

# BOLD ♀ BEAUTIFUL



BECOMING THE FEMALE ATHLETE GOD CREATED YOU TO BE

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## **BOLD + BEAUTIFUL**

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This resource would not be possible without a great, Spirit-led team. Thank you Amy Richards and Scott Richards for creating great design and graphic elements; to Shea Vailes for sharing her editing skills and to Donna Noonan for guiding the process from start to finish. Most importantly, we thank the Lord Jesus Christ for His Word, grace and mercy. Without His sacrifice on the cross for our sins, there is no redemption. We pray that through this resource, you will understand true beauty, and how a strong and competitive spirit can be godly and feminine.

*Scripture unless otherwise noted, is taken from the HOLY BIBLE, HOLMAN CHRISTIAN STANDARD  
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# BOLD + BEAUTIFUL

# INTRODUCTION

## PARTICIPANT'S STUDY GUIDE

**Welcome to FCA's *Bold and Beautiful* Study Series. We couldn't be more thrilled that you've chosen to dive into God's Word with some of the most important people in your life: your teammates.**

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Because, as a group, you have the most incredible opportunity to come together and battle not just your on-the-field opponents, but also the enemy of your souls, and to partner with God to reclaim the ground that's been stolen from your heart. Things like joy, self-confidence, peace and release from crushing pressure—freedom to be yourself and embrace the good and godly truth about you. Because, whether you realize it or not, you were made to walk with God in total freedom from condemnation, striving and self-hatred. You were made to love and be loved by Him.

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**Before we get started, though, we're going to talk about a few details regarding the content and format of the study.**

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## STEP INTO THE CHALLENGE:

First, the focus of this study will be to bring the light of God's Truth into the darkest places of struggle, specifically for female athletes. We're going to talk about some challenging but important issues such as body image, femininity, shame and idolatry. Some things we discuss will be hot-button issues for you, while some will be easier to digest. The important thing, though, is to be willing to bravely confront and go through the issue when the Lord lets you feel it. His Word says that "godly grief produces a repentance" (2 Corinthians 7:10), which means He lets us experience pain so that we can transform our thoughts to believe His Truth over the enemy's lies.

This really is an incredible opportunity, and it can be a pivotal, transformational season in your life. When Jesus brings something to your attention, refuse to let it pass you by without getting every ounce of healing you can out of it. Seek Him, trust Him and let Him touch your heart.



## FOCUS ON THE WORD:

The second thing we want to do in this study is really focus on God's Word. It is His Truth that sets us free (John 8:32), not the personal opinions of others. As much as your teammates care about you, their opinions aren't always right. Neither are yours when you share your thoughts with them. But God's Word is. That's why, you as a team need to commit to pointing each other to Scripture in the study instead of just sharing your own personal thoughts and views.

For instance, when a teammate brings up a personal struggle with her body image during that particular study, while we might want to immediately burst out with opinion statements such as, "You're not fat," "You're not too tall,"

"You're so gorgeous," those statements won't do much for her other than make her feel better in the moment. Instead, the goal is to give her something that lasts—something that is unquestionably true—something from the absolute Truth of God's Word. "I know how you feel, but this is what I'm reminded of in Scripture. Psalm 139 says that you are fearfully and wonderfully made by God's own hands."

When your teammate hears that, she will be able to use that Scripture to combat the lies of the enemy and begin to believe that she truly is beautiful—and not just in the opinions of her friend, but to God Himself, the source of absolute Truth.

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**This focus on Scripture also helps keep you safe from following poor advice. While we all want to solve each other's problems, our solutions aren't always the best.**

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For instance, when a teammate shares an issue she has with her parents, you may think she should take a specific action. If she follows your advice and winds up with terrible results, who will she have to blame? You. But, if you reserve your opinion and share advice and Truth from God's Word, she will be equipped to hear from Him and discern how He wants her to respond. The results will be that she grows in intimacy and knowledge of God, learns to hear His voice and makes her own choice based on what she discerns. If anything doesn't turn out

the way she hopes, she will only be able to turn to God, who promises that it will all work for her good (Romans 8:28).

It's not that you aren't allowed to have an opinion. We all do! But it's coming to the understanding that it's best for everyone in the group to learn how to hear and respond to God and to follow Him first. We do that by sharing His Word and letting our teammates (and ourselves) work with Him to produce growth.



## CIRCLE OF TRUST:

Because of the sensitive nature of the material in some places, you must be able to trust each other to keep things in confidence. The only way you and your teammates will feel safe enough to share is if you feel like you can trust each other. If your teammates share personal information, you are to keep it in the room. Should any issue arise that requires outside help or intervention, then and only then should exceptions be made.

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## SPEAK THE TRUTH:

Another key to getting the most out of this study is agreeing to let your teammates speak into your life. This material is designed to bring transformation, and that only happens when you are willing to receive words of God's Truth in challenging moments. There will be instances when you've shared an area of personal struggle and you may only want to hear what makes you feel better. But what makes you feel better isn't always what's best for you at the moment. Sometimes, you'll need to hear challenging Scriptures that you may not want to hear, and your teammates will have to be the ones who share those difficult verses.

For example, say one of your teammates discovers an area of unforgiveness in her life. She shares during one of the studies that she harbors tremendous resentment toward her dad, and she has refused to speak to him for the past year. While she may only want to hear sympathetic words—and you may want only to share them—you, instead, are reminded of Colossians 3:13 in which Paul instructs us to forgive others as Christ has forgiven us. In that moment, the words of Colossians 3:13 will be far more powerful than your personal sympathy. That's one thing she needs to

hear, but you hesitate because you're afraid she'll get angry. What if she doesn't want to hear that right now? Well, then she'll miss the opportunity to hear from the Lord, and she'll continue in her struggle having not heard what she needed to hear to change her situation. On the other hand, who can she really be mad at for the instruction to forgive? They aren't your words; they're God's. And that's something she'll have to take up with Him.

That's exactly why it's so important that you share Scripture and don't avoid speaking the tough bits of Truth. We all want this study to lead to transformation, which is why part of your pre-study agreement includes a line about giving each other permission to speak truth into each other's lives. That way you'll not only have an excuse to share difficult verses, you'll be expected to. And if your teammate truly wants to follow Jesus, she'll hope you do because she'll know it's the best way to become more like Him.

One word to the wise: It's still OK to sympathize with her, just don't do so at the expense of the truth. Give her a hug, tell her you love her AND share the Truth. It's the epitome of Ephesians 4:15: *"But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head—Christ."*



## FOLLOW UP:

At the end of each study, you and your teammates will have assignments that help you work the lesson into your lives. Your leader will be in charge of sending out follow-up communication the day after each study, but you all will have a part to play in making the lesson real in your team's culture. While you and your teammates will have the ability to choose your assignment from a list of options, you will be given a specific **Bold and Beautiful Rally Cry** to serve as your team's mantra for the week.

The point of the follow-up activity is to help you maximize your team dynamic. When you unite around a specific lesson or bit of truth, you fight the spiritual battle together, which is far more effective than trying to do it on your own. Remember, Jesus sent His followers out in pairs (Luke 10:1) knowing they'd need each other to stay strong. The same goes for you. After you walk through a challenging lesson, you can band together to help each teammate remember God's Truth and avoid slipping back into former ways of thinking.

**The Rally Cry will help you focus on the main verse/point of the study and remember what the Lord has spoken to you. It can be used as a social media hashtag, written on mirrors or athletic tape, and quoted repeatedly.**

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## YOUR RESPONSIBILITY:

To make the most of this study, we ask that you do several things:

- **Be there.** Show up for the study and be ready to rock when it's time to start.
- **Be honest and willing.** Don't sidestep the work of the Holy Spirit. Be honest with God and your teammates and be willing to let Him do His work in you.
- **Be in the Word.** Seek God on your own and maintain a daily routine for studying His Word. You'll be better equipped to help your teammates through their struggles if you are actively engaging with Him already.
- **Be kind.** Treat your teammates with love at all times and be gentle in your words.
- **Be loyal.** These are your girls. Protect these relationships with loyalty and trust.

## GO GET 'EM:

If you're ready to start walking as a Bold and Beautiful woman of God, dive in and enjoy the ride. It may be challenging, but you'll love the results. And don't forget, *"But as it is written: 'What eye did not see and ear did not hear, and what never entered the human mind—God prepared this for those who love Him'"* (1 Corinthians 2:9).



A woman's profile is shown in silhouette against a vibrant pink background. The text 'BOLD + BEAUTIFUL' is overlaid on the image in a large, bold, white font. The '+' symbol is a female gender symbol.

# BOLD + BEAUTIFUL

# WHAT DEFINES YOU

SESSION 1: IDENTITY

## KEY VERSE:

**“LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I stand up; You understand my thoughts from far away. You observe my travels and my rest; You are aware of all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue, You know all about it, LORD. You have encircled me; You have placed Your hand on me. This extraordinary knowledge is beyond me. It is lofty; I am unable to reach it.”**

**Psalm 139:1-6**

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## INTRO:

Imagine you're reading a women's magazine and you come across a headline for a quiz that tells you how to "find yourself." You stop where you are and get down to business. Because, really, who doesn't want to know who they are? That's why we're going to start out today's lesson with a load of questions. So, take a few minutes and jot down your answers to these identity-oriented questions:

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**1**

What three words would you use to describe yourself?

