



# THE CORE

**8** ESSENTIALS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR FAITH



FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

BroadStreet Publishing Group, LLC.  
Savage, Minnesota, USA  
Broadstreetpublishing.com

### The CORE

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978-1-4245-6070-7  
978-1-4245-6115-5 (eBook)

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Printed in the USA.

The CORE Game Plan	4
The CORE Journey	6
How to Use The CORE	9
<b>CORE 1</b> Join God's Team	11
<b>CORE 2</b> Live with God's Power	19
<b>CORE 3</b> Train Spiritually	26
<b>CORE 4</b> Communicate with God	33
<b>CORE 5</b> Study God's Playbook	41
<b>CORE 6</b> Team Up with Others	49
<b>CORE 7</b> Know Your Role	59
<b>CORE 8</b> Share with Others	65
<b>APPENDIX</b> Leader's Notes	73
Competitor's Creed	79
About FCA	80

## Welcome to The CORE

Congratulations on taking the first steps toward growing your relationship with Jesus Christ! No matter if you just surrendered your life to Jesus or you've been a follower of Christ for many years, God has plans to do a great work in you as an athlete or coach.

The discipleship journey is a lifelong, yet fully rewarding adventure. The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is committed to run alongside you as you train your heart, mind and soul to become more like Jesus Christ. No matter where you are at in your journey, FCA has resources and training to help you grow in your faith.

But just like any great competitor will tell you, I believe success starts at The CORE. When you strengthen your CORE, everything else benefits. The same is true in your spiritual life.

Turn the page and start the life-changing journey to strengthen your CORE. These eight sessions will help you be engaged in God's Word, equipped on the basics of the faith, and empowered to help others grow in Jesus Christ.

## READY. SET. GO!

**Shane Williamson**

PRESIDENT AND CEO  
FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES

# The CORE Game Plan

FCA has a vision to see the world transformed by Jesus Christ. We have a clear and compelling mission: to lead every coach and athlete into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and His church. FCA's way to pursue that mission is to engage, equip, and empower every coach and every athlete around the world to grow in Christ. It is our goal to reach every sport, team, community, and country. Our passion is to see the world of sports redeemed for God's greater purposes, and we believe this transformation can only happen through one coach and one athlete at a time.

When people make a decision to follow Jesus, they begin the greatest journey of their life—a discipleship journey. This is a lifelong pursuit and process of becoming fully devoted followers of Christ. We help give coaches and athletes clarity about what the destination of this journey looks like and certainty about how to make progress on the journey. Our definition of a disciple is this:

*A disciple is someone who is in a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and His church.*

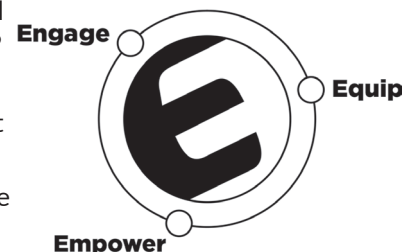
When you are growing and walking with Jesus on a daily basis, you are becoming more like Him. This process is called sanctification, which is the foundation of discipleship.

Let's unpack the "FCA way" of discipleship:

## ENGAGE

We engage coaches and athletes through genuine relationships by sharing our lives and the Gospel. We want to excel in connecting and developing relationships. Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 2:8, "We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News, but our own lives, too."

We connect with coaches and athletes in many different environments by identifying the time and place to cultivate relationships.



## EQUIP

We equip coaches and athletes to grow in Christ through God's Word with Christ-centered training and resources. This is where The CORE comes in. Eight sessions will give you the building blocks to strengthen your faith. In Ephesians 4:12, Paul writes, "Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ." We want to build you so you can be the follower God has designed you to become. You will discover the essence of the Christian life. The CORE is a game plan to have a personal, passionate relationship with Jesus Christ, and then to go impact those on your team, family, and community.

## EMPOWER

We empower coaches and athletes to engage and equip others to know and grow in Christ. Once equipped, we desire to

see coaches and athletes make disciples who make disciples through empowering others. In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul writes, “You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.” We are encouraged to not just hold on to our faith, but also to pass it on to others.

How do coaches and athletes grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ? By engaging, equipping, and empowering. When coaches and athletes begin to do the same, discipleship multiplies, and we see the world transformed by Jesus Christ.

This is a great game plan that can bring personal transformation as you go through these core essentials. The journey gets better when you can do the same with others. We are praying that God will help you grow in your relationship with Him, that He will reveal Himself to you in a powerful way, and that you will lead others in their journey.

## The CORE Journey

Athletes know that when you strengthen your core, everything else benefits. But the journey takes time and effort. Athletes put in hours of training, sweat, and endurance to push to be the best version of themselves.

Likewise, when you strengthen your spiritual core, your entire life benefits from the transforming power of Jesus Christ and His Word.

God has given FCA a calling and desire to make disciples who make disciples. To see this happen, we have developed The CORE. This simple, relevant resource leads new and veteran believers through 8 Core Essentials of the Christian faith in order to establish biblical roots for lifelong discipleship.

FCA believes that no matter where you are on your journey, it's time to focus on your core and grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ.

The CORE can be use utilized in three different environments:

**1-on-1:** A 1-on-1 meeting occurs when two people commit to this study and go through the sessions together. The best way is for a more mature believer to mentor a new believer for the eight sessions. Choose a meeting time each week to review each session, discuss the questions, and share what God is teaching you through the study. Set aside time to pray with each other and hold each other accountable.

**Huddles:** Go through The CORE with a small group of athletes or coaches. It can be an existing FCA Huddle or a new Huddle. Have each member of the Huddle read the session individually. Consistently meet as a group to review each session, discuss the questions, and share what God is teaching everyone through the study. Set aside time to pray with each other and hold each other accountable.

**Individual:** The CORE can be used a personal Bible study to grow in your walk with Christ. Use this study as part of your quiet time and journal about your experience. Share with someone the principles God taught you during your time of study.

Here are some practical tips to help you get started:

**Pray:** One of the most important principles of spiritual leadership is to realize you can't do this on your own. No matter if you are new to the faith or a veteran, you need the power of the Holy Spirit. Lean on God and He will help you.

**Invite Others:** Don't be afraid to ask teammates or coaches to come alongside you in a Huddle or 1-on-1. You will be surprised how many people are open to such a study and are looking for others to encourage them in their walk with Jesus Christ. Whether you have two or ten in your group, it can be a powerful experience.

**Be Prepared:** If you are going through The Core individually, set aside time to go through each session. Find a quiet place, and bring a Bible, The CORE, and a pen to take notes.

