

SUCCESS
AND FAILURE



I AM 3RD



WINTER BBALL INTRO

OUR MISSION

I AM 3RD is based on a simple belief that Jesus Christ is First, Others are Second, and I am Third.

We strongly believe that Jesus Christ is the single most important person in our lives. I AM 3RD works to carry out that belief through a commitment to serve the city of Lexington and surrounding counties through basketball, soccer, equine, tennis and a variety of other sports, camps, and recreation activities.

We are continually grateful for the support of White, Greer and Maggard Orthodontics and their partnership with I AM 3RD. They have given generously to the I AM 3RD program for many years. This soccer season they have continued to provide the league with financial gifts that contribute greatly in creating an amazing experience for all I AM 3RD participants!

OUR VISION

I AM 3RD is a recreation ministry located at Centenary United Methodist Church that seeks to foster spiritual and athletic development for all involved in hopes that we become and are becoming a Kingdom community, empowered by God to make disciples for the Transformation of the world through athletics. (Matthew 28:19-20)

S.E.E.D.S.

I AM 3RD is focused on planting S.E.E.D.S.

Serving

We seek to serve God first and others second in everything we do and have a special focus on serving kids, families, and the marginalized. It is our hope that through serving God and others that families will experience Jesus in a mighty way in all of our programs and offerings. (Matthew 25:40)

Excellence in Everything

We want to work at everything with all our heart, as if we were working for the Lord. We are intentional, strategic, deliberate, accommodating, and considerate of the needs of others. (Colossians 3:23-24)

Engaging

We want to engage coaches, parents, kids, families, and fans and help spur them on towards love and good deeds by encouraging, empowering and equipping them to understand, receive, and share the good news which is Christ Jesus. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Deepening Relationships

We desire that I AM 3RD is not just another thing families do during the week, but rather becomes an amazing time for children and families to spend time together, love one another, share the Gospel with each other, and create memories that will last for a lifetime. We to our focused on deepening relationships with I AM 3RD staff, coaches, and families. (1 Thessalonians 2:8)

Studying Scripture

We believe all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that through studying scripture we may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. It is our prayer that coaches, parents, children and families would gain a deeper understanding of what it means to follow Christ through our weekly devotions and times of prayer in order to help them learn more about Jesus Christ, His life, His purpose, His relevance and His importance in our lives. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

DEAR PARENTS,

We are so grateful to the many parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and neighbors who give of their time to support these kids each season. Thank you for all that you do! We have created this devotion in hope that you find it a useful tool to enhance your experience with us!

In Christ,



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WEEK 1

"I can do all things through Him who gives me strength."

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

In 1988, Kirk Gibson had a remarkable season propelling his Los Angeles Dodgers baseball team to the World Series. Unfortunately for Gibson, he suffered a leg injury before the start of the World Series leaving his ability to help his team uncertain. In Game 1, the Dodgers were losing near the end of the game while the favored Oakland A's had their best relief pitcher on the mound. Gibson summoned what strength he had left and limped to the plate in the last inning. The at bat went down in baseball history when the injured Gibson hit a home run and hobbled around the bases to give the Dodgers their first victory of the Series. Not only did Gibson's heroic demonstration of strength inspire his team in this game, but the Dodgers went on to capture the 1988 World Series Championship.

