Playing the Game with Greatness and Grace

Phil. 3:10-14 and I Cor. 9:24-27

Introduction

There is something about athletic excellence that inspires us.
The great ones make it look easy.
They make everyone around them better.
The challenge for us as Christians is to live our life with greatness and grace.

I. Play with gratitude.

“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” I Thessalonians 5:16-18

Be a thankful person.
We have every reason to be thankful, yet it is a rare quality.
The Ten Lepers – Luke 17:11-19

“All I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth.” Lou Gehrig

Lou Gehrig chose to focus on what he had been given – not what had been lost. He chose to be thankful and not bitter.

That takes great courage and character.

II. Play with purpose.

We experience the greatest joy when we use our gifts for something greater than ourselves.
If life is all about me, we are living in a very small world.

“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:10-14
Paul knew his calling and he labored with all his might to bring the gospel to those who did not know Christ.

What is your mission?

III. Play to win!

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.” I Corinthians 9:24-27

Give God your best!

“Run in such a way as to get the prize!”

- That requires discipline.
- That takes focus.

IV. Be the kind of person people want to sit next to.

“For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.” I Corinthians 15:9-10

Paul ran to win. But he knew that any “success” he experienced was only by the grace of God.

The players we admire most are those who are humble and gracious.

- They have learned how to win with grace.
- They have learned how to lose with grace.
- They are humble and forgiving.

“Now he belongs to the ages.” Edwin Stanton

Conclusion

What kind of player are you?

- Play with gratitude.
- Play with purpose.
- Play to win.
- Be the kind of person people want to sit next to.