If you are leading a Huddle or 1-on-1 meeting, a few minutes a week in preparation can make a huge difference in the group experience. Read through the Leaders Notes in the Appendix for more help. Each week, preview the session and review the discussion questions and activities. If you don't think your group can get through all the questions and activities, select the ones that are most relevant to your group.

**Love Your Group:** Maybe the most important thing you bring to the Huddle or 1-on-1 meeting is your personal care for athletes or coaches in your group. If you will pray for them, encourage them, call them, email them, text them, listen to them, and love them, God will be pleased, and you will have a lot of fun growing together.

Thank you for taking on The CORE. May God bless you as you serve Him, learn about Him, and love Him more.

## How to Use The CORE

You are about to begin a life-changing journey that will shape the core of your relationship with Jesus Christ. This powerful study will grow you as a disciple of Jesus, and in turn, you will be empowered to go and disciple others.

Each session contains the following segments:

**READY** Each session begins with a main Bible verse to memorize and review.

**SET** This segment explores the biblical truth and how it applies to your life as a coach or an athlete. As you follow along, write down questions or insights that you can share with others during discussion time.

**GO** Take time to review the questions and reflect on how the biblical truth applies to your life. You can write out your answers in the provided space to review later and share in a Huddle or 1-on-1 meeting.

**OVERTIME** For those who want to go further in each session, extra study helps or teaching tools will be featured in this segment.

Also featured throughout each segment are interactive opportunities to enhance your individual, Huddle, or 1-on-1 study time:

**ASK** Impactful questions to reflect on individually and discuss in a group.

**ACT** Activities geared for the individual and group to live out what they've learned.

**APPLY** Journal space to write out what God is moving you to do in response to the session.

Whether you are going through The CORE individually or as a group, plan thirty minutes to one hour for each session. Ok, the warm-up is done, and the game plan has been delivered. Let's get started on The CORE!

# CORE 1

JOIN GOD'S TEAM

# READY

"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."

-JOHN 3:16

# SET

Welcome to God's Team! You are taking the first steps toward the adventure of a lifetime: to know Jesus personally and walk with Him daily as He guides your life.

Before you get started, here's a review of the Gospel message in four simple truths:

## GOD LOVES YOU

God made you and loves you! His love is boundless and unconditional. God is real, and He wants you to personally experience His love and discover His purpose for your life through a relationship with Him.

So God created human beings in his own image.  
In the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them. -GENESIS 1:27

## ASK

1. How does being made in God's image change the way you view yourself?
2. What does it mean to unconditionally love someone?

## SIN SEPARATES YOU

You cannot experience God's love when you ignore Him. People search everywhere for meaning and fulfillment—but not with God. They don't trust God and they ignore His ways. The Bible calls this sin. Everyone has sinned. Sin damages your relationships with other people and with God. It keeps you from experiencing the fulfilling life that God intends for you. The result: you are eternally separated from God and the life He planned for you.

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. -ROMANS 3:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. -ROMANS 6:23

It's your sins that have cut you off from God.  
Because of your sins, he has turned away  
and will not listen anymore. -ISAIAH 59:2

## ASK

1. How have you ignored God in your life?
2. What other places have you searched for meaning and fulfillment?

3. How has sin damaged your relationships with your family, friends, and teammates?



## JESUS RESCUES YOU

Sin does not stop God from loving you. Because of God's great love, He became a human being in Jesus Christ and gave His life for you. At the cross, Jesus took your place and paid the penalty of death that you deserve for your sins. Jesus died, but He rose to life again. Jesus offers you peace with God and a personal relationship with Him. Through faith in Jesus, you can experience God's love daily, discover your purpose, and have eternal life after death.

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. -ROMANS 5:8

Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit. -1 PETER 3:18

I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. After that, he was seen by more than 500 of

his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him.

-1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-8

## ASK

1. What guilt are you hanging on to?
2. How can knowing your sins are forgiven bring you peace?



## WILL YOU TRUST JESUS?

If you haven't surrendered your life to Jesus, and you are ready, you can place your trust in Jesus by faith through prayer. Prayer is talking with God. God knows your heart and is not concerned with your words as much as He is with the attitude of your heart.

Here is a suggested prayer:

*Dear God, thank You for loving me and wanting the best for my life. I have lived my life for myself and done things my way, and I am truly sorry. Jesus, I believe that You are God and have forgiven all my sins by dying and coming back to life again for me. I trust You and ask You to be Lord of my life. I surrender my life to You. You are my God, my Savior, and my Lord. Let me experience Your love and Your good plans for my life! Amen.*



If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved.

-ROMANS 10:9-10

But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

-JOHN 1:12

“Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.”

-REVELATION 3:20

# ASK

1. Have you trusted Jesus with your life?

Describe that experience.

## KEY POINTS:



# God Loves You



## Sin Separates You



## Jesus Rescues You



## Will You Trust Jesus?



## ASK

1. What is holding you back from fully surrendering your life to Jesus?
2. How do you need to respond to Jesus right now?

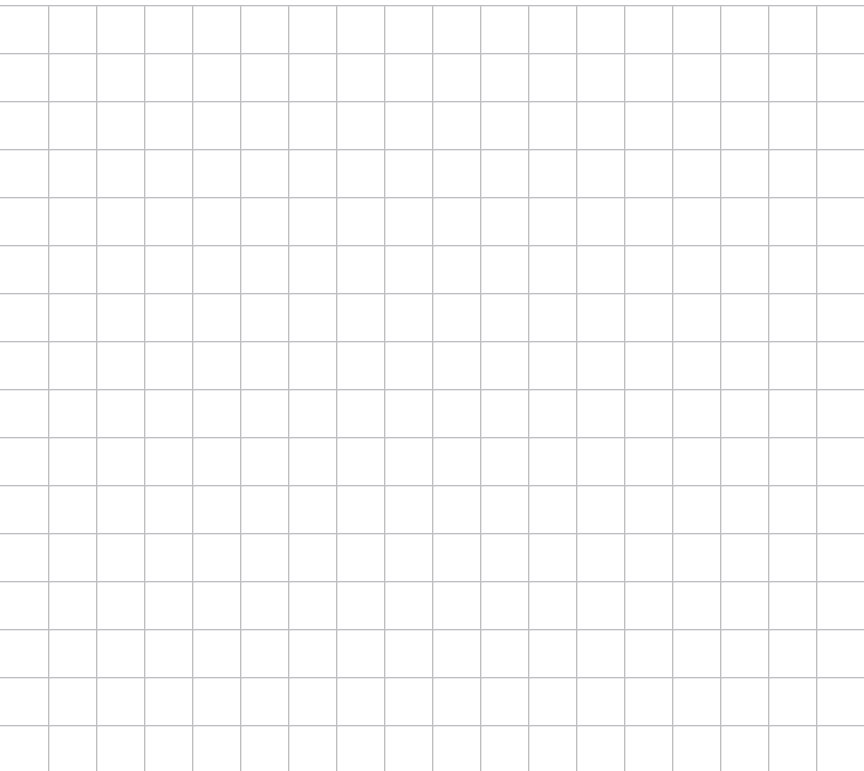
# ACT

See THE FOUR web page ([thefour.fca.org](http://thefour.fca.org)) and watch the videos of professional athletes talking about the Gospel in four simple truths. After watching THE FOUR videos, invite another teammate or friend to view the videos and talk about it with you.