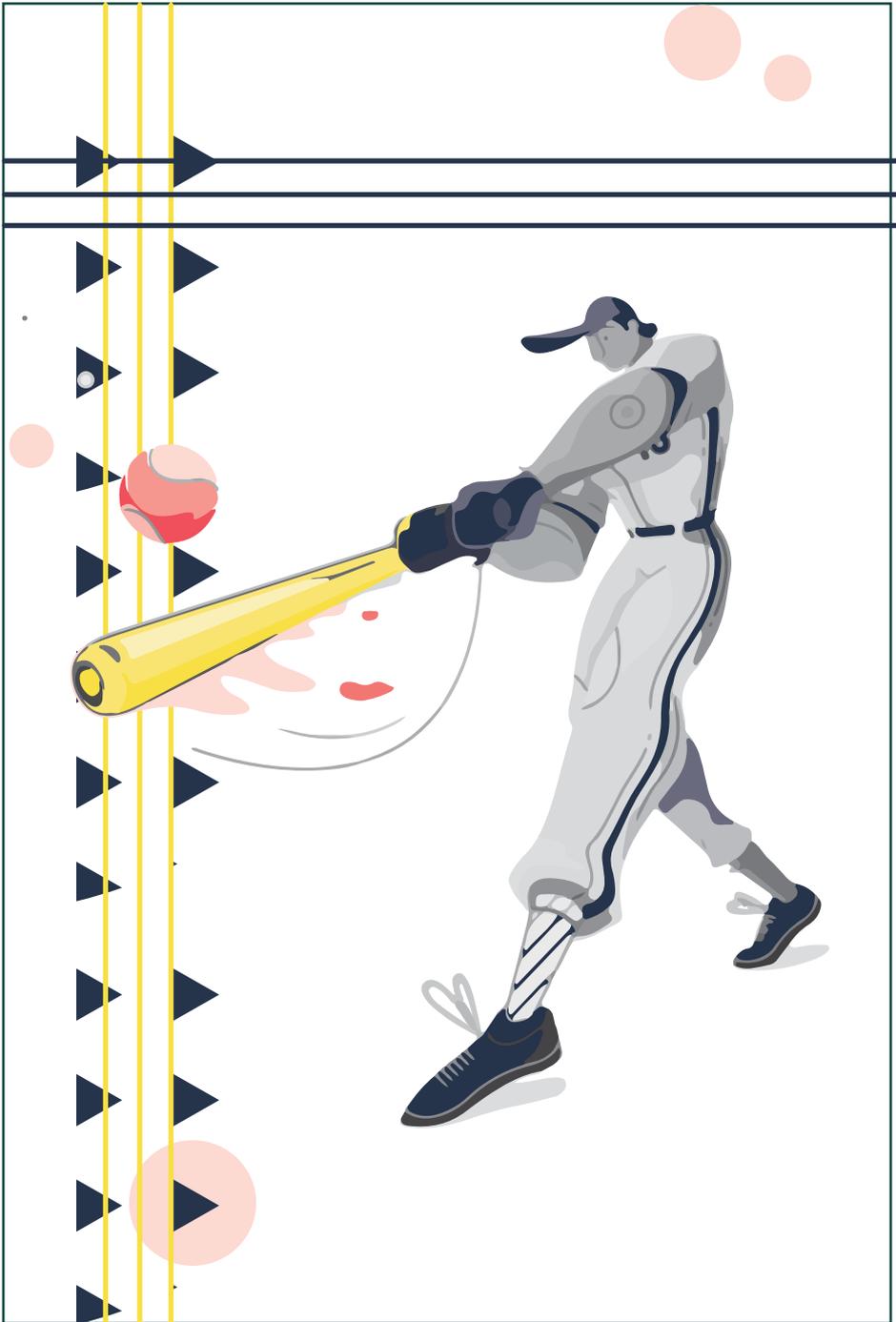
Whether in athletics or in life, we will all experience physical and emotional injuries. Pain can cloud how we think and can sometimes make God seem distant. The truth is God is never far away. He is waiting for us to ask him for strength. This does not mean that God will always make things easy for us, but it does mean that God will be with us through our struggles and that we can lean on His unwavering strength. God's strength can give us victory in His way and time.

1

INJURIES AND SETBACKS ARE A PART OF SPORTS FOR ALL ATHLETES. WHEN WE SUFFER INJURIES AND SETBACKS, HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND? HOW SHOULD WE APPROACH OUR RECOVERY AND MOVE FORWARD?

2

WHAT CAN GOD'S STRENGTH DO FOR US? HOW CAN WE CALL UPON GOD'S STRENGTH IN TIMES OF STRUGGLE?



WEEK 2

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

PROVERBS 3:5-6

University of Kentucky men’s basketball coach, John Calipari, is one of the most successful coaches of all time. In addition to his winning record, Coach Calipari is respected for the number of highly ranked recruits that join his team even when talented players already play at their positions.

Calipari’s players come in knowing that they will have to compete for their opportunities on the court. The players trust that Coach Calipari will guide and push them the right way toward both individual and team success. In the 2009-2010 season, John Wall, who would go on to become a #1 NBA draft pick, expressed mid-season frustration with his coach and how things were going. However, by the end of the same season, Wall was named SEC Player of the Year, Kentucky captured the SEC tournament title and four of Wall’s teammates joined him as NBA first-round draft picks. These successes were in no small part due to the players’ willingness to trust Coach Calipari’s wisdom and good intentions for their futures.

