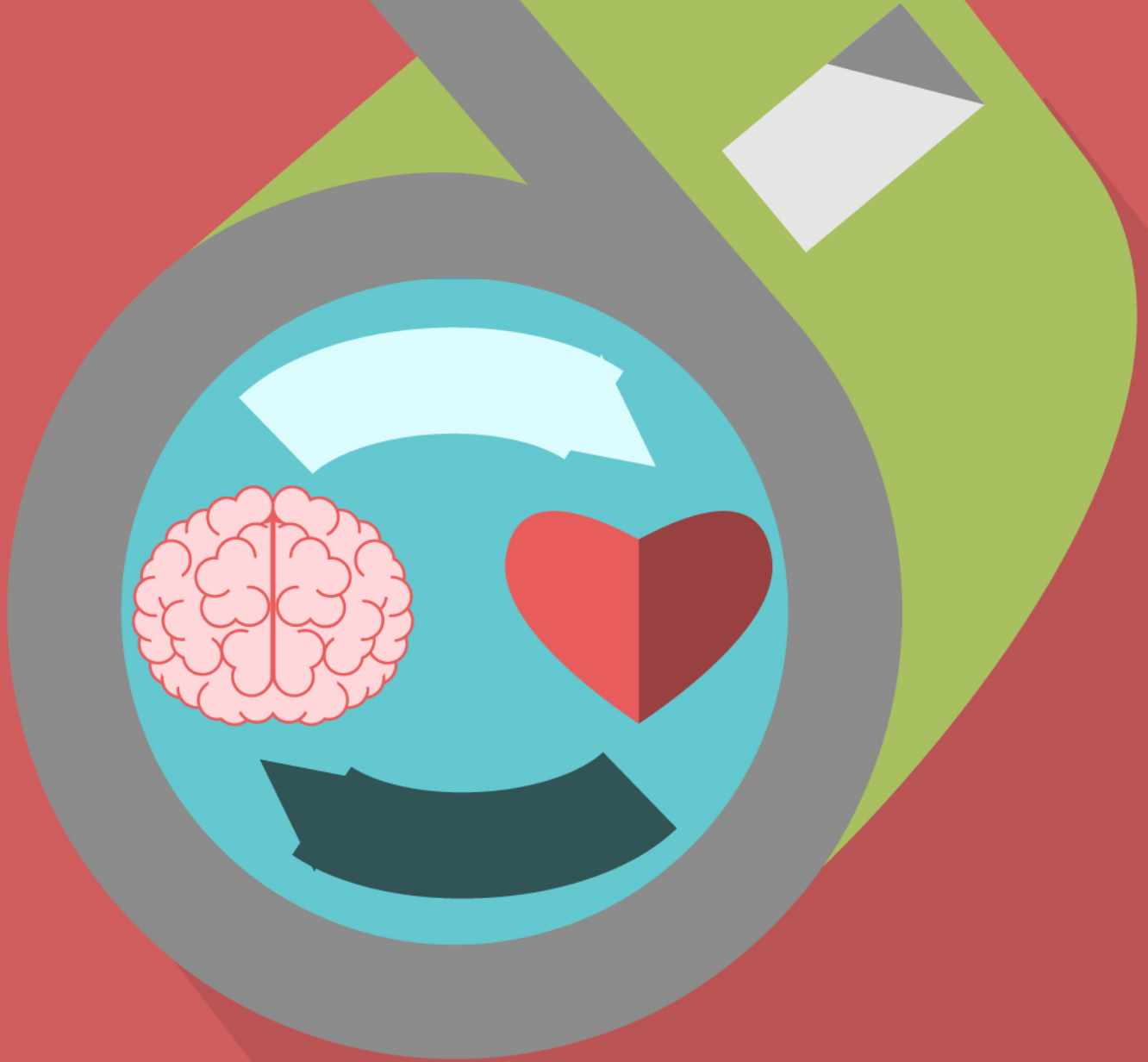


HEAD TO HEART



LOVING GOD WITH ALL YOUR
HEART AND MIND

TEAM SPORTS devotions

Goal Setting

Proverbs 21:5a, Nehemiah



What is something you want to do this soccer season? (suggestion: have fun learning to play soccer) **How can we plan to do that? How can we best learn? How can we make it fun?**



The plans of people who work hard succeed.