## APPLY

In response to **CORE 1**, I believe God wants me to...

[illegible]



# OVERTIME

If you want to dig deeper on starting your faith journey with Jesus, download the FCA Reading Plan, “The Starting Line: Your New Life in Christ.”

You can download the YouVersion Bible app in the App Store or go to Bible.com. If you are not able to directly download the reading plan, search for “The Starting Line” in the “Find Plan” section of the Bible app or on Bible.com.

## CORE 2

LIVE WITH GOD’S POWER

# READY

So I say, let the Holy Spirit  
guide your lives.

– GALATIANS 5:16



# SET

When you trust Jesus with your life, God makes you a new person. You don't have to hold on to the old sin, guilt, and performance mentality of the past. You have a new identity in Christ. God cares about who you are—not how you perform.



## GOD MAKES YOU NEW

For competitors, this is especially hard to believe. You belong to the family of God not because of anything you did, but because of what Jesus did for you. You don't have to meet certain expectations or perform in a certain way to be God's child. You are new. And you are His.

This transformation requires a mindset shift away from a performance mentality. As a believer in Jesus, sport is not a pedestal; it's a platform. God has given you talent and ability to ultimately glorify Him. You play for an audience of One. Your words, actions, and relationships should reflect the One who made you and gave you passion to play. When you see sports as an opportunity to impact and influence others, God will be glorified and lives will be transformed!

My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. – GALATIANS 2:20

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! – 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

## ASK the following questions:

1. As a competitor, how do you overcome the performance mentality?
2. What do you think a victorious life with God looks like?



## GOD IS WITH YOU

But this transformation **does not just happen** on your own. God is with you. He has sent a guide, the Holy Spirit, to be with you and lead you. The Holy Spirit is with believers at all times, and He gives us the power to live a victorious life through Jesus.

The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you. – ROMANS 8:11

The evidence of the Holy Spirit living within you is a changed life. Your emotions, actions, and words will reflect on the outside the change that is happening on the inside. The Bible calls these characteristics the fruit of the Spirit.

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. – GALATIANS 5:22-25

## ASK

1. How does knowing that the Holy Spirit is with you at all times impact how you live your daily life?
2. What is the evidence in your life that God has changed you?

## GOD LEADS YOU

As the Holy Spirit lives within you, He acts as a guide in your life. Your life is no longer your own; God leads you. The Holy Spirit is your advocate who leads believers to all truth. In many ways, the Holy Spirit leads you like a coach that desires the best for you.

“If you love me, obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't

looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.”  
–JOHN 14:15-17

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.” –JOHN 16:13A

The Holy Spirit will lead you in truth through Scripture, prayer, circumstances, and by speaking through other Christians in your life. You don't have to face tough decisions or days on your own; He is with you, and He guides you!

## ASK

1. Have you ever asked God for direction in your life? Describe when.
2. When have you followed the Holy Spirit's leading in your life?

## KEY POINTS:



God makes you new



God is with you



God leads you

GO

## ASK

1. How has your life been different after trusting Jesus with it?
2. How could the Holy Spirit impact the way you compete?
3. How can you make sports a platform for your faith and not a pedestal?

# ACT

Read the Competitor's Creed located in the Appendix. Then write out one practical way you are going to use sport as a platform this week. Share with another Christian teammate to hold you accountable.

## APPLY

In response to **CORE 2**, I believe God wants me to...

[illegible]

# OVERTIME

To explore more of God's truth laid out in the Competitor's Creed, download the Competitor's Creed Bible study at [FCAResources.com/collection/competitors-creed-bible-study](https://FCAResources.com/collection/competitors-creed-bible-study)

# CORE 3

## TRAIN SPIRITUALLY

# READY

Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.

—1 TIMOTHY 4:8

# SET



## SPIRITUAL TRAINING TRANSFORMS YOU

As the Holy Spirit leads you, He will begin to transform you into a new person with a new mindset, but change is a two-way street. In training, the coach sets the plan, but the athlete must execute it. If you want to see change in your performance as an athlete, you have to put in the time and work. The same goes for spiritual training. It takes commitment and effort on your part.

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

—ROMANS 12:1-2

## ASK

1. Has there been a time when your coach put a training plan into place and you failed to follow through? What were the consequences?
2. What are some benefits you've noticed to consistent training over a long period of time?
3. According to Romans 12:1-2, what are the benefits to spiritual training?

## SPIRITUAL TRAINING MOTIVATES YOU

Spiritual disciplines are the way we participate in growing in our relationship with God. These disciplines have value for our lives now and the life to come. The Bible lays out the plan for these disciplines, including:

- Studying and memorizing God's Word
- Prayer and worship
- Fellowship with other believers

Spiritual training is not always easy, but there's a reason behind why we do it. Our motivation is to know and love God more. This takes time and needs to be a consistent practice. When we spend time with Jesus, we become more like Christ as a result.

## SPIRITUAL TRAINING HELPS YOU KNOW GOD

At first, spiritual training might feel like drudgery. Then, if you stick with it, a discipline. And ultimately, delight. Eventually, your time with God and other believers is what you should look forward to each day. It gives you strength and motivation to face any situation that comes your way.

Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.

—COLOSSIANS 3:23

## ASK the following questions:

1. When has spiritual training felt like a drudgery? A discipline? A delight?
2. How has spending time with God helped you get through a particularly tough day?

## KEY POINTS:



Spiritual training transforms you



Spiritual training motivates you



Spiritual training helps you know God

GO

# ASK

1. What do you think God desires your spiritual workout to look like?
2. What are some practical steps that you need to take to train spiritually?
3. What distractions stop you from making these changes?