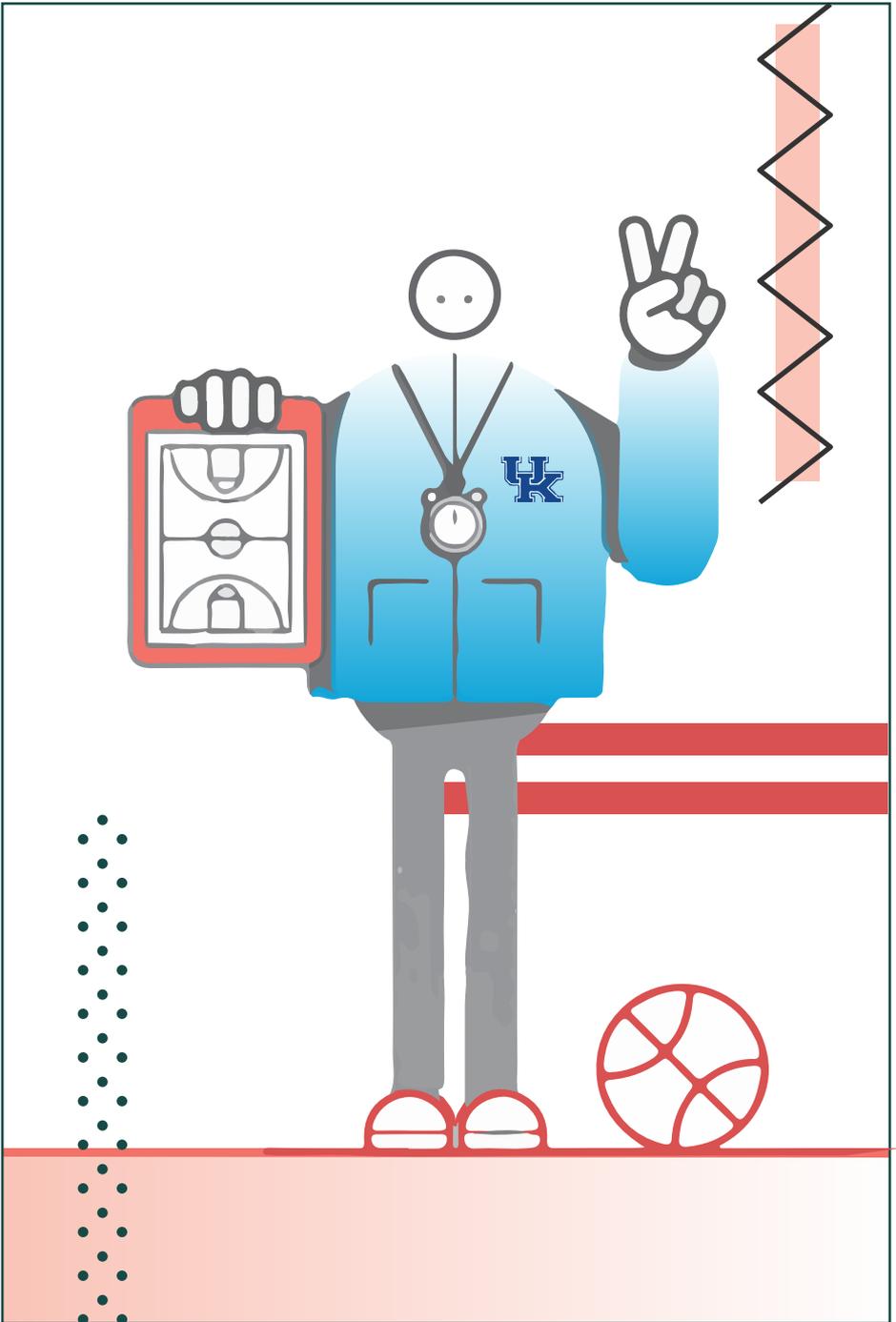
Sometimes an athlete does not understand what a coach is doing. The player wants to rely on his or her own understanding, but the coach often has a bigger picture in mind. People often do the same thing with God. We do not always see what God is doing or why He is doing it. Sometimes God’s timing does not match up with what we want His timing to be. However, God promises us in His word that if we trust Him, we will see victories we cannot always imagine!

1

WHO DO YOU TRUST IN YOUR LIFE? WHY DO YOU TRUST THAT PERSON? DO PEOPLE TRUST YOU?

2

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “LEAN NOT ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING”? WHAT CAN WE DO TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT GOD HAS IN STORE FOR US?



WEEK 3

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

EPHESIANS 2:10

In 2012, gymnast Gabby Douglas became the first African American gymnast in Olympic history to win the individual all-around gymnastics finals. In addition to her individual Olympic gold medal performance, Douglas contributed to the United States winning the gymnastics team gold medal. What many people do not know is that this tremendous athlete overcame multiple obstacles, including a childhood blood disease and homelessness.

