The secret to every winning team is:

* Common Goal
* Committed People
* Complementary Roles
* Clear Communication
* Constructive Conflict
* Cohesion (Healthy Fellowship)
* Credible Coaching

One of the ways a team improves is to go back and review the game film from both wins and losses… constantly looking for ways to improve.

Did you know that Christianity is a team sport? “Team Jesus”!!

The winning team!

But did you also know that not everyone on His team feels the need to grow, improve or play a position?

Even though that mindset conflicts with God’s playbook!

As I studied today’s Scripture passage I began to feel like I was watching last years Arizona Cardinal’s all over again…

We sometimes got excited, but in the end, were often disappointed…

Mark 8:27-29 is like one of those AMAZING moments when the QB airs the ball out to Larry Fitzgerald for the score!

V27 Jesus asks His group: “Who do people say I am?”

28 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.”

29 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.”

SCORE!! Atta Boy Peter!!

But then, on their very next set of downs… V31-32 Jesus sends in a play to the HOLY HUDDLE and explains to His disciples:

“…The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

32 He spoke plainly (communicated clearly) about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

It’s never a good sign when a player runs off the field and begins arguing with the coach!! Especially when that coach is the Son of God!!

What kind of message does that send to the rest of the team?

Just then in V33: “Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, and he rebuked (reprimanded) Peter.

“Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.”

Peter got flagged for a “personal foul” against his own coach!!

Why did Jesus turn and look at His disciples before reprimanding Peter?

Likely to make sure that they were all paying attention to what He was going to say next, so they wouldn’t make the same mistake Peter did.

Because if Peter would have gotten his way, it would have cost them and us the game!!

Had Jesus never gone to the cross, there would have been no payment or forgiveness for mankind’s sin.

No resurrection = no hope of Heaven…

So Jesus calls a “Time Out” in V34-35

V34 Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples,(gathering the whole team together) he said,

“If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.

So let’s break it down… what are some areas that Peter and the team may have been able to improve that might be beneficial to you and New Beginnings Church?

1. Knowing the common goal.

What was “Coach Jesus’s” clearly stated goal? To obey His Father, no matter if it cost Him His life, rise again on the third day and rescue mankind from spending eternity away from God.

Peter’s goal? To prevent that from happening!

Even though Peter’s love for Christ and his motives were sincere, he was sincerely wrong in his actions. All because his goal was out of alignment with the “common goal” of Christ to save the world.

Do you know the common goal of this church? The same as Coach Jesus…

As you examine your actions… Replay the game film from your life…

Does it reveal that “common goal”?

Winning takes more than just “knowing” what the goal is, or even knowing what the “playbook” says… secondly it takes…

1. Being committed to the common goal.

Jesus’ commitment level to the goal? All in!

Peter’s commitment level to his goal? All in!

Can you see the problem beginning to reveal itself? Being “all in” with differing goals often leads to unhealthy conflict…

Causing the common goal not to be met and the team to be divided.

That is why Jesus had to make sure His entire team was gathered when He reprimanded Peter.

Some on the team might have see Peter as the victim… that Jesus shouldn’t have embarrassed him like that.

But that would only have been true if “embarrassing” Peter and making him a “victim” was Coach Jesus’ goal…

Thinking like that only serves as further proof as to how out of touch with the goal they were.

Jesus (the God of the Bible) needed to get everyone together… on the same sheet of music… so they could reach the common goal and win together.

There is hardly anything more destructive to a team than people coming against the leadership and subverting the authority, all in the name of their OWN goal or because they’re jockeying for position.

In Mark 9:33-35 Jesus gave the team more truth…

Not staying focused on the “common goal” and focusing inward is when rivalries begin…,

Instead focusing and reaching people and making disciples who make disciples, problems arise with…

* People
* Money/Power
* Music
* The pastor’s message
* Instead of ministry being the vehicle to reach the lost, it becomes a throne that people pridefully sit on.

Sadly, it is often being committed to that inward focus, and not the “common goal” of Christ that causes people to leave.

It is the stuff of divisions, factions, & denominationalism (the Catholics, Baptists, Assembly of God, Church of the Nazarene, and many, many more are apart of) which the church of Jesus Christ has probably been most known for throughout the ages…

When it should be rescuing people through the Love, Kindness, Grace, Mercy & Forgiveness of Christ.

Over the decades, church leadership has been so misguided and focused on itself that they even tried to fix their problems with yet another division…

The birth of the “non-denominational” church…, only to discover two wrongs never make a right. More division never equals greater unity…

Not to over simplify this very complex issue, but I believe if you look at the reasons for almost every church division, faction, and now non-denominationalism…

I believe you will find a common thread… a commitment to a “self-focused agenda”… Rather than the a commitment to the “Common Goal” of Coach Jesus.

To live in love & greater obedience to His Father and rescue mankind from spending eternity away from God.

Which strikes at the heart of our Wednesday night Bible Study in Genesis doesn’t it?

* The one who obeyed God’s instruction always WON!!
* The ones who followed that example and continued to set that righteous example for others always WON!!

The Bible NEVER shows us a DISOBEDIENT/unrepentant winner!!

Let’s pause and go back to our football analogy again…

1. Credible (Wise) Coaching

The field of life isn’t the wisest place to call your plays …

Have you ever seen what’s happening down on the field? Bad stuff!

You talk about my momma again and I’m gonna… It’s emotionally charged drama!

It’s always best to get your next play from “Coach Jesus”, who isn’t caught up in all of that, but has the “birds eye” view of your life…

He knows what play is needed to help you become the best, most positive, most effective player that you can be… Are you “all in”?

Please stand as we prepare to end this service:

* Do you want to be on the winning team?
* How would Coach Jesus say you’re doing?
* Would He say that you are “all in”? Growing and becoming a more effective “Team Member” who is committed to His goal.
* Have you been a “team builder”, eagerly following the plays that He calls and encouraging others to do the same?

If not, Samantha is going to come to play one final song…

If you need to make things right with the Coach, come to an altar and pray… He is kind, loving, merciful and forgiving…