

Calvary Chapel  of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY BASKETBALL DEVOTIONS

4-9 year olds

Week 4

With All Your Soul

With All Your Soul

The objective is the goal or main teaching point of this week's study. If you convey one thing to your players, make it this.

Read this passage aloud to the kids, as it will be the focus of this week's study. Each week's memory verse will be in bold.

Here is where we will discuss today's passage with the players. This can be read off the page or summarized and explained in the coach's own words.

Objective To show the players that loving the Lord is a full commitment that demands all that we are.

Scripture Passage:

"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

Matthew 6:24 (NIV)

In the Word

Imagine that you had two different basketball coaches, and each of them were telling you to do different things. One coach tells you to go right, the other tells you to go left. One says to shoot, the other says to pass. That would get really confusing, and it would be impossible to obey them both at the same time! But as we will see today, this is what it's like when we try to live for God and for other things at the same time.

This season, we've been studying Jesus' command to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Today, our focus is on how to love Him with all of your soul. The word "soul" means every part of who you are. When Jesus asks us to love Him with all our soul, He is telling us to love God with everything we've got. Loving Jesus is a full commitment, and He should be more important to us than anyone or anything.

The problem is, there are many things in this world that compete with God for our love and attention, such as money, toys, video games, sports, grades, or even friends. When these things are what's most important to us, they are taking the place in our lives that belongs to God, and the Bible says that they become our master. As Christians, if we want to love the Lord with all our soul, we need to make sure that our one and only Master is Jesus, not these worldly things.

Some people think that they can love God, but also have something else be just as important to us as Him. But today's memory verse says we can't serve two masters. Sooner or later, you have to choose one over the

In the Word (Continued)

other. For example, say that your friends tell you to do something that you know is wrong. You have a choice to make: will you listen to your friends, or to God? Are God or friends your master? Or say that it's time to go to church, but you want to stay home and play video games. Again, you must decide which is more important to you. If we want to love God with all our soul, we must choose Him over everything else.

Now there's nothing wrong with having toys and games. It's good to have friends. All these things are blessings from God, and we should thank Him for them. But it becomes a problem when they take God's place in our lives. He must always come first, and we need to give up anything that keeps us or distracts us from loving and obeying Him. That won't always be easy, and we may have to make sacrifices, but after all Jesus has done for us, He deserves our whole lives.

"On the Court" gives some in-game situations where today's lesson can be applied, while "Off the Court" gives examples from everyday life. Encourage them to do the things you listed during the game today.

On the Court

- While there is nothing wrong with playing to win, don't let winning the game become more important to you than God. Remember that the character you show on the court matters more than the score of the game.
- Loving God with all your soul means following, obeying, and honoring Him, not only when you're winning and things are good, but also when you are losing or not playing well.

Off the Court

- Think of anything in your life right now that is more important to you than the Lord. Pray and ask Jesus to help you put Him above everything and everyone else in your life.
- Show that Jesus is the most important Person in your life by spending time with Him each day in the Bible and prayer with your family.

These are some final notes/goals to accomplish this week. These are not meant to be read, but are instructions for the coach.

The Game Plan

1. Review last week's memory verse, Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." Give a ticket to anyone who can recite it.
2. Learn and memorize Matthew 6:24 (NIV) with your team. Encourage them to practice the verse over the week.
3. Spend some time praying with the players this week that all of us would make the Lord more important than anything or anyone else in our lives.