Given the long hours Douglas put into her training, the sacrifices she and her family made, and the obstacles she overcame, it would have been easy for Douglas to give herself the credit for her successes. Instead, she gave credit for her success to God. "He is the secret of my success; I love sharing about my faith. God has given me this amazing God-given talent, so I'm going to go out and glorify His name."

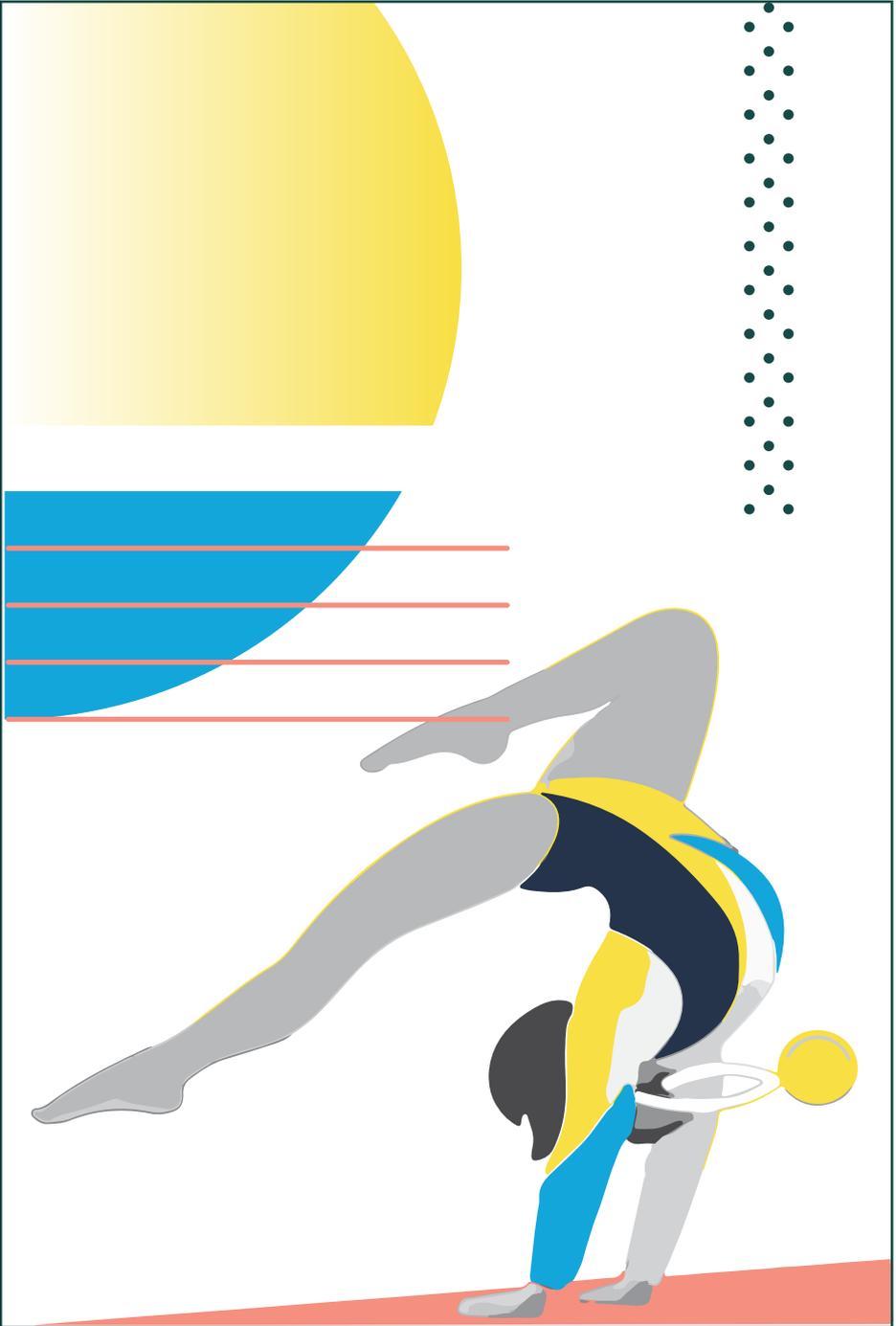
When we win, it can be natural for us to take the credit. It is easy to forget that it took many people along the way to help us achieve our victory. Our parents, coaches, and teammates all play a part in our success. However, none of our success would be possible without the gifts that God has given us. He has given these gifts not just to win games or awards, but to bring glory to His Kingdom through our lives.