**4**

What are the most influential things in your life (e.g. sports, money, clothes, family, grades, etc.)?

**2**

What three words do you think others would use to describe you?

**5**

Who do you think you are?

**3**

What characteristics do you hope others see in you?



# THINK IT THROUGH

**This world is all about self-discovery—about individualism, personality, uniqueness and finding your niche. We're encouraged to know ourselves and follow our hearts. We're told that being comfortable with who we are is a key to life.**

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But who are we kidding? While those questions might be fun to answer and self-discovery might be an engaging psychological exercise, we're in for a frustrating experience when we try to figure ourselves out all on our own. Seriously, how many times have you changed your mind about your favorite color or ice cream flavor? How often have you gone back and forth between being an extrovert and an introvert or changed your mind about whether you hate practice or love it?

We're all human beings who change from time to time—and if we worry about discovering who we are, we'll never get to the bottom of it. Or, if we do, we'll just have to go looking for ourselves again once we've aged a few years and learned new lessons. The point is that finding our identity on our own is fruitless. We might know ourselves really well, but that understanding won't last, and it will change.

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**1** What is something you used to believe that you don't anymore? Why did you change your mind?

**2** How many times have you tried to "find" yourself only to go back to the same question later with a different answer?

**3** To this point in your life, how would you define yourself? If someone was to ask you who you are, what would be your response?



There's a common phrase among Christians that says we are to find our identity in Christ. But what does that even mean? How can we be identified in someone else? Doesn't that defeat the purpose of finding who we are? It would certainly seem so—at least on the surface. But there's a lot more to it if we really take the time to study it.

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**In fact, finding your identity in Christ is actually the only way to discover the real you.**

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## **PSALM 139:1-6**

“LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I stand up; You understand my thoughts from far away. You observe my travels and my rest; You are aware of all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue, You know all about it, LORD. You have encircled me; You have placed Your hand on me. This extraordinary knowledge is beyond me. It is lofty; I am unable to reach it.”

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Based on Psalm 139, consider how well God knows you. He knows what you do at every moment. He knows your words before you say them. He knows when you sleep and when you get up. He knows you. Why? Because He made you (Psalm 139:13). And no one knows an object more than the one who designed and created it—especially when that object was made in the image of said Creator.

Think about it. God formed you. He knows why He made you (Ephesians 2:10), what

gifts He gave you (1 Peter 4:10), your desires (Psalm 37:4) and even the number of hairs on your head (Matthew 10:30). And to all of His children He gave certain rights and traits that contribute to who we are according to His true version of us.

And you know what all this adds up to? You guessed it: our identity. Who we really are. By looking to who God created us to be, we will learn the Truth about us at the deepest, most critical level.

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**So, are you ready to find out who you are?**

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# THE WORD

As we look to the Word to discover our true identities, we must remember that this is actual Truth. If we read something in Scripture that doesn't line up with what we currently believe about ourselves we need to wrestle with the concept and ask why we don't believe the Word and what we believe instead.

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**There's a good chance that the enemy has put lies in our heads to make us believe less about ourselves than God does. This is our chance to destroy those lies and start believing the honest to goodness Truth.**

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## KEY VERSES:

Grab your Bibles and let's look to some key verses. While there are hundreds of them that point to aspects of who we are as God's children, we'll start with some basics to get a handle on our foundational identity in Him. Take 10 minutes to read the following verses and record what it says about who you are:

John 1:12	2 Timothy 1:7
John 15:15	1 John 5:18
Romans 5:1	Acts 1:8
1 Corinthians 6:20	1 Corinthians 3:16
Colossians 1:14	Ephesians 2:10
Colossians 2:10	Ephesians 3:12
Romans 8:1-2	Philippians 4:13
Romans 8:28-35	

**While that may seem like a ton of verses, it's really only the beginning. The Bible is filled with bits of truth that help you come to a deep and profound understanding of who God made you and who He knows you to be!**



**Now, there is one important thing to consider . . . These are all traits of women who are God’s children, meaning those who have received God’s Son, Jesus, as their Savior.**

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Go back to the first verse on the list: John 1:12. “But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name...” According to this verse, while God created us all, there is a qualification that must be in place in order for us to become His children and, thus, step into our true identity. We must receive and believe in Christ. Until we do that, we will remain beings created by God who are living as children of the world.

Here’s the thing: We are all sinners, right? (Yes. Read Romans 3:23.) That creates a problem when it comes to spending eternity with God because our sins come with a death penalty. (Hey, God’s no pushover. He’s incredibly just.) But because He loves us so fiercely, He made a way for us to spend

eternity with Him even while we didn’t deserve it. He sent Jesus to die in our place—to take on the death we deserved so that we could have eternal life with the Father. We can’t do a thing to earn this payment; we need only believe in Jesus, receive Him as our Savior and surrender to Him as Lord. It’s so simple and, yet, so incredible. And once we make this decision, we can step into the role we were created to hold from the beginning: our true selves according to God.

(NOTE: If you have yet to make Jesus the Lord of your life, speak up in this study and talk to someone. Don’t wait. Don’t hesitate. Don’t fear. This is the best thing you could ever do in your entire life.)

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## **TAKEAWAY POINT:**

Listen, we all want to know who we are. We all want to be confident in our identity. But we’ll never get there unless we stop trying to figure it out for ourselves and start looking to the One who made us, designed us and knows us intimately—better than we (or anyone else) know ourselves.

**By turning our eyes to His Word and finding out what He says about us as His children, we will know the absolute, unchanging, fundamental Truth about us—not the guesses we make about ourselves based on our mood or personality. We’ll know who we actually are as His children.**



# TEAM TIME

As teammates, you can help each other learn to the Truth about who you are as God's daughters. The theory that there's strength in numbers is supported in Scripture—starting with the Father Himself as One of Three—and it certainly applies to you in your quest to embrace who you really are. By joining forces with your teammates, you can multiply your strength and resources in the battle for your souls.

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## ACTIVITY:

**1** As a group, discuss things on which you tend to pin your identity (e.g. sports, grades, popularity, friends, possessions, family, etc.).

**2** Why could it be dangerous to place your identity in any of these things—particularly your sport.

**3** Now discuss why it would be safe to find your identity in what God says about you.

**4** Divide up the list of verses from "THE WORD" and assign one or more to each teammate until they are all taken. Go around the room and read them all out loud, recording on a white board or flip chart what each verse indicates about your identity as God's children.

*(4 continued)*

- Now go back through the list and discuss common lies that set themselves up against these pieces of truth.

- Which ones are most common or difficult lies you face as athletes?

- How can rooting yourselves in your identity in Christ help you become a better athlete and teammate?

- What could it look like for an entire team to be fully convinced of their identity in Christ? What would be the impact?

**5** Finish your discussion by considering the questions, "What is God saying to me?" and "How will I respond?"



# WORK IT OUT

**This week, your team's mission is to focus on establishing your identity as God's daughters. Choose one or more of the following activities to do as a team between now and your next meeting:**

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**1** Create a list of traits and truths about who you are in Christ and distribute them to each teammate. Hang the lists in your lockers or on the mirrors in your locker room.

**3** Have each teammate make a photo reprint on herself. Using Sharpies® or markers, let each teammate write bits of Truth regarding who she is in Christ over the photo. Post the pictures in your lockers or on your mirrors at home.

**2** Choose four verses from the list in the study to memorize this week.

**4** Write a poem or rap about who you are in Christ and let the whole team learn it.

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## RALLY CRY:

Once you have your plan in place, couple it with this week's Bold and Beautiful Rally Cry. As a team, this will be your power phrase for the week. Repeat it to yourselves and as a group to combat the lies that the enemy tries to tell you, and let it point you back to the Author of Truth.

**"I AM HIS!"**

**PSALM 139:1-6**





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# THE FALSE GOD OF SPORTS

SESSION 2: IDOLATRY

## KEY VERSE:

**“For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.”**

**1 Chronicles 16:26**

## INTRO:

You love your sport. You think about it when you wake up. Your mind drifts to it in class. You orient your schedule around it. You eat, sleep, sacrifice and slave for it. You live for it. You worship it.

If this was a commercial for a sports drink, it would sound like the epitome of the ideal athlete—the picture of a disciplined, focused achiever who will let nothing stand in her way. But it's not. It's a study designed to let God free us from the prison of the world's lies and to learn how to do life His way. And in His Kingdom, the proper term for this dangerous, all-consuming approach to sports is *idolatry*.

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**1** What's your initial reaction to the word *idolatry*? How does it make you feel?

**3** Fill in the blank: My relationship with my sport is \_\_\_\_\_.

**2** On a scale of 1 to 10, how strongly do you fit the description in the first paragraph?

**4** How does that compare to your relationship with Christ?



# THINK IT THROUGH

**Athletes of all levels struggle with letting their sport overtake their world. With so much emphasis being placed on success, competitors give themselves fully to training and competition in an effort to find significance and value. But when the sport becomes the source of their worth, it captivates them to the point of total devotion at the exclusion of everything else. And that's when they have an idol.**

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According to Merriam-Webster, an idol is "a representation or symbol of an object of worship; a false god." It's also called an "object that is worshiped as a god." And because we only have the capacity to serve one master at a time, our idol is what gets our first, best and always. All other objects or people fall in line behind it.