# ACT

In the columns below, write a list of benefits to physical training and spiritual training.

## PHYSICAL TRAINING

## SPIRITUAL TRAINING

Read 1 Timothy 4:8 out loud as a reminder to keep up with your spiritual training.

## APPLY

In response to **CORE 3**, I believe God wants me to...

[illegible]



# OVERTIME

Using the graph below, create a Daily Spiritual Workout Plan. Add in elements to your workout like *Read my Bible*, *Pray*, *Journal*, and so on. Place a check mark under each day as you finish each element.

Share this plan with a mentor or teammate to keep you accountable on your workout!

Spiritual Training Plan	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

## CORE 4

COMMUNICATE WITH GOD

## READY

“Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.”

—MATTHEW 6:9-10

# SET

Communication is necessary to deepen a relationship with someone we love. We make it a priority to talk to our family, friends, teammates, and coaches. If we are to grow in our relationship with Jesus, we must make time to talk to Him as well.



## PRAYER IS A CONVERSATION

Prayer is a conversation between you and God. You can talk to God about anything. It's not so much about what you say, it's about sharing your heart with God. You can pray anytime and anywhere!

Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. -1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

## ASK

1. How often do you talk to the most important people in your life?

2. How often do you talk to God?

3. What do you think it means to "never stop praying"?

You also need to take time to listen to God. How do you know when God is speaking? Listening requires you to slow down, get quiet, and focus on God's voice—the Holy Spirit. Practicing silence is hard. However, as you practice, it will be easier to discern the Holy Spirit's leading through prayer, scripture, circumstances, and others.

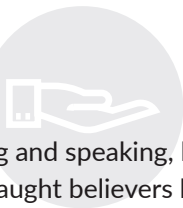
Come close to God, and God will come close to you.

-JAMES 4:8

## ASK

1. Do you know of a definitive moment when God spoke to you? Describe it.
2. How can you be sure that you heard God's voice?

## PRAYER IS ABOUT ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING



Prayer is an active conversation of listening and speaking, but what should we pray about? When Jesus taught believers how to pray, he put it like this:

“Pray like this:

Our Father in heaven,

may your name be kept holy.

May your Kingdom come soon.

May your will be done on earth,  
as it is in heaven.

Give us today the food we need,

and forgive us our sins,

as we have forgiven those who sin against us.

And don't let us yield to temptation,

but rescue us from the evil one.” – MATTHEW 6:9-13

We are to give God thanks for what He has done in our lives, ask God for what we need, ask forgiveness for the times we've sinned, and ask God to help us in our struggles. In other words, we are to pray about anything and everything!

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. –PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

## PRAYER ACCOMPLISHES GOD'S PLANS



The purpose of prayer is not only to ask for what you want, it is to get what God wants. Jesus represented this purpose in the Lord's Prayer, where we pray for God's Kingdom to come and for His will to be done on earth. We are encouraged to pray for God's plan to succeed in every situation whether it's in our lives or in the lives of others.

### ASK

1. What parts do you notice as you read the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13?
2. How could approaching prayer as a natural conversation with God about anything and everything change how you pray?

### KEY POINTS:



Prayer is a conversation

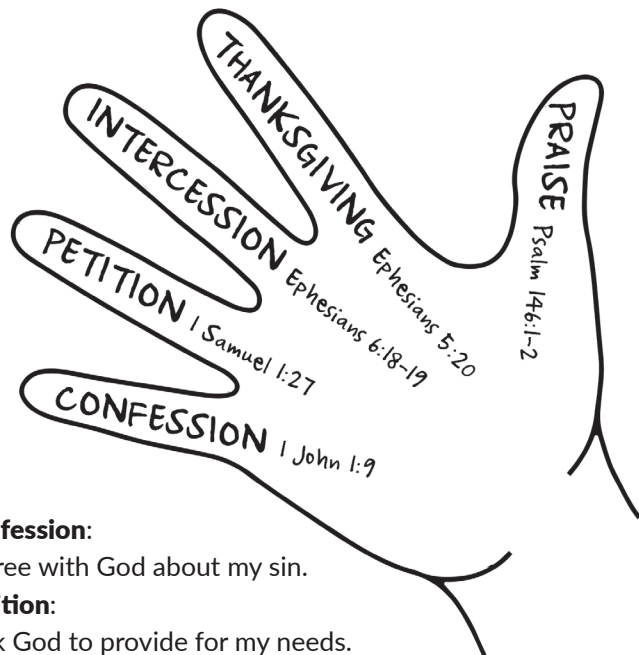


Prayer is about anything and everything



Prayer accomplishes God's plans

You have the freedom to pray about anything, but sometimes having a guide helps. You can use this prayer hand method as a reminder of what you can pray for:



**Confession:**

I agree with God about my sin.

**Petition:**

I ask God to provide for my needs.

**Intercession:**

I ask God to provide for the needs of others.

**Thanksgiving:**

I thank God for what He has done in, through, and for me.

**Praise:**

I let my enjoyment and adoration of God overflow into words.

Prayer Hand ©1976 The Navigators, all rights reserved

# GO

## ASK

1. What do you pray for?
2. Who do you pray for?
3. Do you tend to pray about what you want or about what God might want? Commit to spending more time asking God what His plan is for you.

## ACT

Commit to having an ongoing daily conversation with God the rest of this week. Use the space below to write what you learn. In the "I Speak" column, write down what you prayed for (petitions, praise, thanksgivings, and confession). In the "God Speaks" column, write down what you believe God is saying to you.

### I SPEAK

### GOD SPEAKS


## APPLY

In response to **CORE 4**, I believe God wants me to...

A full-page view of a blank sheet of graph paper. The grid consists of thin, light gray horizontal and vertical lines forming small squares across the entire page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# OVERTIME

For more tools and resources on prayer,  
go to the prayer collection on FCA Resources:  
<https://fcaresources.com/collection/prayer>

# CORE 5

## STUDY GOD'S PLAYBOOK

# READY

“For the word of God will never fail.”

-LUKE 1:37



# SET

In each sport, the coach has developed a training manual to help athletes develop excellence. God does the same thing for believers. The Bible is like a playbook, guide, and training manual rolled into one. It contains the true and inspired words from the heart and mind of God.

## THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD



The Bible is the Word of God and is the primary way we come to know Him. It teaches us how to practically live out faith in Jesus. God's Playbook contains piercing truth about who God is, who we really are, and our mission and destiny. Its message is simple, yet deeply powerful.