1

WHEN YOU WIN, WHO DO YOU GIVE CREDIT TO? WHY DO YOU GIVE CREDIT TO THOSE PEOPLE?

2

WHY MIGHT WE FORGET TO GIVE GOD CREDIT FOR OUR SUCCESSSES? HOW CAN WE USE OUR SUCCESS TO BRING GOD GLORY?



WEEK 4

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters..."

COLASSIANS 3:23

Cameron Mills was a standout basketball player at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in Lexington, KY. He became a local star known for being a fantastic shooter. After his senior year, Mills could have gone to several schools where he would have been able to continue to be the star on his team. Instead, he decided to join the University of Kentucky basketball team as a walk-on. Walk-ons usually get very little playing time and attention compared to the other players. Mills was knowingly going from being a local hero to a player on the bench.

In Mills' first two college seasons combined, he played less than an hour in games. However, Mills continued to practice hard and prepare as he always had. During his final two seasons, he found a role on the team as a 3-point shooter. It would be this very skill that helped to defeat UK's rival ,Duke, in the NCAA tournament. Mills' shot in that game would go down in Kentucky basketball history!

It is not always clear to us what role God wants us to play. We never know if God could be saving us and our unique skills for another moment in time. It is up to us to continue to be prepared, to work hard, and to meet the needs of our team and others. Everyone has a role to play in God's Kingdom, we just have to be ready to play it!

1

WHAT ROLE DO YOU PLAY ON YOUR TEAM? WHY IS THIS ROLE IMPORTANT?

2

WHAT ROLE CAN YOU PLAY IN GOD'S KINGDOM? HOW CAN YOU KNOW WHAT ROLE GOD WANTS YOU TO PLAY?



WEEK 5

"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had..."

ROMANS 15:5

Long-distance runner Shalane Flanagan holds the American women's record times in the 3000-meter, 5000-meter, and 15K road race distances, winning the 2017 New York Marathon in dominating fashion. Flanagan's accomplishments and elite status as a runner did not come by accident. To turn her natural talent into success, it took dedication, practice, and consistency.

To begin her training for the Berlin Marathon, Flanagan ran between 105 and 120 miles a week at high altitude in Park City, Utah. She added gym sessions, careful meal preparations, work with physical and massage therapists, and even regular ice baths to help restore her body in response to her vigorous training. For Flanagan to perform as a distance runner at the highest level, she dedicated her time and attention to the activities that would maximize her abilities. Her dedication had to come from a passion for and commitment to her sport.