There are many reasons why athletes fall into sports idolatry. A woman may feel

insecure in who she is without athletic achievements. Maybe she didn't receive approval from her dad as a child and is working to earn it through sports. Maybe she holds resentment against people in her life who never thought she'd amount to anything. Or, maybe she thinks she can use sports to win the approval of God and make up for all she thinks she lacks in other areas.

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**1** What drives you to succeed in sports? Do any of the reasons above ring true in your heart? Are there others not listed?

**2** What are the emotional desires of your heart? Do sports really fulfill those longings? Why or why not?

**3** If a friend asked you if she was more valuable as a person if she performed better on the court or field, what would you tell her?

**4** Do you idolize and worship your sport?



# THE WORD

There are a hundred reasons why idols are dangerous and destructive, and many of them can be found in God's Word. Take a look at the following verses and note what each says about sports and sports idolatry.

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## KEY VERSES:

Exodus 20:3  
1 Samuel 12:21  
Isaiah 44:12-20  
Psalm 37:4  
John 4:13  
Ephesians 2:8-9

**1** Which of these verses resonate with you personally? In what ways?

**2** What do you think God is saying to you?

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**Ladies, idols aren't safe. If you're bowing to one right now, you're in a dangerous position. And unless you move, you're going to get crushed when the idol comes crashing down upon you. The only thing worthy of your worship—that won't fail you—is God.**

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## TAKEAWAY POINT:

Idols can never be what we want them to be. If we idolize sports and sacrifice everything to be the best athlete, we'll learn that lesson as soon as we achieve our goal. What happens to us the minute we achieve the success on the court? The bar is suddenly raised. We either have to keep performing at that level forever to maintain our status or watch someone break our record or take our championship away next season. The idol isn't satisfied by victory; it's intensified. And if we keep bowing to it, we'll wind up killing ourselves in pursuit of something that does nothing to change our true value as a woman.



The only way to avoid being crushed by the inevitable falling idol is to take it down before it crashes—or, better yet, replace it with the only One capable of maintaining the idol status.

God is the only One who won't fail or fall. Sports will end. Our bodies will age. We will move in and out of different life seasons. But God will never, ever change or fail. He will never crush us with His demands like idols do. (How often do you just wish you could escape the pressure of it all?) If we live to serve Him above all else, He promises that, no matter what, He will work only for our good in all situations (Romans 8:28). No idol can make any such promises.

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**Do you see it? By instructing us to not worship idols, God is protecting us. He doesn't want us to be crushed by false gods. He knows they can't take His place, and He loves you too much to let you settle for anything less than the best: Himself.**



# TEAM TIME

**Gather back together as a group and let the Lord work through you as a team.**

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## ACTIVITY:

- 1** Go around the room and let each teammate share her struggles with idolatry. (If you have a large group, break into groups of three to five.)
- 2** Once everyone has shared, discuss the similarities and common themes or thoughts. Write them down on a white board or flip chart for everyone to see.
- 3** As a group, identify the lies that drive the negative thoughts. (e.g. I'll be accepted if I achieve. I must be perfect. Sports success will fulfill me. God alone can't meet my needs.) Write these down, as well.
- 4** To fight the lies, replace them with Truth from Scripture. As a team, identify Bible verses that correspond to each lie and write the reference next to (or directly over) the lie. Discuss the activity as a group.
- 5** Because idols (poorly) fill some perceived need in our lives, break into smaller groups if necessary and discuss what purpose the idols have served and what it will take for you to be able to surrender them. Ask the question, "How can Jesus meet that need?"
- 6** End with this question to the group: "What is God saying to you, and how will you respond?"



# WORK IT OUT

**This week, your team's mission is to begin tearing down the idols in your lives and allowing God to take their places. While you may start by realizing your sports idolatry, God might also reveal other idols in your life such as boyfriends, academics, possessions, etc.**

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Come up with a plan of action that will help you live out what you learned and believe God's Truth about idols and Himself. Choose one (or more) of the following activities to do as a team and use the B&B Rally Cry to help each other stay the course!

**1** Memorize the key verse or one of the ones listed in the study and quote it to each other daily.

**3** Come up with a symbolic gesture to dethrone your idols and put God in their places.

**2** Make a "No Idols" sign and post it in your locker room using the universal "no" symbol (circle with a slash through it).

**4** Visit the blog of Pastor J.A. Medders and read Tim Keller's 12 Questions for Diagnosing Heart Idolatry: <http://jamedders.com/heart-idols/>. Discuss your findings as a team.

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## RALLY CRY:

Once you have your plan in place, couple it with this week's Bold and Beautiful Rally Cry. As a team, this will be your power phrase for the week. Repeat it to yourselves and as a group to combat the lies that the enemy tries to tell you, and let it point you back to the Author of Truth.

**"ONE GOD!"**

**1 CHRONICLES 16:26**





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# WONDER WOMEN

SESSION 3: FEMININITY

## KEY VERSE:

**“Strength and honor are her clothing, and she can laugh at the time to come.”**

**Proverbs 31:25**

## INTRO:

Femininity has gotten a bad reputation in the world of sports. Apparently it's not OK to be anything less than He-Man® if you want to dribble a basketball or swing a bat. Maybe the athletic world has developed an aversion to femininity because it doesn't know what it truly means—what it was created to be by its divine Author.

---

1

What is your personal definition of femininity, and how did you get this definition?

2

Do you see your femininity as a strength or a weakness? Why?



# THINK IT THROUGH

Dresses, shopping, flirting, shoes, nail polish and chocolate. That's femininity, right? Isn't that what we're taught? In order to be a woman, we have to play with dolls and find our purpose in the mall?

OK, there's nothing wrong with Barbies® and shopping. (Unless you're playing with dolls at age 22. Then we need to do a completely separate study.) But there is something wrong with defining womanhood by superficial and limiting characteristics.

**1** What things do you associate with femininity?

**2** Would you include any of your athletic gear, or do you associate these items more with masculinity? Why or why not?

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Throughout history, sports predominantly have been associated with men. Only in the 1900s did it become normal for women to participate in physical competition. Considering the length of time mankind has been around, that makes women's sports still in its infancy and the stereotypical athlete is still a man. Which, can make it difficult for women to embrace their feminine identity if they want to be taken seriously as an athlete. But what if you could be all woman and still be a competitive, focused athlete?

**Thankfully, you can. By reading God's Word you can discover that there's more to women than frills and lace. There's a brave soul waiting to bring glory to her Father by embracing who she is in Him: a strong, capable daughter of the King.**

---

**1** Have you ever felt the need to "man up" and behave like members of the guys' teams? If so, why?

**3** Who are you trying to please when you pursue masculine emotions or behaviors?

**2** How does this carry over into your lifestyle off the court or field?



# THE WORD

To live in your identity as a strong woman of God, you must fully embrace the Truth of Scripture, which can derail the lies of the enemy. Because, if God equipped you for the athletic arena, He certainly made you to live out His purpose in it. So, let's take a look at His Truth.

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**1** First, the basics. Genesis 1:27 says, *"So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female."* The most basic truth is that you are a woman—distinctly different than a man—created in the image of God.

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**2** Next, consider Peter 3:3-6, which offers two points: *"Your beauty should not consist of outward things like elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold ornaments or fine clothes. Instead, it should consist of what is inside the heart with the imperishable quality of a **gentle and quiet spirit**, which is very valuable in God's eyes. For in the past, the holy women who put their hope in God also beautified themselves in this way, submitting to their own husbands, just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You have become her children when you **do what is good and are not frightened by anything alarming.**"*

(Note: This passage doesn't say you can't wear jewelry or fancy clothes; it says that these aren't the source of our beauty.)

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**The godly woman has a gentle and quiet spirit, rooted in faith.**

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And, just like Abraham's wife, Sarah, she does what is right and refuses to fear. Doesn't this sound like an amazing woman? Maybe even a fantastic competitor? She has inner peace and isn't shaken when a bad call comes her way. While she may want to say something back to a trash-talking opponent, she doesn't have to because she's got a gentle and quiet spirit and can let it go and play the game. She does what is right and helps her adversary up after a collision. And she's not afraid of anything—including last-second shots and game-winning runs. She's a brilliant light for Christ on the playing field, that's for sure!

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**3** Now let's examine the ultimate godly woman of Proverbs 31. Read verses 10-31 and note what attributes of the Wife of Noble Character displays that require physical, mental or emotional strength. How do her traits apply to sports?

---

## TAKEAWAY POINT:

Ladies, right now let's kill the lie that women are sissies and that you have to be anything other than who you are to be taken seriously as an athlete. Because the fact is that you ARE a woman, and God created you that way on purpose according to His good plan. The enemy will try to confuse you as to how you fit into the athletic arena and will make you think that the woman you are isn't good enough. He will tell you that you have to be harder, more masculine or less emotional if you want to be taken seriously.