Proverbs 21:5a



God is very wise. When there is something to do, God says, “Make a plan. Work hard. You can do it!” In Bible times, there was something important to be done. God picked Nehemiah to do it. God’s people lived in the city of Jerusalem, but Jerusalem was a broken down city. God’s people weren’t safe. They needed help. So God spoke to Nehemiah’s heart. Nehemiah was sad for God’s people. He wanted to help them. He made a plan to rebuild the walls so the city would be strong and safe again. The people in Jerusalem were ready to get to work. Nehemiah showed them what needed to be done. God gave everyone strength to work hard. In a very short time, they did it! People were amazed. They could see how great God is. **What did God want to get done? Who did he choose to help? Why were people amazed?**



Can you have fun doing something hard? When we are first learning something, it can feel hard to do. But the more we work at it, the easier it gets. In a very short time, we can do it! It is fun. **Who can we ask for help when things seem hard?**

PRAY

Heavenly Father, you are amazing. You give us strength to do hard things. You love it when we have fun. Help us have fun learning to play soccer. Amen.

TEAM SPORTS devotions

Commitment

1 Kings 8, Psalm 72, Romans 5:10



What are some things in soccer that take time to learn? Every time you come to practices and games, you learn something about playing soccer. When you stick with it and don't give up, over time you will get better at playing the game.



And may you commit your lives completely to the Lord our God. May you live by his rules. May you obey his commands.



1 Kings 8:61a



Have you ever felt excited to do something at first and then lost interest later? Solomon was the king of Israel. Solomon wanted to be the best king he could be. He asked God to help him be good and fair to his people. At first, Solomon was excited to live by God's rules and obey his commands. He was off to a very good start as king. But over time, Solomon lost interest in doing things God's way. More and more, Solomon did things his own way. **Do you think this made Solomon the best king he could be? Why or why not?**



At first, Solomon wanted to be good and fair and help people. *Psalm 72:8* But he didn't stick with God. Sometimes we are like Solomon. We forget to do things God's way. We do things our own way instead. **What does God do when this happens?** He keeps on loving us anyway. God is good and fair and treats us with kindness and forgiveness. Because we don't always do things God's way, God sent his son, Jesus, to do things God's way for us. Then Jesus gave his own life for ours so we could be with our Heavenly Father. *Romans 5:10* **God will always stick with you. How can you stick with him?** (believe in his son, Jesus)

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank you that Jesus did things God's way for us. This season, help us think about how we can follow him by sticking with you. Amen.

TEAM SPORTS devotions

Confidence

Psalm 46:1, 1 Samuel 17



What are some new things you have learned playing soccer this season? (how to dribble keeping the ball close, how to kick with the lace-covered part of your shoe, how to pass without losing possession, how to keep the ball away from your opponent, etc) At first, you were unsure how to do these things. Now that you are learning, you are gaining confidence. **What does it mean to have confidence?** Having confidence is feeling sure you can do something. It is being brave enough to try. It is expecting good things to happen. **What kind of things do you say to yourself when you have confidence?** I'm ready. I can kick the ball. I can run fast.



*God is our place of safety. He gives us strength.
He is always there to help us in times of trouble.*

Psalm 46:1



When we believe in God, we can have confidence in him. Having God-confidence is feeling sure that God can do something. When we need help, we can be confident that God will give us strength and help us in times of trouble. In the Bible, young David needed God's help. The giant, Goliath, wanted to fight God's people. He teased them and made fun of God. **How do you think God's people felt?** Someone needed to do something. Because David loved God and had confidence in him, he said, *"I will fight Goliath."* David had never fought such a big man before. But with God's help, he was brave enough to try. David expected good things to happen because he knew that God was stronger and more powerful than any enemy. David said to Goliath, *"This day the Lord will give me the victory over you."* 1 Samuel 17:46 The king offered David a big sword and heavy armor. But David said, "No." He knew all he needed was God and his trusty sling and stones. Then, David struck Goliath in the forehead with a stone, killing him. Because David had confidence in God, he was able to do what none of the warriors could do—defeat Goliath. **How did David show he had confidence in God?**



Playing soccer is a good way to learn confidence. Feeling sure you can do something will help you play better. But sometimes in your life, you will have troubles that feel very big and hard to handle on your own. Because God's word is true, you can trust that he is always there to help in times of trouble. **How does God help you be brave enough to try new things?**

PRAY

Heavenly Father, your words are true. We can trust you. When we face something scary or difficult, thank you for always being there to help us. Amen.

