

June 25, 2025 – “In the Game” – Football

1st college football game – 1869, Rutgers vs College of N.J. (Princeton)

Sat. Aug. 23 – football season begins

Intro.

7 principles:

Objective: outscore opponent. 4 downs to move 10 yds for a 1st down.

1 – God gives us multiple chances... more than just a second chance God.

- **Jonah.** Peter (denial) **David** (adultery) **Moses.** Prodigal. **Zacchaeus.**

Micah 7:18 – *“Who is a God like you? You forgive sin and overlook the rebellion of your faithful people. You will not be angry forever, because you would rather show mercy.” (God’s Word trans)*

Joel 2:13 – *“Don’t tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead. Return to the LORD your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He is eager to relent and not punish.”*

John 1:16 – *“From His fullness we have all received grace upon grace.”*

○ - God freely forgives... gives abundant grace & mercy.

To win, you must score points. . . get the ball over the Goal Line.

2 – What is the Goal line of your life?

- Is it to get into heaven? Not a good goal b/c we don’t earn it.
- Is it to be righteous? More Christ-like? To love God/others? All good.
- But the Bible gives us a purpose for living:

○ **Isaiah 43:7** – *“Bring all who claim me as their God, for I have made them for my glory. It was I who created them.”*

▪ **We were made to give God glory. That should be our Goal.**

○ **1 Cor. 10:31** – *“whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”*

We live, love, & are more Christ-like when our goal is to glorify God.

Matt 5:16 – *“let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven”*

1 Cor. 6:20 – *“you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body.”*

There are penalties in football... backs up the team, 5, 10 or more yds.

3 – Penalties of a player hurt the whole team.

- In many ways, the bad acts of 1 Christian hurt all of Christianity.
 - o One bad lawyer hurts the profession. One bad cop...
 - **Hypocrisy** - When Christians fail to live up to the moral standards they profess to follow, people **doubt** the sincerity/validity of our faith.
 - **Judgmental** – judging/shunning others b/c of sin or differences **contradicts** the Christian message of grace & forgiveness.
 - **Lack of Love/ Compassion**: Failing to show love & compassion towards others **undercuts** the message of Jesus. [Good Samaritan ex.](#)
 - o We have a “**collective responsibility**” as the body of believers to live to glorify God. And we need to see it... own it.
- 1 Cor. 12:26** – “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.”

In football, every position player is important... need lineman, etc.

4 – The body of believers must work together.

- o **1 Cor. 12:27** – “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”
 - o **Paul** explained in **Romans 12:4-5** – “*Just as our bodies have many parts & each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.*”
- **Know that you are part of the Team**... you have a purpose, a role, a position... and the body needs you.

Off season/in season. The season doesn’t succeed w/o the “off season.”

5 – Understand that God prepares us... we have an “off season.”

- God’s call to action is always **preceded** by a time of **preparation**.
 - o **Paul** – missionary journeys/after 3 yrs in obscurity, learning... after dramatic encounter w/Jesus on Rd to Damascus.

- **Moses** – 40 yrs. leading stubborn sheep thru pastures.
- **Jesus** – 40 days in the wilderness.
- **Disciples** – waited in upper room for H.S. (day of Pentecost)
- **1 Peter 1:13** - “So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control.”
 - **In the waiting ... we have time to get prepared for the big game.**
 - **Perfect “practice makes perfect” performance.**

You can only do what you can do... can't control the other team, other players, the referees, the championship selection committee...

6 – Victory is God's . . . not ours.

- **Psalm 3:8** - “Victory comes from you, O LORD. May you bless your people.”
- **Romans 8:37** - “in all these things we are *more than conquerors through him* who loved us.”
 - It's not us, it's the power of God working in us, thru us...
 - When you know it's God at work... u don't take credit for success. Give the praise to God. Your life glorifies God.

7 – Coach is important. Sets the tone ... prepares players for the game ... designs the game plan ... assigns positions & calls the plays. **Bowden/tower**

Who is your coach? Are you coaching yourself?

Who is running your offense? ... Calling the plays?

You trying to prepare yourself for the game of life?

- In football, Coach calls a play... but it's up to players to execute it.
- When they do their own thing, do you blame the coach?
 - Maybe... for lack of disciple, respect. But we have **free will**.
 - **John 10:27** – “²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”
- **The sheep follow the Shepherd... and they listen / obey**
 - You being coached? Or coaching yourself?