**But that's a lie. The daughter God made you is more than good enough.**

**1**  
In what ways have you struggled to find your identity as a woman and as a competitor?

**2**  
How can a woman be both strong and gentle?



# TEAM TIME

As a team, work together to challenge each other in these areas:

---

## ACTIVITY:

**1** Discuss the misconceptions you've had regarding a goldy woman. Use a flip chart or white board to record the characteristics of a real biblical woman vs. the stereotypical version. (e.g. brave vs. timid, real vs. superficial/fake, etc.)

**2** Now open an honest discussion about femininity.

- How do you view it?
- Do you believe it is weakness?
- What is it really?

**3** Discuss the struggle to find your identity as women who are competitors. What internal battles come with being a female and an athlete?

**4** Using what you know about the following biblical women, relate their situations to sports scenarios. Talk about how their characteristics can apply to your lives on the court or field. (e.g. Esther had to approach the king despite being greatly afraid. What athletic situations involve fear and bravery?)

- Esther—Esther 4:12-5:8, 7:1-10
- Mary—Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1:18-25
- Rahab—Joshua 2

**5** Close by letting each teammate answer the questions, "What is God saying to me, and how will I respond?"



# WORK IT OUT

**Time to come together as a team and fight the enemy, who wants to slay your feminine identity and cause confusion. Select one or more of the following activities to complete throughout the next week to remind yourselves who you are as God's daughters.**

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**1** Post related Scripture verses in your lockers and on your locker room mirrors.

**3** Memorize Proverbs 31:25 or one of the other verses from this study.

**2** Text, Tweet, Facebook, Snapchat or Instagram encouraging verses to each other daily. (Almost any social media site will work.)

**4** Read the book of Esther as a group and discuss it throughout the week.

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## RALLY CRY:

Once you have your plan of action, couple it with this week's Bold and Beautiful Rally Cry. As a team, this will be your power phrase for the week. Repeat it when lies come to your mind; write it on your athletic tape; say it to each other; and remember the verses behind it.

**“STRENGTH AND HONOR!”**

**PROVERBS 31:25**





**BOLD  
+  
BEAUTIFUL**

# BODY OF WORK

SESSION 4: BODY IMAGE

## KEY VERSE:

**“I will praise You because I have been remarkably and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, and I know this very well.”**

**Psalm 139:14**

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## INTRO:

If we look at women’s magazine covers today, we see a lot of non-athletes. Thin, petite women who model clothes or sing pop music for a living. While that’s fine for them—they probably don’t need explosive quads for their jobs—it doesn’t do us much good when we look down and see our muscular thighs and solid waistlines staring back at us and think we’re somehow less beautiful. In those moments, we can get downright mean with ourselves and sink into a self-loathing pit that causes us to live outside of the joy and peace we could have in Christ.

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**Instead of killing our self-esteem when we look in the mirror, let’s learn the real Truth about ourselves as God Himself laid it out...and allow it to set us free (John 8:32).**

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**1** What is your opinion of your body, and how does it affect you mentally? Emotionally? Spiritually?

**2** Where did you get your opinion? Who taught you how and what to think about your body?

**3** Do you worry more about the number on the scale than about your physical fitness? Would you ever change your diet to help you lose weight at the expense of your athletic performance? How could this affect your health? Your team?



# THINK IT THROUGH

**Imagine for a moment that you look like one of today's top models. Your arms and legs are thin. There is little to no fat on your body, and your muscles are so small they can only be detected with an MRI. You walk out to face your opponent on the court, raises her eyebrows and asks, "Are YOU guarding ME?"**

---

You'd like to be confident in your response, but you suddenly realize that she has at least 60 pounds on you. How's your confidence now?

Have you ever stopped to consider your athletic body's worth—what it does and is capable of doing? It's a pretty incredible thing. It can run, jump, throw a pitch, smash a volleyball and so much more. But only if you take care of it and train it for competition, which will inevitably make your body look different than the ones on the red carpet.

Listen, that's OK. If we believe God's Word in Psalm 139, it's a good thing. While we want to appreciate the beauty of all God's daughters and not berate those who set the world's standards, we can't do so at the expense of our own self-worth. We simply can't label one body type as beautiful and all others as unattractive. It's not biblical, and it's not healthy. It's only a lie of the enemy, who wants to steal our life and joy and render us ineffective.

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1

Have you ever considered that God gave you your body for a reason?

2

What can you do athletically that you wouldn't be able to do without your specific physical design?



# THE WORD

**Instead of comparing our bodies, let's learn to appreciate who and how God made us and embrace ourselves as stunning in His sight—and our own. Take a look at the key Psalm 139 verse in context.**

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## PSALM 139

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” (v. 13-16, NIV).

**1** Read the following verses and record what each says about body image: Romans 12:2; 1 Samuel 16:7; Ephesians 2:10

**2** Read Psalm 139:13-16 again and write down what you think God is saying to you in this verse.

**Ladies, God created you as you are on purpose. And if you believe God is the loving, wise and perfect Father He says He is, you can know that your design was (and is) a good one.**

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## TAKEAWAY POINT:

Psalm 139 shows that you were designed as you are on purpose, and you are a beautiful work of God—every bit of you. And while the world can only offer its opinion, this is actual Truth from Scripture. Whether or not you match up with pop culture doesn't have any bearing on your real worth and value. You are fearfully and wonderfully made just as you are.



# TEAM TIME

**As teammates, you have an opportunity to help each other experience freedom from the bondage of a destructive body image. By banding together, you can fight the enemy and help each other embrace God's Truth about your bodies.**

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## ACTIVITY:

- 1** Go around the room and let each teammate share her body image struggles without being interrupted. (If you have a large group, break into groups of three to five.)
- 2** Once everyone has shared, return to the larger group if necessary and discuss the similarities and common themes or thoughts. Write them down on a white board or flip chart for everyone to see.
- 3** As a group, identify the lies that are driving those negative thoughts. (e.g. I'm not good enough. I have to be perfect. There IS a perfect, and I'm not it. I look different, and different is bad. I'm not beautiful as I am. I'm not worthy.) Write these down, as well.
- 4** No fight the lies by replacing them with Truth from Scripture. As a team, identify Bible verses that correspond to each lie and write the reference next to (or directly over) the lie. NOTE: If you think of a verse—even one that doesn't directly relate to body image—that applies to one of your teammates' specific situations, share it during this time.
- 5** Discuss the exercise as a group and anything you learned. Leave with the question, "What is God saying to you, and how will you respond?"



# WORK IT OUT

**This week, your team's mission is to practice thinking God's Truth about your bodies when you're faced with lies. Choose one (or more) of the following activities to do as a team between now and your next meeting:**

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**1** Post body-image related Scripture verses in your lockers and on your locker room mirrors.

**3** Share daily positive affirmations in person.

**2** Text, Tweet, Facebook, Snapchat or Instagram encouraging verses to each other daily. (Any social media will work.)

**4** Memorize Psalm 119:13-16 or one of the other verses from this study.

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## RALLY CRY:

Once you have your plan of action, couple it with this week's Bold and Beautiful Rally Cry. As a team, this will be your power phrase for the week. Repeat it when lies come to your mind; write it on your athletic tape; say it to each other; and remember the verse behind it.

**“WONDERFULLY MADE”**

**PSALM 139:14**





# BOLD + BEAUTIFUL

# NO COMPARISON

SESSION 5: COMPARISON

## KEY VERSE:

**“For we don’t dare classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. But in measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves to themselves, they lack understanding.”**

**2 Corinthians 10:12**

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## INTRO:

*She’s better than you ... You could easily outplay her ... She can lift more ... There’s no way she could beat your time ... She’s was recruited to more schools than you ... She comes from a family of athletes ... You have more medals than she does ...*

How many times a day do you have thoughts like these? In an environment that’s already based on competition it’s easy to get caught up in comparing ourselves to others—both our opponents and our teammates. After all, everyone else (media, opponents) is comparing you to others, so why shouldn’t you join in?

While it’s true that some comparisons in sports are necessary (e.g. how you’ll match up against the girl you’ll be guarding), the concept of comparison itself is incredibly tricky. It must have healthy boundaries that are rooted in helpful facts, and it must carry zero weight regarding how valuable you are as a woman. Anything more, and it will be used as an agent of destruction against your identity in Christ.

1

As an athlete, who do you compare yourself to the most?  
Why?

2

How do the comparisons affect you mentally?



# THINK IT THROUGH

The stat sheets don't lie. When you line yourself up against an opponent or a teammate, you can see a certain bit of truth. One of you has scored more points on the season or has a higher batting average, and that's just a historical fact. If you take this fact and use it appropriately, it can help you determine important sports variables such

as who should guard a certain member of the opposing team, who should bat third or fourth in the lineup, who should run which leg of the relay, etc. Those are crucial numbers in planning for victory, and you and your coaches have to take note of them if you want to win.

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**This is the kind of sports comparison that's positive. If we don't lay out the numbers and physical stats, we'll wind up with a point guard posting up against a forward and a setter starting at middle hitter. But where comparison gets out of bounds is when we start taking it personally.**

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We start using the numbers as validation to either think more highly or poorly of ourselves than we should. *She's got a higher average than I do, therefore I'm less valuable. Or, I was All-Conference last season, so I'm worth more than she is.* And both of those attitudes take us farther away from the women Christ wants us to be.

