron sharpening iron? We need to train with intensity as the way we train will be the way we will perform in matches.
- Do you have friends that keep you sharp?

Section 4 | **What Did Jesus Say?**

Mark 12 : 30 – 31, “Loving Your Neighbor”

- Jesus asked us to love our neighbor, does that also include the opposition?
- In a game, how can you love your opponent?
- If you choose to love your opponent, how will it help you to play your best when your best is needed? *So often when we play, we view the opponent as stopping us, and we can think more about trying to stop them, than about playing our own game. Loving them releases us to play, and concentrate on that and that alone.*
- Does this mean we can desire for our opponent to play well, as if we love our neighbor we will want the best for them? *Yes, Jesus calls us to Love. We need our opponent to play at the top of their game, to help us play at the top of ours.*
- If there is a 50/50 to win, if you are to love your opponent, do you try hard to win that ball? *Yes, as the way we love our opponent, is to respect them, and play as well as we can, so they in turn have to play as well as they can to win the game.*

Section 5 | Final Thought

The best players perform when the stakes are high. Are you going to be a player who plays your best, when your best is needed? For that you need an opponent who will force you to play at the top of our game. Jesus called us to love our neighbor, and that includes your opponent. In the context of the world of football the way we love our opponent is to play the best you can, so we honor God by using the gift he has given us to its full potential. By doing that it forces your opponent to do the same. Therefore, love your opponent, and in doing so you will allow yourself the chance to be at your best when your best is needed.

Section 6 | Pray

“We thank you Jesus that you want us to use our gifts to the maximum. We thank you that you have given us this gift to play football. Jesus, help us to play at our best, when the competition is on. You also ask to love our opponent, and I thank you that instead of making me a weaker player, it makes me better, as I need my opponent to help me play at my best. Jesus I thank you that your teaching always applies to my life and also to my sport, help me to be at my best the next time I play. In Jesus name we pray.
Amen.”

That things would turn out for the best.

Wooden was a man of faith who wanted his players to have faith in themselves and each other. He also wanted them to have faith in Jesus Christ.

Section 1 | Football World

- Why is faith be important for a team to be successful?
- Why do we need to have faith in each other, the coach etc?
- Why is faith in God also a good thing for a player?
- If you feel you are playing not for yourself but for God, what will that do to your motivation?
- What other things do players put their faith in?

Section 2 | Proverb

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."

Proverbs 3 : 5 - 6

Section 3 | **Going Deeper**

- Is it hard to trust God?
- Why is it hard to trust that God is speaking to us?
- Here the proverb says to trust with your whole heart. Do we often give only a little to God?
- In times of trouble, who do you lean on? God, or your own abilities?
- If we do put God first, our path will be straight. What does that mean?

Section 4 | **What Did Jesus Say?**

Matthew 6 : 33, "But seek first his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well."

- Are we going to seek and put God first?
- If we did that what would change in our lives?
- Is it scary to think about giving your life to God?

Section 5 | Final Thought

We can all live our lives for ourselves, and most people do. However, we have seen over the course of these devotions that Jesus said he was the Son of God. Therefore we need to make a decision about who he is. Perhaps some of us have made a commitment to follow him, but he is not the first thing in our lives. Will you going to make a decision to seek him first today?

Section 6 | Pray

“Jesus, help us all to put you first in our lives, as you are the only thing worth living for. Sometimes it can be hard living for you. Be close to me, so I can know you better and follow you call, and your voice. Jesus I want to be a person of faith, and someone who follows after you. Amen.”

Patience is the ability to wait and preserve.

Section 1 | Football World

- Patience is not a word often associated with football. Now chairmen all want instant success. It was six years before Sir Alex Ferguson won a trophy, since then they have not stopped winning. Why are chairmen not patient?
- Are we as a team patient? Under pressure do we do the same things we have always done and trust they will work for us, or do we quickly change?
- Who puts pressure on players to be the best they can, as quickly as they can?
- Do players also need to be patient with themselves sometimes?

Section 2 | Proverb

*"A patient man has great understanding
but a quick tempered man displays folly."*

Proverbs 14 : 29

25 patience

Section 3 | **Going Deeper**

- We live in an instant world, everything is now quick-fix, and we don't want to wait. Why is patience no longer valued?
- Are you guys prepared to be patient and take the long road to be successful young men or women?
- If you do become rich very quickly, or famous tomorrow, what are the dangers with that?
- You also sometimes have to be patient when trying to find the right person to marry. What is the danger of marrying someone too quickly?