## ASK

1. How important is a training guide and playbook in your sport?
2. How does knowing that the Bible contains the very words of God affect how you will read it?

## THE BIBLE IS ALIVE AND ACTIVE



The Bible is alive and active. It is not something you read once and put back on the shelf. Read it every day to experience its power, to understand God's truths, to know God more, and to help you figure out how to live in this world. God will reveal new insights that apply directly to your life each time you open it.

For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. -HEBREWS 4:12

## ASK

1. What does it mean to you to know that the Word of God is alive and powerful?
2. Have you ever read the same scripture more than once, but received a different lesson from it?



## THE BIBLE IS TRUE

The Bible is infallible because **all scripture** is inspired and breathed by God Himself. It can be trusted as the authoritative truth in your life. All other things in the world can be measured against God's Word.

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. -2 TIMOTHY 3:16

## ASK

1. After reading 2 Timothy 3:16, which of the benefits mentioned is the most helpful to you right now?
2. How can the Bible help you determine right and wrong?

As you read God's Word, it will transform you, but where do you start? Choose a consistent meeting time each day to focus on reading the Bible. This can be part of your Spiritual Training Time.

Here is one simple way to help organize your reading time.

## P.R.E.S.S. Method

### PRAY

Begin by thanking God for the new day, and then ask Him to help you learn from what you read.

### READ

Find a scripture or devotional to read. Read through it at least two times. Write down any words or phrases that jump out at you. Write out any questions you have about the scripture. Write out any emotions you have when you read the scripture.

## EXAMINE

Ask yourself the following questions: What do I need to **KNOW** about God, myself, and others? What do I need to **CHANGE** in my thoughts, attitudes, or actions? What do I need to **DO** in obedience to God's leading?

## SUMMARIZE

Rewrite the scripture in your own words or create a short one or two sentence summary of the scripture.

## SHARE

Talk to God about what you've learned. Then share with someone what God is teaching you.

## GO

## ASK

1. How often are you making time to read the Bible?
2. What are some practical things you can do to prioritize reading God's Word?

## KEY POINTS:



The Bible is the Word of God



The Bible is alive and active



The Bible is true

# ACT

Use the P.R.E.S.S. Method to read through Psalm 139.  
Write out your thoughts in the sections below.

### Pray:

**Read:**

### Examine:

## Summarize:

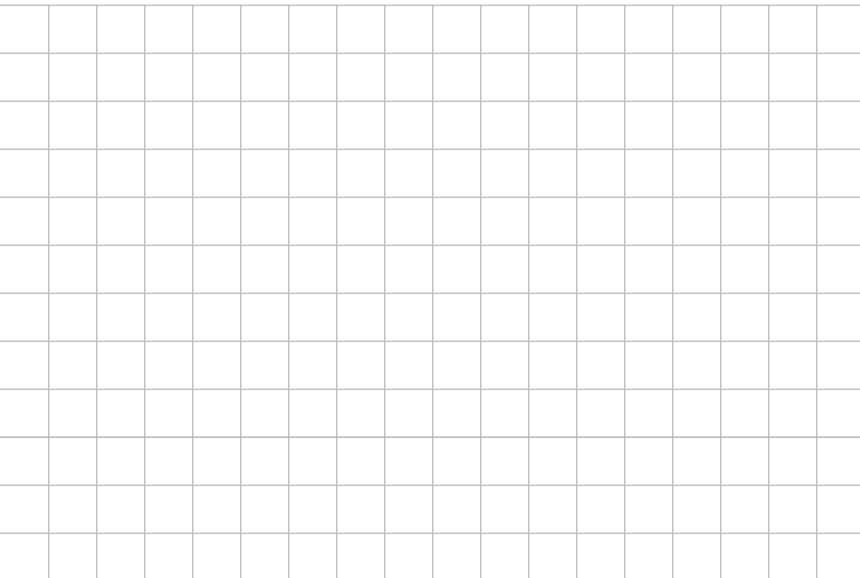
**Share:**

## APPLY

In response to **CORE 5**, I believe God wants me to...

A full-page view of a blank sheet of graph paper. The grid consists of thin, light gray horizontal and vertical lines forming small squares across the entire page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.





# OVERTIME

Commit to spending the next 21 days with God by simply reading a chapter of John each day. You can download the 21 Days with God FCA reading plan at [Bible.com](https://Bible.com) or from the YouVersion Bible app.

Pray for God to speak to you and write down what jumps out at you each day. At the end the 21 days, share with someone how you have changed.

# CORE 6

TEAM UP WITH OTHERS

# READY

All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.

-1 CORINTHIANS 12:27



# SET

As competitors, we depend on the support of others to reach our goals.

Imagine a quarterback trying to pass the ball without the protection of the offensive line or a pitcher trying to throw strikes without the direction of a catcher.

It's the same for Christians. God designed people to be together.

## YOU ARE PART OF GOD'S TEAM



As a new believer, you don't have to go on this faith journey alone. When you join God's team, you immediately have teammates to surround you. You are united with all other believers. Together you make up the Church, the body of Christ, of which Christ is the head. You are on God's team, you have teammates, and Christ is the head coach!

But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God. —JOHN 1:12-13

# ASK

1. Do you enjoy playing team sports or individual sports? Explain why.
2. Have you ever felt alone in your journey as a Christian?



## TEAMMATES SUPPORT YOU

Life is challenging and may be difficult **at times**. But God has given you teammates to support you in the journey. You have strength in numbers and power in a supportive team! These teammates will have your back, uplift you in hard times, and celebrate with you in good times.

Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.

—ECCLESIASTES 4: 9-12

## TEAMMATES STRENGTHEN YOU

Teammates not only support you, but they also strengthen you. You need a CORE team to go with you through the challenges of life.

These CORE teammates will share what God is doing in their lives, learn from each other, pray for each other, and challenge each other to grow in their faith.

When you take time to grow in your individual relationship with Jesus Christ, you become closer to Him. When you take time to grow in your relationship with other Christians, everyone benefits. We are better together!

We are created for relationship. Take time to grow in your relationship with each other as well as with God.

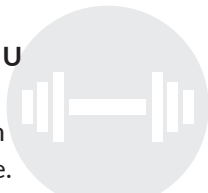
As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.

—PROVERBS 27:17

## ASK

1. How has the support of teammates helped you in your competitive goals?
2. How can the support of a CORE team strengthen you during difficult times?

How do you find this CORE team? You can build your team through the local church and ministries such as FCA.