First, when we use comparisons to berate ourselves or beat ourselves up, we put more weight on what the stats, the world or the enemy says about us than what God does.

Fact: God says we are...

- His wonderful creations.
- worthy of being called His children.
- created in His image.
- worth dying for.

And no stat or opinion in the world can touch those. They're absolutely true if we are in Christ.



## **When we let our athletic comparisons dictate our value overall, we disregard and cheapen what our Father says is true about us.**

---

We give in to the enemy who whispers in our ear that we have to prove something or be better than someone to be worthwhile as a woman. That. Isn't. True. We are worthwhile as women because we are God's daughters, created in His image and redeemed by the blood of His Son. And that has nothing to do with a stat sheet. Just because your rival can run faster or jump higher does not mean she's in any way more worthy than you.

**1** Think of a time when you let a negative comparison damage your self-worth. What were the consequences?

**2** What would have been a more spiritually healthy mindset to adopt?

On the other hand, if we allow the comparisons to elevate our opinion of ourselves based on how well we stack up against those who are less skilled, we fall into a different trap. We use a worldly system to find the worth and value that God intends for us to get from Him. It's a false sense of worth that's based on temporary things that can and will change with time, and we mustn't rely on that to find our worth or we'll be crushed when it departs.

---

## **Instead, we must learn to find ourselves in God as His daughters—totally and completely loved and adored by God, but none more so than the other.**

---

Another consequence of letting our egos go crazy in comparison is that we lose touch with Jesus and His call to love and serve others in humility. We start believing we're above others and deserve to be revered because we can do some physical skill better than they can. Where in the Bible does it say that she who can run the fastest is more valuable than those who are slow? Hint: It doesn't. What it does say is that God loves all of His children equally and in the same way: totally and completely.

**1** Think of a time when you've let comparisons make you prideful. What were the consequences?

**2** Why does Jesus call us to be humble?



# THE WORD

**To better understand the dangers and drawbacks of comparison, and to get a better handle on how we should view ourselves in regard to others, let's take a look at God's Word.**

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## KEY VERSES:

Read the following verses and record what each says about comparison:

- Romans 10:11-12
  - Acts 10:34-35
  - Luke 18:9-14
  - Genesis 1:27
  - Galatians 6:3-4
  - Galatians 3:28
- 

## TAKEAWAY POINT:

In sports, we're going to face comparisons. But we don't have to let them defeat us or damage our ability to live like and for Jesus. Instead, we can learn to think like a mature believer who knows who she is in Christ—that she's worthy of His love and approval just because she's His, not because she's a good athlete. Then, when the comparisons come, we can use them to help us match up against the competition and, then, to let them go.



# TEAM TIME

**Come back together as a group and discuss the topic of comparison. It's bound to have affected you all, so don't feel ashamed if you struggle with it. (Shame isn't from God, anyway.) Just be honest and let the Lord help you discover the issues and work through them together!**

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## ACTIVITY:

- 1** As a group, open a discussion about the fine line between necessary and damaging comparison in sports. What kind of comparison is necessary? When does it become damaging? What Scriptures come to your mind in helping you distinguish between the two?
- 2** Using a white board or flip chart, make a list of all the ways comparison creates spiritual, emotional or physical damage.
- 3** Turn the page or erase the board and start a new list. This time, make a list of all the damaging thoughts you have as a result of comparing yourselves to others in sports. (e.g. "I'm a failure because I can't do \_\_\_\_\_ like she can." "I'm better than she is because I can...")
- 4** Discuss the damage these thoughts create in your lives. How do they affect you as a team? How do they affect your relationship with Christ?
- 5** Using Scripture and what you know about God, create new, godly thoughts and write them beside the negative ones you listed from No. 3. Use these to help you start renewing your mind.



# WORK IT OUT

Now it's time to come together as a team and help each other fight the comparison battle. Select one or more of the following activities to complete throughout the next week to help you avoid adopting a false opinion of yourself and releasing your grip on your identity in Christ.

---

**1** Post related Scripture verses in your lockers and on your locker room mirrors.

**2** Text, Tweet, Facebook, Snapchat or Instagram encouraging verses to each other daily. (Almost any social media site will work.)

**3** Divide into pairs and commit to quizzing each other three times in the coming week by posing hypothetical situations that help you develop healthy thoughts in the face of comparison.

**Example:**

**Teammate 1:** "What thoughts are spiritually healthy to think if you are named to the All-Tournament team and your rival isn't, and what are some verses that apply?"

**Teammate 2:** (answer)

**Teammate 1:** "What thoughts are unhealthy in that situation?"

**Teammate 2:** (answer)

**4** Memorize 2 Corinthians 10:12 or one of the other verses from this study.

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## RALLY CRY:

Once you have your plan of action, couple it with this week's Bold and Beautiful Rally Cry. As a team, this will be your power phrase for the week. Repeat it when lies come to your mind; write it on your athletic tape; say it to each other; and remember the verses behind it.

**"NO COMPARISON!"**

**2 CORINTHIANS 10:12**





# BOLD + BEAUTIFUL

# S-U-C-C-E-S-S

SESSION 6: SUCCESS

## KEY VERSE:

**“More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of Him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them filth, so that I may gain Christ.”**

**Philippians 3:8**

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## INTRO:

Legendary NFL coach Vince Lombardi once said, “Winning isn’t everything; it’s the only thing.” And for most of us, that’s become a personal truth. It’s hard to disagree with the ultimate bottom line in sports (the win-loss column), but as followers of Christ, we’re allowed to view things in a different way than the world. We don’t have to define success the same way those around us do because we have an eternal perspective on life. Yes, it’s OK to want to win and do well in the vein of conventional success, but because we think with a Kingdom mindset, we know that’s not the only way to achieve a win.

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**We can find and obey our God in every situation and trust Him to bring good from the results.**

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**1** How do you view success in your sport? Be specific.

**3** How much weight does succeeding carry in your life?

**2** How do you view success as a Christian?



# THINK IT THROUGH

In 2010, University of Texas senior quarterback Colt McCoy was playing in the most important game of his life. It was the BCS National Championship game, and his Longhorns were taking on the Alabama Crimson Tide. Already one of the most prolific passers in school history, McCoy needed only a national title to round out his legacy. Sadly, during the very first drive of the game, McCoy injured his passing shoulder and wound up watching from the sidelines as his team lost the game.

After it was over, a TV reporter asked the devastated senior how it felt to have to watch his team play this once-in-a-lifetime game without him. McCoy struggled for words for a moment before he launched into one of the most faith-filled moments in sports interview history. "God's in control of my life," he told a national TV audience, "and, if nothing else, I'm standing on the Rock."

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**Failure? Or success? That all depends on whose standard you're using.**

---

Of course the world viewed that as a massive disappointment. But what if that moment was the epitome of obedience to the Lord for Colt McCoy? Would God not count it a success? And, if so, whose opinion matters more?

1  
How would the world categorize McCoy's situation?  
How would you?

2  
How do you think God would categorize this situation?  
Use Scripture to back up your answer if you know any verses that apply.



In verses such as 1 Samuel 15:22 and Jeremiah 7:23, we read that God's desire for us is obedience to Him. We can't control the circumstances of the world, but we can pay attention to the voice of the Holy Spirit and move when and where He says. We may not win every game on paper, but we can win every game in the eyes of God if we do as He asks in each moment. The only thing, then, is to change the way we view success and line it up with how God sees it.

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**Can we be sad and disappointed when things don't go our way? Of course. We wouldn't be competitors if we weren't. But if we allow the Lord to renew our minds and see with His eyes, we can walk away from even the most devastating of situations knowing that we were winners that day because we followed Him. We may not have won the title or beat the record, but we did play our hearts out for Jesus by loving others, playing with integrity and using our gifts as best we know how.**

---

And, let's face it, athletic success is completely subjective anyway. Your teammates may consider a regular season win to be a great success, but you may not agree if you turned in a sub-par personal performance. A track runner might enjoy winning her race but not see it as success because she didn't set a personal record. It's all in the eye of the beholder, which is why we need something more concrete on which to base our level of success.

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**If we start to view success through the eyes of the Creator, we might just start to believe the truth that we're successful if we obey Him, love Him and glorify Him in all we do, regardless of the score.**



# THE WORD

Let's take a look at a great example from Scripture. Throughout history, God made a point of turning the tables on worldly achievers by calling them to a lower worldly status in acts of successful obedience to Him. Remember Saul before he was Paul? He was a rich, powerful Pharisee who had tremendous standing in the world. But all of that changed when he met Jesus, who gave him a new identity along with new instructions to leave it all behind and spend his life spreading the gospel he'd so vehemently denied. After maturing as a believer, Paul eventually saw that his new status was of much greater value than his former worldly-amazing life. Check out his comments from **Philippians 3**.

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## PHILIPPIANS 3:4B-9A

"If anyone else thinks he has grounds for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised the eighth day; of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; regarding the law, a Pharisee; regarding zeal, persecuting the church; regarding the righteousness that is in the law, blameless. But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ. More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of Him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them filth, so that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ..."