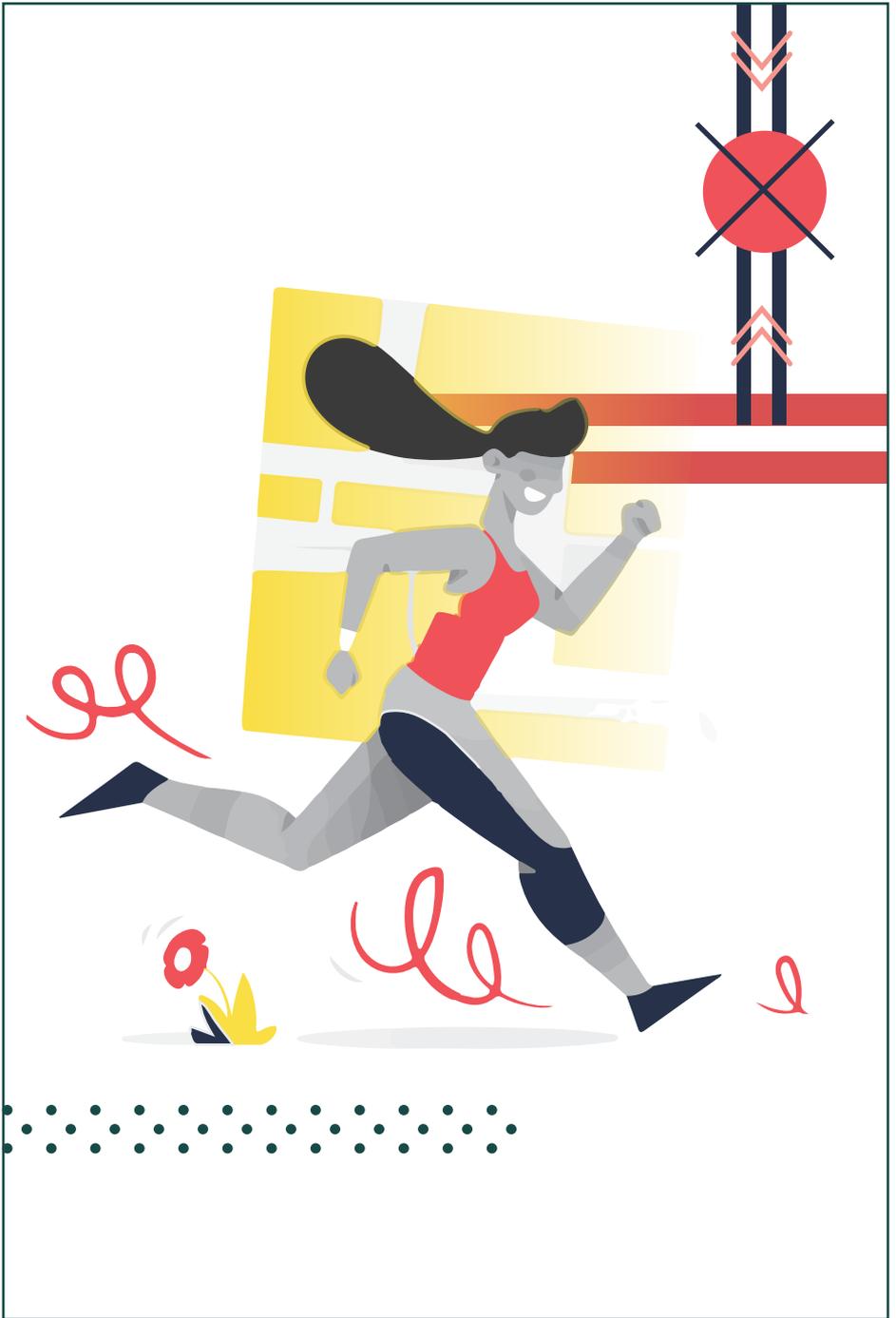
Having a relationship with God also requires passion and commitment. It took time for Flanagan to become an elite athlete. So too, we must spend time developing our relationship with God. Thankfully, God also gives us many ways to relate to Him like going to church, reading the Bible, and prayer. What step toward God can you take today?

1

WHAT ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT AND COMMITTED TO IN YOUR LIFE? WHY DO YOU LOVE THESE THINGS? HOW CAN OTHERS SEE YOUR PASSION FOR THESE THINGS?

2

WHAT WOULD BE A WAY THAT YOU COULD CONNECT WITH GOD TODAY?



WEEK 6

"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

HEBREWS 4:12

Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant are among the greatest and most famous basketball players ever to have played in the NBA. Individually, they have won the highest awards and been featured in the most popular advertisements. When they played together on the Los Angeles Lakers, they were a dominant force that led their team to winning three straight NBA championships. Yet despite their success, these two great players experienced significant challenges in how they viewed their roles on the same team. Eventually, their differences contributed to the team splitting up. Many of their fans were left to wonder how many more championships they could have won together if they had maintained a team-centered attitude.

Thankfully, God's Word gives us instructions on how to live, including the attitudes we hold. These instructions are found in the Bible and apply to all parts of our lives. Being on a team can sometimes challenge our attitudes. As we learn through this example, this can happen even on a winning team. When we keep our hearts centered on God and His instructions, we can trust that our attitudes will help us through all kinds of seasons.

1

WHY IS IT SOMETIMES HARD TO HAVE A RIGHT ATTITUDE WHEN WE DEAL WITH OUR TEAMMATES OR COACHES?

2

WHY MIGHT TEAMMATES ON A WINNING TEAM STRUGGLE WITH KEEPING A TEAM-CENTERED ATTITUDE? WHAT ABOUT A TEAM FACING MANY LOSSES? HOW CAN WE ASK FOR GOD'S HELP WHEN OUR ATTITUDE IS NEGATIVE?



WEEK 7

"But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 CORINTHIANS 15:57

In just his second professional football season, a young quarterback named Dan Marino led the Miami Dolphins to the NFL's Super Bowl. Unfortunately for Marino, the Dolphins came up short in the big game. After their loss, commentators speculated that a player as great as Marino would inevitably play in more Super Bowls. Although Marino set numerous records, received significant recognition, and won many games by the time he retired, he never again competed in a Super Bowl. The team success that everyone assumed Marino would have never materialized. Marino would go on to be elected to the NFL Pro Football Hall of Fame, but his inability to win the ultimate championship is still recalled when people debate the greatest quarterbacks of all time.