Don't know where to start? Look for a church that is committed to:

1. The Gospel (Matthew 28:18-20)
2. The Bible as the inspired Word of God (2 Timothy 3:14-17)
3. Making disciples (Matthew 28:18-20)
4. Serving others (1 Timothy 4:6-8)

If you are not part of an FCA Huddle, go to <https://www.fca.org/get-involved/huddles> to find a Huddle near you.

# GO

## ASK

1. Share your church or community experience. What are some good experiences you've had with others in your church?
2. Identify two to five people who can be your CORE team and learn and talk about your life with Jesus together.
3. Who might you be able to share this process with and disciple to help them live their life with Jesus Christ?

## KEY POINTS:



You are part of God's Team



Teammates support you

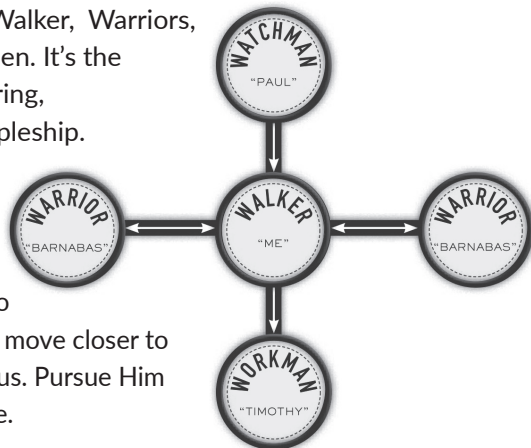


Teammates strengthen you

# ACT

Building your Dream Team is what *WisdomWalks* is about. Getting the right people on your team and understanding the role they play is essential. A *WisdomWalker's* Dream Team has four key relationships: Walker, Warriors, Watchmen, and Workmen. It's the perfect blend of mentoring, accountability and discipleship.

**The Walker** is you. This is your personal relationship with Jesus. You are the only one who determines whether you move closer to or farther away from Jesus. Pursue Him with everything you have.



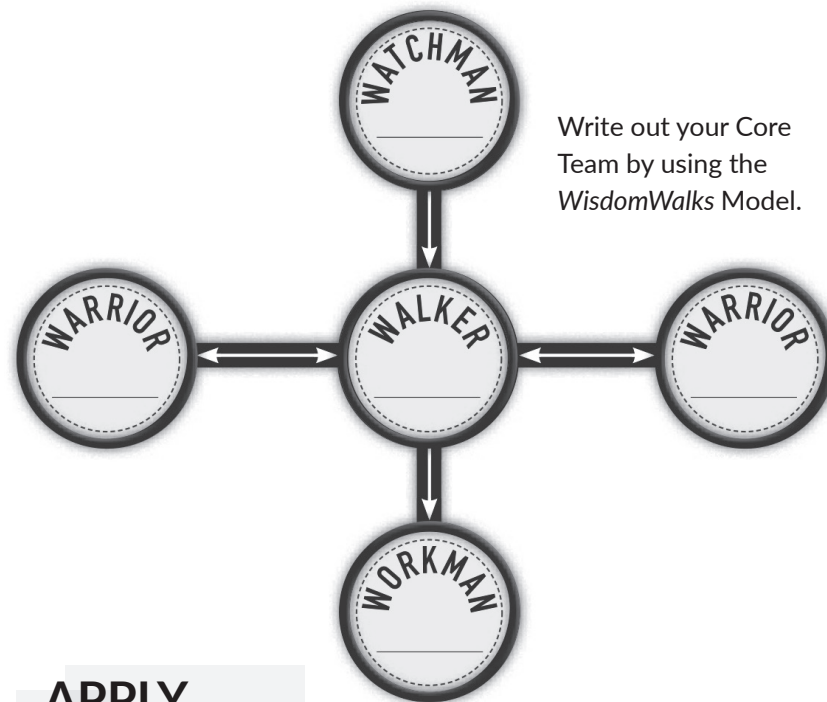
**The Warrior** is a peer. This is a friend or two who you will do life with, shoulder-to-shoulder. We need someone who will love us enough to hold our feet to the fire and help us pursue our purpose! When you have a Warrior, you become their Warrior as well.

**The Watchman** is a mentor. This is someone who is season or two ahead of you. Find a godly WisdomWalker who can invest wisdom in you. When you have a Watchman, you become their Workman.

**The Workman** is a disciple. You simply pour into them what God has poured into you. All of us have so much to offer. You don't have to be perfect to invest in others, just willing. When you have a Workman, you become their Watchman.

From *WisdomWalks*, BroadStreet Publishing. Used by permission.

54



Write out your Core Team by using the *WisdomWalks* Model.

## APPLY

In response to **CORE 6**, I believe God wants me to...

[illegible]

# OVERTIME

Reach out to those you've identified as your CORE team and schedule time to spend together regularly for the next month. It could be weekly, or biweekly. Fill out this schedule below:

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

## CORE 7

KNOW YOUR ROLE

## READY

We are many parts of one body,  
and we all belong to each other.

—ROMANS 12:5

# SET

On a sports team, there are many different positions and roles. All athletes must use their talents and training to fulfill their unique role on the team. When everyone is giving 100%, the team succeeds.

## YOU HAVE A ROLE ON GOD'S TEAM

It is the same for believers in the church. You have a special role on God's team. You were created with certain personality traits, gifts, and interests that complement and work in unity with others in the body of Christ. Your specific role is important and needed for the church to succeed. You are here for a certain purpose, at a certain time, to make a certain impact.

When everyone is using their gifts and cooperating with each other, we share God's loving, welcoming, and powerful Spirit with others who don't yet know Christ. We will make an impact on those around us and see lives transformed for Jesus!

He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. -EPHESIANS 4:16

# ASK

1. What are your interests and talents?
2. Have you ever used your talents and interests to make an impact for Jesus? Describe how.

## SERVE EACH OTHER

How do you know your role? When you trust Jesus with your life, you receive certain spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit. These gifts empower you to live out your position and role in your church to serve others. Every believer has at least one spiritual gift. Many have multiple gifts that are spotlighted at different times to help fill the needs of others. We can help each other grow and become stronger in our faith through the gifts and talents that God has given us.

The Bible outlines these gifts in the New Testament:

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. -1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-7

Just as our bodies have many parts and 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. In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. -ROMANS 12:4-8

Identify what you have to offer, own it, and serve other believers with your whole heart!