**1** How much value do you place on worldly success vs. spiritual obedience? Which is more important to you?

**2** Does your athletic success get in the way of your obedience to Christ?

**3** Read the following verses and record what each says about success:

- 1 Kings 2:1-3
- Matthew 16:24-27
- Matthew 19:16-30
- Romans 12:2
- 1 Samuel 16:7
- Colossians 3:23-24



## TAKEAWAY POINT:

Wanting to be successful isn't a bad thing at all. In fact, success was God's idea; not man's. He told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply, which was total success. The writers of Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1 and Proverbs 16:3 all talk about God's plan for our success. He wants us to succeed and has placed that desire in our hearts. The only qualification is that we need to be willing to succeed His way; not ours.

---

**Success of the world is based on such limited and superficial views, but success in the Kingdom is so much broader and fruitful.**

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Even if we never win the championship—or any other game for that matter—in the spiritual world, we can be victorious if we are walking with Him in obedience. If we love our teammates and opponents... If we refuse to retaliate when we are confronted... If we look for ways to show Christ to those in our sphere of influence... If we compete for Him with all that we have... If we play with integrity and joy... Then we will find the success that truly matters and lasts into eternity.



# TEAM TIME

**It's time to bring your minds together to talk about success and about the world's view versus ours as Christians. Come back together as a group and work through the following points.**

---

## ACTIVITY:

- 1** The Bible is filled with stories of what could have been failures turning into spiritual successes. Using a white board or flip chart, make a list of biblical stories you think would fit into this category. How do you relate to these men and women?
- 2** Based on what you considered in the lesson, discuss as a group some of your personal standards for athletic success. Make a list of common elements.
- 3** Considering what you learned about success in God's eyes, come up with another list—one that features ways to succeed for Him on the field or court. But there's a catch...Each item must include a Scripture to back it up. (e.g. Loving your opponents can be seen as spiritual victory, and that can be backed up by John 13:34-35.)
- 4** As a group, create a description for what true success means for you as a team and as individual athletes.



# WORK IT OUT

**This week, your team's mission is to help each other begin viewing success through the eyes of the Lord. Choose one (or more) of the following activities to do as a team between now and your next meeting:**

---

**1** Using your answers from the final Team Time question, write an official team creed of success.

**3** Memorize Philippians 3:7-8 or one of the other verses from this study

**2** Text, Tweet, Facebook, Snapchat or Instagram verses about spiritual success to each other daily. (Almost any social media site will work.)

**4** Come up with your own idea!

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## RALLY CRY:

Once you have your plan of action, couple it with this week's Bold and Beautiful Rally Cry. As a team, this will be your power phrase for the week. Repeat it when lies come to your mind; write it on your athletic tape; say it to each other; and remember the verse behind it.

**“HE WINS!”**

**PHILIPPIANS 3:8**





# BOLD + BEAUTIFUL

# PURELY HIS

SESSION 7: PURITY

## KEY VERSE:

**“Let no one despise your youth; instead, you should be an example to the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”**

**1 Timothy 4:12**

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## INTRO:

Purity. It seems like such a high standard. In a world filled with question marks and compromise, it's hard to even know what that means, let alone uphold it as a daily lifestyle. But God asks us to remain pure, specifically regarding sex, for a reason—several, in fact. And who better to write the book on purity than the One who did, in fact, write the book on purity? If we are willing to seek Him on the matter and commit to following His ways, we'll be blessed far beyond the substitutes and short-term pleasures this world offers as a reward for compromise.

---

1  
What is your personal definition of purity, and what are your standards for it?

2  
Where do you get those standards?



# THINK IT THROUGH

Before we can start talking about the how's and why's of sexual purity, we need to talk about what it is according to God's standards. Purity itself means being without blemish or fault—completely clean—as was the case with the animals used to make sacrifices to atone for the sins in the Old Testament. They had to be perfect—pure—in order to be worthy of a holy God. That's why Jesus was the only One worthy of being sacrificed for our sins. Because He was pure.

Since our goal here on earth is to become

like Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18) and to show the world a picture of their Savior so that they will come to know Him for themselves, we, too, are called to walk in purity. By our example, others will get to see a beautiful picture of the God who loves them and knows a higher and better way for them to live. His ways of purity and righteousness are the paths that lead to peace, joy, life and health, and with our lives of purity, we get to be a powerful example of His way.

---

**So, you see, God's desire for us to remain pure isn't just so He can make us feel awkward at parties or keep us from having fun with our boyfriends. It's because He wants to (A) show Himself to the world through us and (B) protect us from the heartache and pain that comes when we sacrifice our purity.**

---

1

How does our purity reveal Christ to the world?

2

When do you struggle most with maintaining your purity?  
Why?



**To better understand purity, we need to know about sex according to God's design. Sexual purity was God's intent from the beginning, and it was a high and good standard that fit with His plan for marriage.**

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In this sacred union between a man and a woman, great intimacy could be shared because it was inside a committed, covenant relationship. Sex was designed to be a key part of that union, as it involved two people becoming one flesh (Ephesians 5:31). The intimacy involved in sex was so powerful and

lovely that it had to be reserved for marriage. Now, because God doesn't change, His plan for sex and marriage hasn't changed, either. It is still designed for husbands and wives who choose to commit to Him and each other and to serve as the representation of His loving, sacrificial commitment to His people.

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**Sex is part of something sacred and holy—something that is to be cherished, protected and prized. And that's how we as Christians should view it.**

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Unfortunately, many of us have joined the world in mishandling sex. We've either cheapened it like the vast majority or demonized it out of fear and lack of spiritual understanding. To be fair, either trap is easy to fall into. Unless we've intentionally studied God's view of marriage and sex or have been around mature Christians who comprehend it, we're likely to take the world's perspective or avoid it altogether.

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1  
What are your views on sex?  
Are they most in line with the  
world's view, the views of fear,  
or God's Truth?



## **Any interpretation of sex other than through God's design is dangerous.**

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First, when we cheapen sex and fall in line with the voice of the world, we believe that sex isn't as big of a deal as God makes it out to be. Famed artist Andy Warhol so aptly summarized pop culture's message on sex when he said that sex was "the biggest nothing of all time." While it may seem like sex is glorified and worshipped in pop culture, it's actually stripped of its sacred value and made common when it's thrown around so casually in music, movies, TV and such. If we, then, start adopting that mindset regarding sex—believing that it's nothing

more than a pleasurable, exciting hobby and that it should be experienced frequently and without pause—we fall into destructive behaviors that steal away what God had intended for us (and our future husband) as special and holy. Some behaviors seen in the life of a woman who rejects (or simply compromises) God's standards for sexual purity can include immodest dress, excessive flirting, sexual experimentation, vulgar or questionable media consumption, and, of course, premarital sex.

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## **So does that mean that we have to be covered up in burlap bags from head to toe and sit at home every weekend to maintain our purity and avoiding being compromised by the world? No.**

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Though, sadly, that's the mindset many Christians have adopted over the years. And it's likely where the assumption originated that Christians think sex is evil, which is not the case at all! When we fully understand the value of sex and the divine nature of it, we see it as a gift from God that is to be prized and protected—something of far more value than the world can understand because it doesn't understand God. He designed it as a powerful force to be experienced and enjoyed in marriage and to be a vehicle through which He brings new life. It's absolutely beautiful, and we know it.

Women, this is why we should fight to defend our purity. Our sexuality is something God gave us to share with our husbands in a committed, godly relationship that reveals Him to the confused world around us. Sex isn't cheap, and neither are we! We should—and have every right to choose to—reserve it for the man who will love us like Jesus loved the Church: completely, boldly, sacrificially and with loyalty, wisdom and strength. That man, when God leads him to make us a bride, will be capable of holding our hearts and becoming one with us in the holy way God designed.



# THE WORD

**God's Word is filled with wisdom regarding sex and purity. The entire book of Song of Solomon is a picture of godly romance and should be studied for further understanding. For now, though, let's examine some of the other many Scriptures that offer Truth on this topic.**

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**1**

First, since the world will tell you that sexual promiscuity is no big deal, read these verses and be reminded of the fact that it is, in fact, a sin:

- 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 18
  - 2 Corinthians 12:21
  - Galatians 5:19-21
  - 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5
- 

**2**

Now let's take a look at verses that show God's design for sex.

- Read Genesis 1:28. What does God's first instruction to Adam and Eve tell us about sex?
  - Read Matthew 19:5-6. What does this indicate about the power of sex?
  - Now read Genesis 2:18-25. Adam and Eve—the first husband and wife—were naked and unashamed. How is this different than the feelings of a woman who wakes up naked in a strange bed after a night of partying? Why is there such a difference?
- 

**3**

So, what is our aim regarding purity? There may not be black and white instructions outside of abstaining from sex outside of marriage, but there are key guidelines. Read these verses and record what each says about how we should conduct ourselves.

- Romans 12:1-2, 13:14
- Psalm 119:9-10
- 2 Timothy 2:2
- Philippians 4:8



## TAKEAWAY POINT:

Ladies, when we compromise our purity, we rob ourselves of God's highest and best for us. He gave us our sexuality to be enjoyed in the covenant of marriage with a man who is willing and able to love us like Christ. No one else deserves that from us. No one else is worthy of receiving this prized possession.