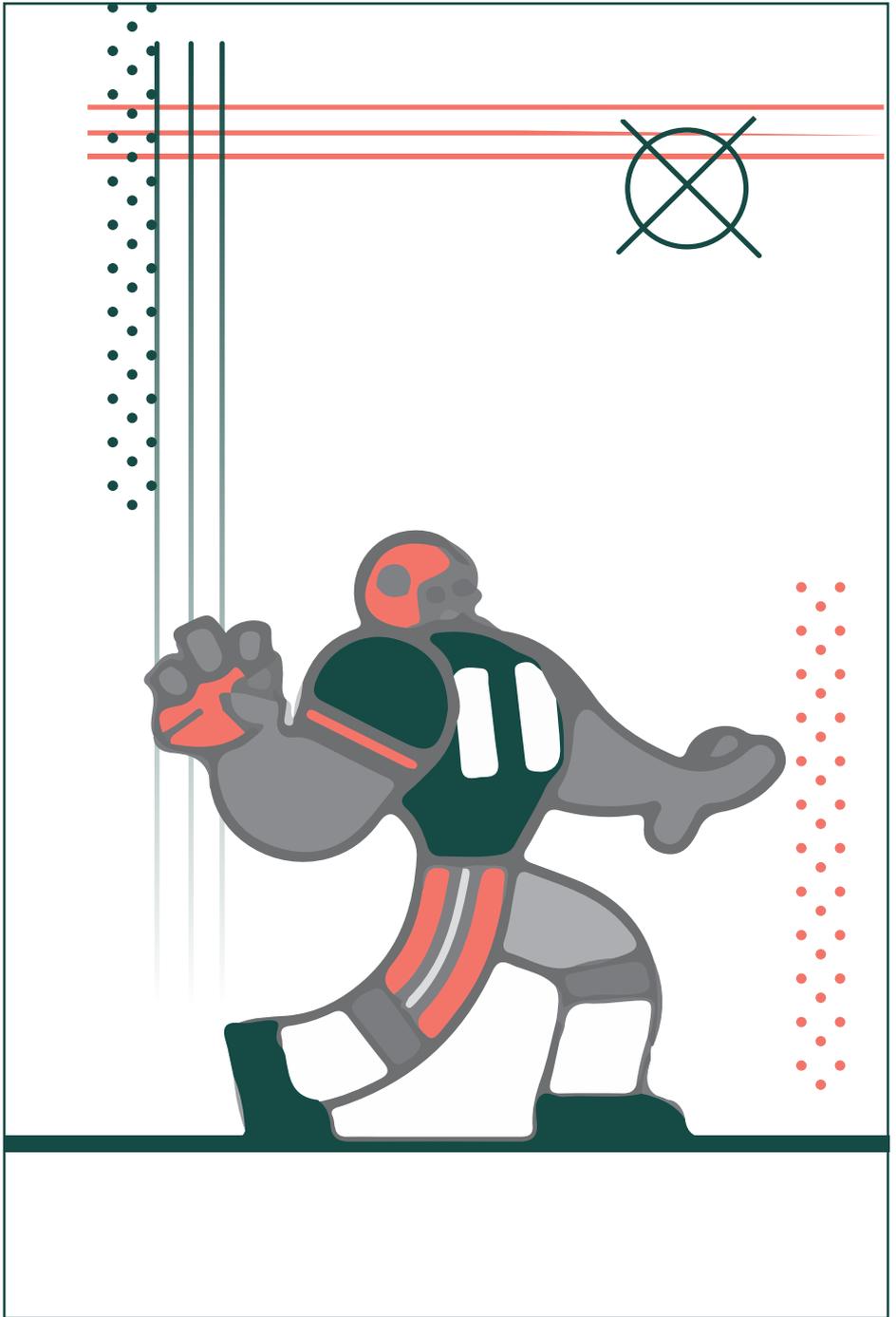
While most of us will never compete in a game as big as the Super Bowl, we are guaranteed the biggest win in the "game of life." How is this true? By putting our faith in Jesus Christ, we can achieve the ultimate victory. He forgives our sins and promises us eternal life! Through accepting Jesus, we already know the final score because Jesus always wins the championship. There is no need to debate His legacy. Jesus is the greatest person who ever lived, and He gave the greatest sacrifice ever for you!

1

HAVE YOU EVER REALLY WANTED TO WIN SOMETHING BIG? DID YOU SUCCEED OR FALL SHORT? HOW DID YOU REACT?

