

CHAPTER 11

HOW'S YOUR AVAILABILITY?



Biblical Lessons for Students, Athletes & More

FOCAL VERSE

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send?
And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" Isaiah 6:8 (NIV)

"Basketball is one of those rare opportunities where you can make a difference,
not only for yourself, but for other people as well." – Bill Walton

CHAPTER ELEVEN - GROUP EXPERIENCE HOW'S YOUR AVAILABILITY?

Are you a trophy or a tool?

A trophy is an object that sits on a shelf to be looked at and admired. It boasts of pride and beauty. The life of a trophy is easy. Conversely, the life of a tool can be agonizing, yet full of purpose. The tool does not choose *where, when, or how* it will be used. No, tools are simply created with a unique purpose in mind and are at the mercy of the craftsman. As followers of Christ, we are called to be God's *willing* tools on earth. If you've ever handled tools, then you know they get scratched, dinged, dirty, and worn. They (we) may sit in a tool box for a season and enjoy "time off," but eventually the Master carpenter will pick up the tools available Him, and use them for His good and pleasing purposes. **Are you a trophy or a tool?** Are you sitting on a shelf like a trophy, or are you willing and available to be used by God? Notice, I didn't ask if you're *ready and available*; I asked if you're *willing and available*.

As we dive into chapter eleven, be thinking about the "trophy vs. tool" illustration. Be prepared to answer, for yourself, "Am I a trophy or a tool?"

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Read the first two paragraphs then discuss:

- Dick DeVenzio said that a player who is constantly available to the ball defuses a lot of potentially troublesome situations. **What kind of troublesome situations might he be referring to?**
- Practically speaking, do you think praying, reading, and studying God's Word can also help defuse or prevent a lot of troubling situations? Explain?

SESSION 10 FOLLOW-UP

Since the previous session, did you have an opportunity to pray for your coach or guide a negative conversation in a more positive direction?

"Watching the activity of God from a distance can never compare with the thrill of being fully involved in the Spirit's active work."

HENRY AND MEL BLACKABY

"God is not concerned with your ability, God wants your availability."

KIRBYJON H. CALDWELL

"The Christian walk was never meant to be easy. The 'trophy life' is easy. The trophy life is pretty. The trophy life looks really good on the outside, but is empty and full of pride on the inside."

Julie Ann Filter





Love and kindness are never wasted.
They always make a difference. They
bless the one who receives them,
and they bless the giver.
Barbara De Angelis

Being constantly available to the ball is of great benefit to you. If you're not available to the ball, you can't score. And who doesn't like to score? It's exciting to be part of the action. It's also exciting to be part of the action when you make yourself available to be used by God.

Did you know that God *wants* to use you? You may have heard the phrase, "*Be the hands and feet of Christ.*" Being used by God is not confined to pastors, preachers, or teachers. *Anyone* can be an instrument or tool in God's hands. You just need to have a willing spirit, like Isaiah did when he said, "Here I am God, send me."

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At the bottom of page 72, I share a simple story of rolling down my window while at a stoplight, and simply saying, "hello," to a displaced man. It didn't cost me anything. It wasn't hard. But it did require action; it required *doing*. That simple act made the man feel seen, cared for, and valued. In his own words, he felt "recognized."

- **Read Matthew 25: 35-40 in your Bible.**
 - How is this parable similar to my story about the man at the stoplight?
- **List some practical ways in which you can be available to God. I'll start:**
 - Begin the day with worship. (Reading God's Word, praying, listening to worship music, etc). (*Personally, I don't think I'm as open to be used by God, unless I'm first inspired by God.*)
 - Ask a parent or guardian if there's anything around the house they need help with. Be prepared for "yes." How will you respond?
 - Ask a friend how you can personally and privately pray for them.
 - It's your turn! How can you be available to God today? Throughout the week?

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- Work through the parent, coach and player applications.

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PERSONAL TRAINING SESSION

- Don't skip over the quote by Neal A. Maxwell. "God does not begin by asking us about our *ability* but only about our *availability*, and if we then prove our *dependability*, He will increase our *capability*."
 - **Meditate on this quote. How does it apply to you as a basketball player?**
 - **How can you apply this quote to your spiritual walk with Jesus?**

~~ability~~ availability dependability capability

CLOSING COMMENTS:

When I was coaching, I had players who were willing to set aside their personal comforts and interests to serve the team in whatever capacity would benefit the program. On most days, it meant physically pushing themselves beyond their comfort level. It also meant playing a position they might not be comfortable with. On rare occasions, it meant sacrificing a position on the "A" team to serve a greater need on the "B" team. That's sacrifice!

God is looking for those who are willing to set aside their personal comforts and interests to follow Him and share in His ministry. He wants obedient, focused, and committed followers who will not only trust Him, but who will submit to His authority even when it's not comfortable or easy. The choice, however, is yours.

Jesus warned his disciples that following Him wasn't for the faint of heart. Matthew 16: 24-25 says, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it."

The key to serving Christ is "sacrifice." What are you willing to sacrifice to be the hands and feet of Christ? Your time? Your comfort? Your pride? Are you available to be used by God?

We will end today's lesson with this question?

ARE YOU A TROPHY OR A TOOL?



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- End with Post Game Prayer.