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**God made you valuable, and anyone who gets to experience intimacy with you needs to be aware of the treasure he's receiving. Settling for anything less will be accepting a knockoff of the holy gift of God.**

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*NOTE: Statistics show that roughly 80% of high school seniors report being sexually active by the time they graduate. If you're in this group and have already experienced sex outside of marriage remember Romans 8:1 that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. He loves you and will forgive and restore you (1 John 1:9). It's possible to begin again with the Lord who removes your sins as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12). See the Bold & Beautiful study on Shame for more.*



# TEAM TIME

**Now it's time to come back together and discuss the topic of godly purity.**

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In a group setting, there are women who have both kept and released their virginity. Be mindful of the fact that God loves and treasures each of you, and that nothing of the past can change that. Work together, knowing you are on the same team—spiritually and literally—and help each other get to a place of wisdom, courage and peace regarding purity.

## ACTIVITY:

- 1** Opening up a dialog about purity. Discuss what the word *purity* means to you, where you get your standards for it and how diligent you are at sticking to those standards.
- 2** Now, using a flip chart or white board, write three headings at the top: *Physically*, *Emotionally* and *Spiritually*. Under each heading, list the ways purity is beneficial in those areas of your lives.
  - Now, do the same thing listing the ways compromising purity is harmful in each area.
  - Based on this exercise and the Scriptures you've read, discuss why God instructs us to live lives of purity.
- 3** Create a list of ways women—specifically female athletes—can demonstrate purity in their lives. Include things like dress, speech, lifestyle, etc. (Keep in mind that this is not a legalistic set of rules, but a way to get a mental picture of a godly woman who walks in purity.)
- 4** It's time to get real and vulnerable. If you have a large group, consider breaking into smaller groups of three or four. In each group, allow each woman to share any personal struggles in the area of purity. As she shares, respond to her by using Scripture reminding her of God's Truth regarding forgiveness, grace, love, restoration, etc.

**Return to your group and discuss any breakthroughs that were made. Finish with the question, "What is God saying and how will you respond?"**



# WORK IT OUT

**Your assignment this week is to help each other walk in purity and to make it part of your team atmosphere. Choose one or more of the following activities to do between now and your next study.**

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**1** As a team, create a purity agreement that all members can sign. Write a statement or contract outlining what standards you will uphold and specifically how you will live them out.

**2** Commit to fasting from sexually impure media and pop culture for the week and then discuss among the team how this affected you.

**3** Memorize one of the verses from this study and recite it to each other throughout the week.

**4** Read through Song of Solomon and discuss it together. Use trusted resources to help you.

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## RALLY CRY:

Once you have your plan of action, couple it with this week's Bold and Beautiful Rally Cry. As a team, this will be your power phrase for the week. Repeat it when lies come to your mind; write it on your athletic tape; say it to each other; and remember the verse behind it.

**“STAY PURE!”**

**1 TIMOTHY 4:12**





**BOLD  
+  
BEAUTIFUL**

# ASHAMED NO MORE

SESSION 8: SHAME

## KEY VERSE:

**“Those who look to Him are radiant with joy; their faces will never be ashamed.”**

**Psalm 34:5**

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## INTRO:

*I'm not good enough...I've messed up too much...If people only knew what I've done and who I am inside...I sin every day, so God couldn't possibly love me...I'm not worthy of Him or His forgiveness...I'm nothing but garbage...No one has ever or could ever love me because I'm not worth it.*

Oh, the lies that the enemy puts in our heads. At one point or another, we all experience thoughts like these and feel worthless and no good. And if we think about them long enough, we'll start to believe they're true—that we're nothing but sin-stained rejects who aren't fit to enter into the presence of God.

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**But ladies, it's not true. We are worthy. Not because of anything we've done or not done, but simply because God loves us like crazy. And nothing we've ever done or could do would make Him love us less. In His eyes, we have nothing to be ashamed of—and His are the eyes that matter.**

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**1** How much shame do you carry in your heart?

**3** Do you believe God loves you even so, or do you think He looks at you with disgust and disapproval? Why?

**2** What are you ashamed of?



# THINK IT THROUGH

Everyone experiences guilt once in a while. When we do something we know we shouldn't, we get a pang of remorse and know that we were wrong and deserve consequences for our actions. Guilt is normal, and even a little necessary to helping us learn the difference between right and wrong.

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**But then there is guilt's ugly companion shame, which is a whole different animal. In fact, shame can make guilt look like a guppy in a shark tank.**

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The difference between the two is that while guilt says, "I *did* something wrong," shame says, "I *am* something wrong." Guilt addresses the sin, but shame attacks the sinner. And when we let shame take root in our hearts and make us believe the lie that we're somehow worthless because of what we've done or experienced, we'll start behaving accordingly. We'll either give up and behave like we're worthless, or we'll enslave ourselves to becoming perfect to make up for our lack. And neither is beneficial.

For example, an athlete who deals with deep-rooted shame and believes she is innately wrong as a creation may work supremely hard at her sport as a way of regaining her worth as a woman. She won't find life-giving joy in her pursuit, but will, instead, feel like it's the only way she can make up for what she lacks on her own. Any mistakes she makes will be devastating, as they will further derail her from finding her worth, and will only affirm the lie she believes that she's no good.

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**It's a painful, life-sucking and unnecessary way to live, and it will lead to physical, mental and emotional damage. It also will create a chasm between the athlete and God, as she will believe He couldn't love her as she is and that she's not worthy of Him in any way.**



**1** How much do you identify with the thoughts and emotions of shame?

**3** To what degree has shame kept you from drawing close to God?

**2** How much does shame drive your behavior? What things do you do or don't do because you struggle with feeling worthless and ashamed?

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While shame is most visible when we experience sin or shortcoming, it rarely starts with the incident itself. Yes, our sins can cause shame, but the problem is often rooted in something we experienced as children such as rejection, abuse, trauma, physical limitations, neglect or family dysfunction.

Any of those and many other situations can make us feel and believe that we are lesser—tainted, stained, different—or that we are, ourselves, nothing but mistakes. And, oh, this is so painful. We long to be good enough but know we never will be. We think if we can just do X, Y or Z that our shame will be gone, but it never goes away.

The thing about shame is that, unlike other wounds, it doesn't heal on its own with time. It just stays buried inside us waiting to manifest itself when stirred by circumstance. An angry coach berates us, and we immediately feel the same shame we felt when our mom said we were ugly, stupid or fat. We miss a last-second shot and automatically feel the sting of our dad's disappointment in our failures years ago. We find ourselves in sexual sin and immediately remember the permanent judgment exacted on others who had done the same by Christians who had forgotten God's forgiveness and mercy.

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**Thoughts and beliefs like that are some of our worst enemies. They'll separate us from God and keep us from ever experiencing His love, joy, forgiveness, peace and freedom. They'll keep us enslaved to perfectionism, sin, isolation, addiction, anxiety and depression for as long as we let them. But there is one thing they can't withstand: God's Truth.**

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# THE WORD

**The darkness of shame has no place in the light of God's Truth. None. Once we start believing what He says about us and letting it displace the lies that have been stealing our identity, shame will be forced out and rejoicing will be ushered in.**

---

Along with it will come peace, gratitude and the courage to love and be loved just as we are. We'll know that God created us in His image and that we are every bit as included in His promises and salvation as the next girl if we receive it through Jesus.

The way to displace shame in our hearts and begin living in freedom is to shift our focus. Instead of dwelling on our past and

what we've done (or has been done to us), we begin focusing on God's Truth, which tells of His solution to our sin and His immeasurable love for us. Reading His Word reminds us that our past sins no longer exist and that regardless of where we've been or what we've been through, His love for us never falters.

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**1** Read the following verses and record how each relates to the battle against shame from past sins: Micah 7:19; 1 John 1:9; Romans 8:1; Psalm 103:12; Titus 2:14; John 8:2-11.

**2** Because our shame sometimes results from actions taken against us, we can turn to His Word and find that He prizes us unlike any human ever could and wants to restore us. Take a look at these verses and record how they apply to the battle against shame from people and circumstance: Psalm 27:10; Jeremiah 30:17; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Genesis 16; Romans 8:31-39.

## TAKEAWAY POINT:

Ladies, regardless of where we've been or what we've done, we aren't despised by God. To believe so is to deny who He created us to be. We are loved. We are forgiven. We are redeemed by the blood of Jesus, who loved us so much that He went to the cross for us. He wants us. He cares for us. He is our God. Let go of your shame and let His Truth and love lead you to freedom.



# TEAM TIME

**Come back together as a team and settle in to do some bonding over shared wounds and a shared redemption.**

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## ACTIVITY:

**1** Open a discussion about shame in general. Using a flip chart or white board, write a description of shame. What are its characteristics? What does it look like in someone who carries it around.

- Make another list of the negative effects of shame. What does it do inside us? How does it separate us from God? What does it do to our relationships, lifestyle, mentality, etc.?

**2** Now discuss how shame affects a team dynamic. How is a team negatively affected by the shame in its athletes?

**3** On the other hand, a team filled with women who are free from shame and thriving in God's Truth and love will look completely different. First, discuss what a woman who is free from shame looks like and how she acts and thinks.