## ASK

1. What spiritual gifts do you think you have?
2. Why do you think it is important to serve other believers?

## LOVE EACH OTHER

The primary use for our gifts is to serve each other and build up the Church, but the heart behind the actions is just as important. We must love one other. In 1 Corinthians, Paul proclaims that spiritual gifts without love is useless.



If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing. -1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-3

You must love other believers first and serve them second. Not all relationships are easy. Learn to forgive, cooperate, and work in unity with others in the Church. When you do, you glorify God and represent Him well.

People want to see believers who are real and genuine in their faith. It is by our love for one another and how we treat each other that God's Word spreads and His will is accomplished on earth.

"So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." -JOHN 13: 34-35

GO

# ASK

1. Is it easy or hard for you to love other believers?
2. Why is the motivation more important than the action of serving?
3. How might your gifts, strengths, interests, and talents be used to serve in your local church or FCA Huddle?

## KEY POINTS:



You have a role on  
God's team



Serve each other



Love each other

# ACT

Identify a ministry within your local church and FCA Huddle where you can use your gifts, interests, and talents to serve. Then write out why you want to serve others.

My Church: \_\_\_\_\_

My FCA Huddle: \_\_\_\_\_

My gifts, interests, and talents: \_\_\_\_\_

My motivation to serve: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPLY

In response to **CORE 7**, I believe God wants me to...

[illegible]





# OVERTIME

If you would like to find out what your spiritual gifts are, go to <https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/women-leadership-spiritual-gifts-growth-service> and take the test!

## CORE 8

SHARE WITH OTHERS

## READY

I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings.

-1 CORINTHIANS 9:23



# SET

Athletes and coaches are some of the most influential people in today's culture. God has used your talents and passions to create a platform where people watch what you do and hear what you say. You have a unique opportunity to impact others with God's Word and see the world transformed by Jesus Christ through coaches and athletes.

When you chose to trust Jesus and surrendered your life to Him, you began a discipleship journey. This is a lifelong pursuit and process of becoming a fully devoted follower of Christ. Going through The CORE is just the beginning of becoming a disciple. The next steps require you to invite others on the discipleship journey. God calls us to make disciples everywhere we go.

*A disciple is someone who is in a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and His church.*

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." -MATTHEW 28: 18-20

This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace. -COLOSSIANS 1:6

## ASK

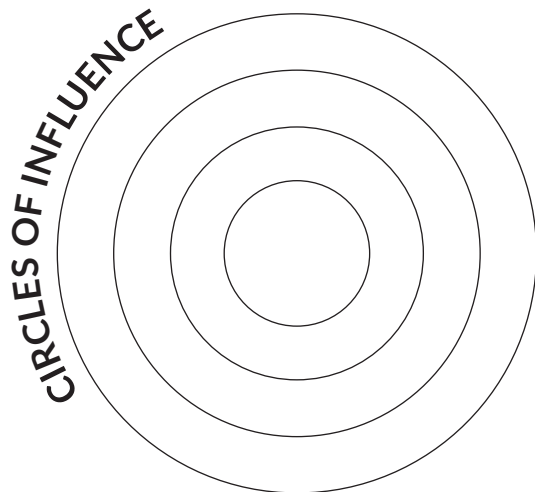
1. What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?
2. What does Matthew 28:18-20 say about how to make disciples?

When you are growing and walking with Jesus on a daily basis, you are becoming more like Him. That process is called sanctification, which is the foundation of discipleship. God calls you to walk alongside others through their own journey of sanctification, which represents discipleship!



## ENGAGE

God calls us to engage others through genuine relationships by sharing our lives and the Gospel. Look for the areas where you can engage others with God's Word. This can include your home, community, school, team, church, and FCA Huddle. These are your circles of influence. Your innermost circle is the people you spend the most time with, and your outer circles reflect other areas where you spend your time. Write out the names of people in your circles of influence on the next page.



“We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God’s Good News but our own lives, too.”

– 1 THESSALONIANS 2:8

## ASK

1. What places and environments has God placed you in?
2. What relationships do you need to intentionally engage with more?



## EQUIP

Once you have engaged others with the Gospel, God calls us to equip others to grow in Christ through God’s Word. Create a game plan to have a personal, passionate relationship with

Jesus Christ, and then go lead those on your team, family, and community to do the same. Share with others what God is teaching you, and help others learn from God’s Word as well.

## ASK

1. Why is it important for us to share the gospel and help people grow in their faith?
2. What is holding you back from sharing your story with others?

Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.

–EPHESIANS 4:12



## EMPOWER

When coaches and athletes are equipped with God’s Word and growing in their faith, we will see them become disciples who make disciples. The discipleship journey is a cycle. We are encouraged to not just hold onto our faith, but also to pass it on to others. God calls us to empower others to engage and equip others to know and grow in Christ.

You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others. –2 TIMOTHY 2:2

## ASK

1. Of the three areas, which one comes most naturally to you and which one is the most difficult?
2. Who are two people in your life who need to hear the Gospel and grow in their faith?
3. What is your game plan to engage, equip, and empower others?

# ACT

Sharing your faith story is one of the best ways to start conversations around the Gospel and to help others grow in their faith. Use the testimony help chart on the next page to share your faith with confidence.

## KEY POINTS:



Engage others



Equip others



## Empower others

## HOW TO SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY

A personal testimony is simply sharing what God has done in your life. One of the most effective ways to prepare your testimony is to ask three questions:

***What was my life like before Christ?***

### How did I meet Christ?

*How has my life been since accepting Christ?*

The key is to share your story.

## THREE KEY PARTS TO EVERY TESTIMONY:

*Before Christ*

*How you came to Christ*

*How you have grown in Christ*

## APPLY

In response to **CORE 8**, I believe God wants me to...

[illegible]

# OVERTIME

## THE CORE CHALLENGE:

Congratulations on finishing The CORE! We hope you are more engaged in God's Word, equipped on the basics of the faith, and empowered to move forward in your faith journey. Remember, this is just the beginning!

The journey gets even better when you can share the experience with others. We invite you do The CORE Challenge: Lead someone through The CORE in a 1-on-1 setting.

### 1 - ON - 1

- A 1-on-1 meeting occurs when two people commit to a mentoring relationship and go through the eight sessions together.
- Invite a teammate or peer to go through The CORE with you.
- Schedule a meeting time each week to review each session, discuss the questions, and share what God is teaching you through the study.
- Set aside time to pray with each other and hold each other accountable.

At the end of The CORE, reflect on what you have learned, and then encourage others to take The CORE challenge and lead others in a 1-on-1 setting.