TEAM SPORTS devotions

Attitude

Philippians 2:1-11



Picture a soccer player with a good attitude. **What things does he do and say?** Now picture a soccer player with a bad attitude. **What things does he do and say? Who has more fun playing soccer? Can a person change his or her attitude?**



Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

Philippians 2:5 NLT



What kind of attitude did Jesus have? Jesus cared more for others than himself. He had the same importance as God, but he set it aside to come down and save the world. Jesus went from living in the form of God who rules over the world to living in the form of a human being who serves others in the world. Jesus looked for people to help. He put others first. He even died for all the people in the world so that we can live and enjoy the goodness of God's kingdom forever.



You can choose your attitude when you play ball. God wants us to choose the same attitude as Jesus. **How can you choose to have the same attitude as Jesus?** Jesus truly cared for people. He was unselfish and put others first. **How can you put your teammates first?** Jesus wanted to show God's love. He looked for people to help. **How can you help your teammates?**

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank you for loving us and sending your son, Jesus. Sometimes we feel upset and have a bad attitude. We ask you to help us think good thoughts so that we choose the same attitude as Jesus. Amen.

TEAM SPORTS devotions

Courage

Isaiah 41:13, Numbers 13 & 14



Everyone has felt afraid of something. **What does it mean to be brave? Being brave is doing something even when you feel afraid. Sometimes playing soccer makes you feel afraid. What things are you afraid of when you play soccer?** (making a mistake, feeling embarrassed, disappointing your teammates, etc)



*I am the Lord your God. I take hold of your right hand.
I say to you, 'Do not be afraid. I will help you.'*

Isaiah 41:13



In Bible times, God's children followed their heavenly father through the wilderness to a wonderful new land. God wanted his children to have this land and promised to help them get it. When they got close, God's children wanted to check it out first. They saw that the land was very beautiful and there was plenty of delicious food to eat. It looked like a very good place to live. But they also saw that the people who lived there were big and strong. God's children were afraid they would lose a fight with them. So they decided not to move into the land. Joshua and Caleb wanted to be brave. They said, "God will help us." But the others did not believe them. So God told the others they would have to stay in the wilderness for 40 years and they would not be able to move into the promised land. They would miss out on all the good things God wanted to give them. Since Joshua and Caleb trusted God, after 40 years they did get to move into the promised land and enjoy God's good things. **Why were God's children afraid? How did it keep them from enjoying God's good things?**



Feeling afraid can keep you from enjoying something good. **What should you do if you feel afraid?** Talk about it with God, your parents, and your coach. We are here to help you move past your fears. Suppose you are afraid you won't know what to do when you get the ball. **How can you be brave and move past this fear?** Start with deciding to make a simple play whenever you get the ball, like passing it to a teammate. As you build confidence, look to see if you can dribble into space and attack the net. Play with your head up to know where the space is and where your teammates are so you can know if you can attack or not. Focus on both the ball and the space; the defenders, your teammates, and what's going on around you. **What good things will happen when you are no longer afraid of knowing what to do when you get the ball?** (If time allows, name other fears and talk about ways to move past them.)

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank you for being with us when we feel afraid. Help us be brave and trust you to lead us to good things. Amen.

TEAM SPORTS devotions

Coachability

Proverbs 1:5a, 2 Kings 5



What does a soccer player do when he wants to learn to play better? He listens, pays attention, and asks questions because he wants to know what he can work on. He practices what he learns.



Let wise people listen and add to what they have learned.

Proverbs 1:5a



In Bible times, Naaman had a very bad skin disease. He wanted to get better. Naaman heard that Elisha could heal him, so he went to Elisha's house. When Naaman got there, a servant came to the door. He gave Naaman instructions from God. He said, *"Go! Wash yourself in the Jordan River seven times. Then your skin will be healed."* **What did Naaman learn when he listened to Elisha's servant?** (what he needed to do to get better) But Naaman didn't like what he heard.

He wanted Elisha to pray and wave his hands over him so that he would be healed. Naaman didn't want to wash himself in the muddy Jordan River, so he turned away angry. Fortunately, Naaman's helpers were there. They wanted him to get better. They talked to him and were able to convince him to give it a try. So Naaman went down to the Jordan River. He washed himself seven times. He did exactly what Elisha's servant told him to do. Then his skin was completely healed. **How was Naaman wise?** He listened and learned what to do. Then he did it.