2

HOW CAN YOU CELEBRATE THE VICTORY THAT JESUS HAS WON FOR US?



WEEK 8

"The Lord said to him, 'Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.'"

EXODUS 4:11-12

Michael Kidd-Gilchrist was a standout freshman on the 2011-2012 National Champion University of Kentucky men's basketball team. He was a defensive stopper, a high energy player, and a fantastic teammate. Kidd-Gilchrist was also a leader. Early in the season, he started what became known as "The Breakfast Club." Waking early and gathering his teammates, Kidd-Gilchrist's group put in extra work early in the morning, followed by eating breakfast together. His leadership helped to build bonds between his teammates and improve their overall play as a team.

Yet, Kidd-Gilchrist's leadership was not without potential barriers. Kidd-Gilchrist experienced stuttering, a common speech impairment. Ultimately, Kidd-Gilchrist's leadership came in the example of the hard work he put in and the relationships he BUILT. Many Bible scholars believe that Moses had speech difficulties. In fact, Moses viewed his speech as a barrier when God tasked him with leadership. God did not give into Moses' reluctance. He made him into one of the greatest leaders in the Bible.

We can also feel reluctant to lead. Maybe we have a physical limitation. Perhaps we are shy or maybe we feel uncomfortable in that role. There are plenty of reasons for not leading, but God gives us the power to be leaders in the places He puts us. While we might feel unprepared to lead, God can provide us with all of the guidance we need.

1

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT LEADERSHIP? WHY CAN LEADERSHIP BE INTIMIDATING? WHAT HOLDS YOU BACK FROM SEEING YOURSELF AS A LEADER?

2

WHAT DOES GOD TELL US ABOUT OUR ABILITY TO BE LEADERS? WHERE CAN YOU FIND THE STRENGTH TO BE A LEADER IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES?



WEEK 9

"My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

PSALM 73:26

The United States women's soccer team has consistently been one of the best teams in the world. The team has featured outstanding individual performers and won multiple FIFA World Cups. As the team prepared to play in the 2016 Olympics in Rio, they were one of the favorites to bring home the gold medal. One of the best players on the team was the 2016 US Soccer Athlete of the Year, Tobin Heath. Despite the team's hard work, they were upset in the quarterfinals of the Olympic tournament, a loss that was personally very upsetting to Heath. Although she had won a significant individual award, her team failed to accomplish their team goal while the whole world watched.

However, it was through this loss that Heath learned something about herself. She recognized that she was defining her identity through soccer, not through Christ. Heath remarked, "I had the mindset that my faith was just sort of an add-on, that I was a soccer player who was also a Christian." Her team's loss in the Olympics reminded Heath that while the glory of winning a game is great, she wanted her whole life to "reflect His glory."

Most of us find sports more fun when we are winning, but the reality is that losses are inevitable. Did you ever think about what you can learn through failure? Often, when things do not go our way, God is growing and molding us into a closer relationship with Him. A loss in a game might actually be a win for God if we are focusing our hearts and minds on His purpose.

1

HAVE YOU EVER LEARNED A LESSON FROM LOSING A GAME? WHAT CAN LOSSES TEACH US?

2

WHY CAN IT SOMETIMES BE HARD TO GIVE GLORY TO GOD WHEN WE LOSE OR FAIL? HOW CAN YOUR WHOLE LIFE REFLECT GOD'S GLORY?



WEEK 10

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

GALATIANS 6:9

At the 1988 Canadian Olympics, sprinter Ben Johnson broke his own world record in the 100-meter race with a time of 9.79 seconds. Observers were astounded by Johnson's speed and power. Johnson claimed the gold medal and could claim to be the fastest man in the world. Unfortunately, beneath the shine of the gold medal, there was trouble. To help him train harder and run faster, Johnson took a banned substance which was against the rules. When Johnson was caught, his gold medal was taken away, and he was banned from future races. This affected not only Johnson, but also his country's team and the sport he loved. In the end, the glory Johnson had achieved disappeared quickly when his actions were exposed.

Some people cheat or break the rules to gain an advantage in sports and in life. It is important to remember that we are not judged by only the world's standards, but by God's standard. God always sees when we do things the right way. He knows our heart and motives. We can be encouraged that God loves those who do what is right.

1

WHY IS CHEATING WRONG? HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TEMPTED TO CHEAT?

2

WHY DOES GOD HAVE RULES FOR OUR LIVES? WHAT DO GOD'S RULES PROTECT US FROM?





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