# APPENDIX

## LEADER'S NOTES

Here are few tips on how to effectively lead a CORE Huddle or 1-on-1 meeting.



## HAVE A GROUP AGREEMENT

A group agreement is to make sure everyone is on the same page and that they have common expectations.

The Group Agreement tool listed below will help you discuss specific guidelines together during your first meeting. You can modify anything that does not work for your group.

### WE AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING PRIORITIES

<b>Take the Bible seriously</b>	To seek to understand and apply God's truth in the Bible
<b>Group Attendance</b>	To give priority to the group meeting (call if I am going to be absent or late)
<b>Safe Environment</b>	To create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved (no snap judgments or simple fixes)
<b>Be Confidential</b>	To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group
<b>Spiritual Health</b>	To give group members permission to help me live a godly, healthy, spiritual life that is pleasing to God
<b>Building Relationships</b>	To get to know the other members of the group and pray for them regularly
<b>Prayer</b>	To regularly pray with and for each other
<b>Other</b>	

## HAVE A GAME PLAN

Set up the environment expectations so everyone can enjoy the meeting. Ask the following questions:

- What day and time will we meet?
- Where will we meet?
- How long will we meet?
- Will we have refreshments?
- What will we do about childcare?
- What electronics or equipment do we need?

### DURING THE MEETING

# READY

- Be prepared. Your personal preparation can make a huge difference in the quality of the group experience.
- Pray for your group members by name. Ask God to use your time together to touch the heart of every person in your group. Expect God to challenge and change people as a result of this study.
- Provide refreshments. There's nothing like food to help a group relax and connect with each other.
- Relax. Don't try to imitate someone else's style of leading a group. Lead the group in a way that fits your style and temperament. Remember that people may feel nervous showing up for a small group study, so put them at ease when they arrive. Make sure to

have all the details covered prior to your group meeting, so that once people start arriving, you can focus on them.

- Have ample materials. Make sure everyone has their own copy of the study guide. Encourage the group to open this week's session and follow along with the teaching.
- Arrange the room. Set up the chairs in such a way that it is conducive to discussion.

# SET

Here are some guidelines for leading the discussion time:

- Make this a discussion, not a lecture. Resist the temptation to do all the talking and to answer your own questions. Don't be afraid of a few moments of silence while people formulate their answers.
- Don't feel like you need to have all the answers. There is nothing wrong with simply responding "I don't know the answer to that, but I'll see if I can find an answer this week."
- Encourage everyone to participate. Don't let one person dominate, but also don't pressure quieter members to speak during the first couple of sessions. After one person answers, don't immediately move on; ask what other people think or say, "Would someone who hasn't shared like to add anything?"
- Affirm people's participation and input. If an answer is clearly wrong, ask "What led you to that conclusion?" or ask what the rest of the group thinks. If a disagreement arises, don't be too quick to shut it down! The discussion can draw out important perspectives,

and if you can't resolve it there, offer to research it further and return to the issue next week.

- However, if someone goes on the offensive and engages in personal attack of another person, you will need to step in as the leader. In the midst of spirited discussion, we must also remember that people are fragile and there is no place for disrespect.
- Detour when necessary. If an important question is raised that is not in the study guide, take time to discuss it. Also, if someone shares something personal and emotional, take time for them. Stop and pray for them right then. Try to keep the group on track, but allow the Holy Spirit room to maneuver, and follow His prompting when the discussion changes direction.
- Split into subgroups. One of the principles of small group life is "when numbers go up, sharing goes down." So, if you have a large group, sometimes you may want to split up into groups of 3-5 for the discussion time. This is a great way to give everyone, even the quieter members, a chance to say something. Choose someone in the group to guide each of the smaller groups through the discussion. This involves others in the leadership of the group and provides an opportunity for training new leaders.
- Pray. Be sensitive to the fact that some people in your group may be uncomfortable praying out loud. As a general rule, don't call on people to pray unless you have asked them ahead of time or have heard them pray in public. This can also be a time to help people build their confidence to pray in a group. Consider having prayer times that ask people to just say a word or sentence of thanks to God.

# GO

These simple suggestions and questions will help you apply the lesson. Be sure to leave adequate time to talk about the practical applications of the lesson. This is a great way to build group community. Try the ideas together and hold each other accountable for completing them. Share the following week how it went.

# A FINAL WORD...

Keep an eye on the clock. Be sensitive to time. Whatever is the agreed upon time commitment, try to stick with it. It is always better to finish the meeting with people wanting more rather than people walking away stressed out because the meeting went too long.

## Competitor's Creed

I am a Christian first and last.  
I am created in the likeness of God Almighty to bring Him glory.  
I am a member of Team Jesus Christ.  
I wear the colors of the cross.

I am a Competitor now and forever.  
I am made to strive, to strain, to stretch and to succeed in the arena of competition.  
I am a Christian Competitor and as such, I face my challenger with the face of Christ.

I do not trust in myself.  
I do not boast in my abilities or believe in my own strength.  
I rely solely on the power of God.  
I compete for the pleasure of my Heavenly Father, the honor of Christ and the reputation of the Holy Spirit.

My attitude on and off the field is above reproach—my conduct beyond criticism.  
Whether I am preparing, practicing or playing:  
I submit to God's authority and those He has put over me.

I respect my coaches, officials, teammates and competitors out of respect for the Lord.

My body is the temple of Jesus Christ.

I protect it from within and without.  
Nothing enters my body that does not honor the Living God.  
My sweat is an offering to my Master. My soreness is a sacrifice to my Savior.

I give my all—all of the time  
I do not give up. I do not give in. I do not give out.

I am the Lord's warrior"—a competitor by conviction and a disciple of determination.

I am confident beyond reason because my confidence lies in Christ.

The results of my efforts must result in His glory.

Let the competition begin.  
Let the glory be God's.

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# ABOUT FCA



The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is touching millions of lives . . . one heart at a time. Since 1954, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes has been challenging coaches and athletes on the professional, college, high school, junior high and youth levels to use the powerful medium of athletics to impact the world for Jesus Christ. FCA focuses on serving local communities by equipping, empowering and encouraging people to make a difference for Christ.

## **VISION**

To see the world transformed by Jesus Christ through the influence of coaches and athletes.

## **MISSION**

To lead every coach and athlete into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and His church.

## **VALUES**

Integrity, Serving, Teamwork, Excellence

For general questions on FCA and how to find local FCA staff, visit [www.FCA.org](http://www.FCA.org) or call 1-800-289-0909.