Section 4 | **What Did Jesus Say?**

John 21 : 15 – 17, “Jesus Reinstates Peter”

- Here we see the story of Jesus reinstating Peter after he had denied Jesus before. This was Jesus' best mate and he had turned his back on Jesus when he was arrested, when he needed him the most. How would you have reacted to your best mate turning his back on you?
- How does Jesus react?
- Jesus knew that Peter would fail him, but he was patient with him, how do you think that made Peter feel?
- What did it mean to feed his sheep?
- How would have Peter felt to be given such a role?

25 patience

Section 5 | Final Thought

We need to be patient with ourselves, our teammates, and others. Sometimes things will take time. Sometimes in a game you just need to keep doing the basics and the game will change. Sometimes things are hard. Also we need to know that Jesus is patient with us. He knows we will fail. However, he loves us and continues to loves us. If Jesus is patient with us, should we not also be patient with others?

Section 6 | Pray

“Jesus, help us to be more like you. Thank you that you are patient with us. You never give up on me, like you never gave up on Peter. Thank you, and help me be a patient person, so I can share that same kindness to others around me. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.”

Success is peace of mind that is a direct result of self satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best you are capable of becoming.

Section 1 | **Football World**

- Name some players you think have got the most out of their ability?
- David Beckham played for Manchester United, Real Madrid, AC Milan, England, and couldn't really dribble, head the ball or kick the ball with his left foot, but was seen as one of the best players in the world. Why?
- When this season have we as a team got as close to playing at our best?
- Is it easier to play at our best against a weak team or strong team?
- Can we play our best and still lose?

Section 2 | **Proverb**

"Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man."

Proverbs 3 : 3 - 4

Section 3 | **Going Deeper**

- How are we to win favor with other people according to the proverb?
- We also want to find favor with God, do you think God cares how we play football?
- Sometimes we all know love and faithfulness can leave us, what can we do to ensure they don't?
- The writer of the proverb says we should bind love and faithfulness around our neck. What else could we do to ensure they don't leave us?
- Is having a good name important to you? Is it important for this club?

Section 4 | **What Did Jesus Say?**

Matthew 28 : 16 – 20, "The Great Commission"

- Jesus has given a task to his disciples and therefore to all Christians to make his message known around the world. That includes to the footballers of this world. How can we be successful at doing this?
- What does God require of us in this task?
- If we remember the proverb above, and try to do the best we can, we can be successful. What would that mean and how would success be measured?

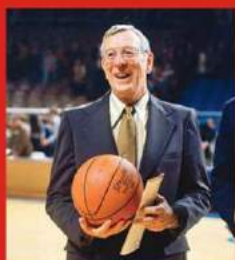
26 SUCCESS

Section 5 | Final Thought

God requires us to try and be the best we can, just as Wooden expected of his players. Therefore, let's go out and try to accomplish the task that Jesus has set before us by being good news as a football team, but also in the communities and families we live in.

Section 6 | Pray

"Jesus, help us be the best we can and to communicate the message of Jesus Christ to the people we know. In the process help us to accomplish the task you gave your people. Amen."



John Wooden, voted Coach of the Century by ESPN, created the powerful UCLA basketball dynasty that won 10 NCAA national championships, 88 straight games, and 4 perfect seasons. Today after he passed away, his wisdom capsulated in his famous Pyramid of Success. This now continues to guide a new generation of athletes and coaches.

Wooden's Wisdom for Football provides football coaches the chance to use the thinking and philosophy of the Greatest Ever Coach, John Wooden. By making 25 studies based on Wooden's Legendary Pyramid of Success. These studies also incorporate seemingly Wisdom from the book that John Wooden valued higher than any other, the Bible. The studies then conclude with asking the question what Jesus himself had to say about the subject.

A complete programme, that along the way challenges players on how to choose their friends wisely, set appropriate goals, how to deal with peer pressure, the dangers of alcohol and drugs, and choosing the right husband or wife are just some of the topics covered in this comprehensive resource for football coaches.

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Jonathan Blair

"I have used this material with the prisoners I work with in Drakenstein prison in South Africa. These young men are in prison as they have lost, they lost in the game of life. However, through football we are trying to give them hope and another chance. Jonathan has provided a wonderful resource we have used to build the character and values so needed in these young boys' lives."

Mark Slessenger, Director of the Hope Academy South Arica