What do wise people do? They listen so that they can learn more. **Why is it good to learn from God?** God loves us and knows what is best for us. **How do you listen to God and learn from him?** You read the Bible because it tells you what God is like. You go to church where you learn how much Jesus loves you and what he has done to save you. You talk to God and tell him what is on your mind. You sit quietly and let him speak to your heart. You talk to others who know God. You ask them questions because they can help you understand things. Getting to know God is fun because he wants to be your friend.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, we want to know you better because you teach us truth and give us life. Help us listen carefully and learn from you what is best. Amen.

TEAM SPORTS devotions

7

Consistency

Galatians 6:9



How do you practice dribbling? You're taught to point your toe down and touch the ball with your laces. Change direction by turning your hips around the ball and cutting with the inside or outside of your foot. Use the sole of your foot to roll the ball back and quickly change direction. Practice with both feet. **Have you ever gotten tired of practicing the same thing over and over?** Sometimes the sun is hot and we get tired of dribbling between cones, even when we know it's a good thing to do. **Why is dribbling an important skill to learn?** In a tight space, dribbling helps you evade defenders. In an open space, dribbling helps you outrun a defender.



*Let us not become tired of doing good.
At the right time we will gather a crop if we don't give up.*



Galatians 6:9



Farmers grow food from seeds. They water and pull out the weeds. They do this over and over until they have a crop to harvest. It's good to care for the crops because it helps them grow lots of good food. But sometimes the sun is hot and the farmer gets tired of watering and pulling weeds. **What would happen if the farmer stopped watering and pulling weeds?** The plants would die and the weeds would take over. The farmer would miss out on harvesting his crop.

God wants us to do good. **What kinds of good things does God want us to do?** (love, help, comfort, forgive, tell people about him, etc) It's good to be kind and help people. God wants us to do good things over and over. **Have you ever gotten tired of doing good things?** Sometimes we get tired of helping with chores. Sometimes we get tired of using kind words like "please" and "thank you". **What would happen if we stopped being helpful and kind?** We would miss the chance to make others feel good. We would miss the chance to make their life better. We would miss the chance for God to shine his blessings on us.



It feels good to be in control of the ball and help the team. It feels good to be kind and help people. **How can you keep doing good even when you get tired? When the coach asks you to practice something again, what will you do? When someone needs help, what will you do?**

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank you for your love that never stops. Every time we get the chance, help do good for the team and others in our lives. When we feel tired, give us your strength to do good and remind us of the great rewards that come from not giving up. Amen.

TEAM SPORTS devotions

Victory Story

1 Corinthians 15:57, Luke 2:10-11, John 3:16



What is one good thing that happened this season? There have been some fun and exciting moments this season. It's fun to talk about the victories along the way. **What is a victory?** A victory is a win. Learning a new skill is a victory. Making new team friends is a victory. Playing better than you did in the last game is a victory. And of course defeating the opponent is a victory. We will remember these things and talk about them for a long time. In Bible times, when a king had a victory, he had someone write it down so the story could be told over and over. The victory story told how the king defeated his opponent and saved his people. The victory story was called a gospel because it was the good news of the good things that had happened.



But let us give thanks to God! He gives us the victory because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done.

1 Corinthians 15:57



The story of Jesus is a victory story. It starts when an angel appears to the shepherds. They have good news to share. Lord Jesus has been born into the world to save us. *Luke 2:10-11* **Why do we need to be saved?** We have all done things that were un-loving. God is so good and loving, he can only be around people who are always loving. Jesus was the only one on earth who is always loving. So he has a right friendship with God. Since we are not always loving, we do not have a right friendship with God. Without a right friendship with God, we will die. **How did Jesus save our friendship with God?** Jesus took all the un-loving things we have done and put them on himself. He took his right friendship with God and put it on us. Jesus died and was buried with our un-loving things on him. Then God raised him to new life. When we believe Jesus died for us, we will be given new life, too. Jesus is the king who saved our life and our friendship with God. That's good news. That's a victory story. God gives us new forever life. **How do we accept God's gift?** We accept God's gift by trusting and believing in Jesus. *"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life."* *John 3:16* That is exciting! It's good news for all people. It's the victory story God wants us to remember and talk about over and over.



Now that you know God's victory story, do you want to trust Jesus and accept God's gift of eternal life? Let's pray.

INVITATION TO TRUST AND FOLLOW JESUS

Lord Jesus, I have done things that were un-loving. I'm sorry. I believe you died for me and were raised to life to save me and my friendship with God. I trust you to guide my life. Help me follow you. Amen.