The Parable of the Talents

Today’s Athlete Note is written by Bruce Scifres. After 27 years as the head football coach at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, Bruce retired from coaching in the spring of 2017 to become the Executive Director of the CYO of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Bruce has a "Coaches Toolbox" on the CYO website filled with Tools and Lesson Plans to help create a team environment that is "transformational." This means one that will make a lasting, positive impact in the lives of youth through athletics. One of the "Lessons" in this Toolbox is "The Parable of the Talents."

Athletes, read this parable and talk as a team about the how you can develop and share your "Talents."

"TALENTS"

"The Bible often uses a technique called a parable. The term parable refers to a simple fictional story used to help explain a moral lesson or spiritual principal. These are often used by Jesus as he tries to instruct his followers or make a point to the crowds. These stories can provide us a valuable way to consider moral, spiritual or social issues as a group.

In the Bible, the book of Matthew Chapter 25 shares the Parable of the "Talents." During the time of Jesus, talents were gold or silver coins used for currency, much like our money system today. This parable tells the story of a wealthy master who was going on a journey and before leaving, called in three of his servants. To one servant he gave five talents (or coins), to the second he gave two talents, and to the third he gave one. After the master's departure, the servant with five talents went and invested them and in turn received five more talents in interest. The servant with two talents did the same and likewise made another two. However, the third servant, fearing punishment by his master, went out and buried his talent to keep it safe. Upon the masters' return, he called the servants in to settle accounts with them. The first two servants shared that they had invested their talents and had doubled their value. To each the master replied, "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy." As the third servant came forward, he shared that he had buried his talent out of fear of losing it. In reply, the master said, "You wicked, lazy servant...Should you not have put my money in the bank so that I could have got it back with interest on my return? Now then, take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten... Throw this useless servant into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth."

Obviously, Jesus told this parable to emphasize the importance of
Bruce on being a Transformational Coach.

In the process, we will make our master (God) proud! This Bible story has always been one of my favorite on a couple different levels! First, it states pretty clearly that we are expected to use the gifts we have been given to the best of our ability. Next, it insinuates that as we "invest" in our gifts, and ourselves, we tend to get much back in return. Finally, the parable addresses that there are those who have gifts that they disregard, or "bury," and never do anything with them. The fact that the master (God) is clearly not pleased with this is a pertinent point! I find it interesting that the word "talents" in Jesus' day referred to actual coins, whereas today when we hear the word talents we tend to think of one's physical and mental gifts and abilities. Just as Jesus' lesson from 2,000 years ago was relevant to the people of that day when talking about money, the same message is just as important to us today, especially as athletes! Without question, God had something very special in mind as He created each of us, and we all have our own unique set of gifts and abilities, both physical and mental. Just as in the parable, God has given each of us different levels of ability in different areas.

One of the things I have always appreciated about athletics is that there are so many different sports to choose from that require different abilities! If a person is willing to work hard and keep a great attitude, they can almost always find something they can do and be successful! I have learned over the years that regardless of the gifts with which we have been blessed, it is imperative that we do everything in our power to make the most of our talents. The more we "invest" in these abilities through hard work, determination, courage, and self-discipline, the more we will get back in return! Certainly, there will be those around us who will "bury" their talents and abilities by choosing not to do anything with them. In return, they will get little to nothing out of themselves and will never come close to reaching their potential. In the process, our "Master" will not be proud or happy with this effort!

Each day, we have that choice. Will we sit back with our abilities buried and stagnant, or will we make an investment in ourselves through hard work, determination, commitment, and mental toughness? Will we take pride in ourselves and what we are doing?

EACH DAY THE CHOICE IS OURS!!

Everyone is gifted... but some people never open their package.

Team Reflection Questions on "Talents"

Have a team meeting to reflect upon and discuss the following questions:

In what areas of your life have you worked your hardest to develop your talents?

In what areas of your life do you not make the most of your God-given gifts?

What commitment can you make to this team to get the most out of your abilities?

How can you help this team as a whole make the most of our talents and abilities?
March Madness Magic...Sportsmanship at its Finest
What would you have done?

Whether you are a basketball player, fan or just a sport enthusiast, you will love this moment in the Men's NCAA Basketball Tournament.

Sixth-seeded Houston was ahead by two points with just 3.8 seconds to go in their game against third-seed Michigan when Houston forward Devin Davis went to the foul line and missed two free throws which would have put Houston up by four points. Michigan player Mo Wagner got the rebound and called timeout which set up a length-of-the-floor play that ended with Michigan scoring a 3-pointer to win the game as time expired. While all the Michigan players ran to celebrate their buzzer-beater victory, Mo Wagner took the time to pause and console his devastated opponent.

Reflect
Watch this video clip as a team and discuss what you think about Wagner's action.

What would you have done in this circumstance?

Today's AthleteNote is about developing your God-given gifts. We are all given the gift of compassion and kindness and we all have responsibility to develop this gift by exercising it, sharing our concern and care with and for others.

How as an athlete can you share kindness?
How as a team can you show compassion?

Developing your gift of compassion will distinguish you as disciples of Christ.

Sport Stations of the Cross for Holy Week

Athletes, there is something special your team can engage in this Holy Week. You can participate in the Play Like a Champion Sport Stations of the Cross while conditioning together as a team. The 6th Station directly relates to kindness and compassion. As an athlete, you can draw inspiration from Veronica to be kind to
The Sixth Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Read Scripture: Matthew 10:40, 42
He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.

Reflect
Take a moment to think about a time when you helped someone out, not like help carry groceries, but truly helped them with something that was painful to them. How did helping them feel to you? Did you help because you pitied them, felt they were weak, or looked down on them in some way; or, did you help because you had compassion for them, and cared about them? What if the person in need of help was an opponent rather than a teammate or friend? Can I allow others to mend my hurts and comfort my sorrows, wipe away my tears? Can I allow them to know that it hurts that I messed up in the game? Can I allow another to reflect back to me my weakness and still be okay?

Review
What strengths does it take to help out someone in need, particularly those who might be your competitor - either someone on your team vying for your position or playing time or a member of the opposing team?

Team Prayer
"My prayer is to recognize how I might be a Veronica for someone who needs my care and support. How can I wipe my brother or sister's face in comfort?"