- Now, do the same for a team that is free from shame. What does that team dynamic look like and what are the results?

**4** Now it's time to get a little personal. Because shame is so rampant in the world, there are unquestionably women on your team and in your group who wrestle with shame every day. Maybe you all do.

If you have a large group, break into groups of three or four and, if you are willing, share your areas of shame and how they are affecting you. *(If you aren't ready to share your struggles, it's understandable. But let a trusted teammate know that you are wrestling and ask her to pray for you. Then make a plan of action for confronting the issue and let her know about it.)*

- As each teammate shares, respond by offering words from Scripture. What does God say about her shame and His desires for her freedom from it?

**5** Come back together and discuss any breakthroughs. Finish with prayer and the question: "What's God saying, and how will you respond?"



# WORK IT OUT

**This week, your team's mission is to help each other as you break free from the shame in your hearts. Choose one (or more) of the following activities to do as a team between now and your next meeting:**

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**1** Post related Scripture verses in your lockers and on your locker room mirrors.

**3** Break into partners and pray with each other every day regarding liberation from areas of shame and finding freedom in Christ.

**2** Text, Tweet, Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram encouraging verses to each other daily. (Almost any social media site will work.)

**4** Ask a trusted older woman (e.g. a Christian coach) to serve as a guest speaker and talk to your team about shame and how to overcome it through Christ.

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## RALLY CRY:

Once you have your plan of action, couple it with this week's Bold and Beautiful Rally Cry. As a team, this will be your power phrase for the week. Repeat it when lies come to your mind; write it on your athletic tape; say it to each other; and remember the verse behind it.

**“NOT ASHAMED!”**

**PSALM 34:5**





**BOLD  
+  
BEAUTIFUL**

# PLEASED TO PLEASE

SESSION 9: PEOPLE PLEASING

## KEY VERSE:

**“For am I now trying to win the favor of people, or God? Or am I striving to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a slave of Christ.”**

**Galatians 1:10**

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## INTRO:

Their eyes are everywhere, watching every move you make. They praise, ridicule, analyze, scrutinize and cast judgment after judgment, and their words can inflict wounds so deep they'll need years to heal.

Fans, critics, scouts and media. Parents, friends, peers and rivals. They all have something to say, and some of their voices carry tremendous weight in our lives. And whether we realize it or not, we may be letting their opinions dictate how we live our lives and approach our sports.

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**That's why it's so important that we learn to shift our focus to the only audience that should have that kind of authority over us: our loving, grace-filled Heavenly Father.**

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Who are your loudest critics,  
and how do their words and  
opinions affect you?



# THINK IT THROUGH

The desire to please others has a bad reputation, but it isn't entirely bad. It's fun to watch others delight in us and to contribute to their happiness. It's selfless to put others before ourselves and to seek their good above our own (Philippians 2:3). And it puts Christ on display when we love and serve out of a humble heart. It's part of living for Him.

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**The problem, however, arises when we aren't doing these things out of a love for Christ, but rather out of an effort to earn the approval of others—the acceptance we think will make us feel valuable and worthwhile.**

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**1** Whose approval do you desire most in your life?

**3** When you take to the court or field, who are you trying to impress? Why?

**2** In what ways do you try to earn approval?

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Maybe you've heard about the informal survey conducted by two former coaches who asked hundreds of college athletes to name their worst memory from playing sports as kids. Out of all those they surveyed, the most prevalent answer was this: the post-game car ride home with their parents.\* Why? Because that was when the scrutiny from Mom and Dad would begin and the kids would learn that they hadn't measured up—that they weren't good enough.

It's not surprising that this is such a bad memory for most athletes. Kids gain confidence and self-esteem from words of

affirmation offered by parents and influential authority figures. When those words are absent or are replaced by negative, derogatory comments, the child becomes insecure and believes she is worthless and must "do better" to earn the missing approval. She will then project this idea onto God and believe that He also, as her Father, must be pleased and that she has to earn His approval—that she doesn't measure up for Him as she is.

\*Henson, Steve. "What Makes A Nightmare Sports Parent -- And What Makes A Great One." 15 Feb. 2012. Web. <http://www.thepostgame.com/blog/more-family-fun/201202/what-makes-nightmare-sports-parent>, Survey by Bruce Barron and Rob Miller of Proactive Coaching LLC.



**1** In what ways did you receive validation and acceptance from your parents and other influential figures in your life as a child? In what ways was it withheld from you?

**3** How does this affect your relationship with God?

**2** If you were standing face-to-face with those influential people right now, what words of affirmation would you most want to hear from them?

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**If you're in this situation right now, it's time you were released from that exhausting pursuit. Because the truth is that you don't have to please a single person in the world to attain the validation you crave, and you most definitely don't have to do anything to earn God's love. You already have all the acceptance and validation you could ever want; you just have to own it.**

---

According to God's Word, it's entirely possible to be free from the constant drive to please others. The Bible is filled with evidence of His love for us, which we already have simply because He chooses to give it to us. We can't earn it, and we'll never deserve it. All we can do is thank Him for it and accept His free, unconditional love, which manifested clearly on the cross when Jesus died for us.

You are part of that. You are God's creation, and He wants to help you see and believe

that He's already pleased with you. Not because of any achievement you earned, but simply because He made you and called you good. Better yet, He called you wonderful (Psalm 139). No amount of points scored, trophies earned or records set will increase or decrease your standing in His sight. Now, how many of the people you're trying to please can offer the same kind of love? (Hint: The answer is none.)

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**Not one person, regardless of how much he or she loves you, can offer the same kind of unchanging, unrelenting, totally fulfilling kind of love that is found in the Lord.**



# THE WORD

**The first step in finding release from pleasing people is to recognize God's love for you. Take a look at these verses and record what each says about God's love and what it means for you:**

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**1** Read these verses and record what each says about God's love and what it means for you: Galatians 1:10; Colossians 3:23-24; Matthew 6:1-4.

**2** Once you're armed with an assurance of His love (or at least working toward that total assurance), it's time to let God's Truth destroy your people-pleasing habits. Read these verses and record what God is saying to you about people-pleasing: Galatians 1:10; Colossians 3:23-24; Matthew 6:1-4.

**3** Finally, let's revisit the story we studied earlier about the Apostle Paul. His may be the ultimate anti-people-pleasing testimony in the Bible. **Stop and read Philippians 3:4-11.**

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Paul had everything. He had lineage, power, knowledge and status—everything that would be useful in pleasing and impressing people. But he found that it was worth nothing. Once he found Jesus, He realized that every impressive fact about him was garbage compared to knowing Jesus—the One who loved him and had called him to something greater: a relationship with Him.

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## TAKEAWAY POINT:

Ladies, if you've been a people-pleaser and have tried to win acceptance, approval and love by earning and achieving to appease others, it is very likely that you're trying to use the same approach with God. But that's not how God operates. He gives us His love first—before we've earned it—and then lets us obey Him freely out of the overflow of that unconditional love. It's a miracle called grace, and along with love, it is the only real antidote to the desperation of pleasing others.



# TEAM TIME

**Time to huddle up. And in a group this setting, you can be 100% sure you'll find a number of women who struggle with this issue. But it's once again time to join forces and take on the lies together in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

---

## ACTIVITY:

- 1** Using a white board or flip chart, make a list of your most common target audiences (i.e. Who are you trying to please?).
- 2** Discuss the differences between these audiences and God. Make a chart and record how they differ in the areas of love, grace, standards, power and any others you can think of.
- 3** Have members of the group read these three verses aloud and then discuss what each says about God's love and grace and how the Truth frees us from trying to earn His approval.
  - Ephesians 2:8-9
  - Romans 5:8
  - John 1:12
- 4** Finish by posing the question, "What is God saying to me, and how will I respond?"



# WORK IT OUT

**This week, your team's mission is to practice shifting your focus from pleasing people to resting in God's love and grace. This lesson will do no good unless you put a plan in place to work it into your lives. Choose one (or more) of the following activities to do as a team between now and your next meeting:**

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**1** Revisit the question on standing in front of your influential person and considering what words would you want to hear from them.

As a team, share your answers with each other, then work together throughout the week to find Scripture verses that show these words or similar ones being spoken to us from God. (e.g. If a teammate wants to hear her parents say, "You're good enough," you could point her to Romans 14:18.) Do this for each member of your group so that she has a list of verses.

**2** Using strips of paper, write down the names of people or groups whose approval you are trying to earn in sports or other areas of your life. Get together as a team and put the pieces of paper in an old shoebox. Seal the box and put it somewhere in your locker room to serve as a reminder that you have chosen to seek God's approval instead of theirs.

**3** Memorize Romans 8:38-39 and Galatians 1:10 and quote them to each other daily.

**4** Make team bracelets that remind you of God and His unconditional love.

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## RALLY CRY:

Once you have your plan of action, couple it with this week's Bold and Beautiful Rally Cry. As a team, this will be your power phrase for the week. Repeat it when lies come to your mind; write it on your athletic tape; say it to each other; and remember the verse behind it.

**"AUDIENCE OF ONE!"**

**GALATIANS 1:10**





# BOLD + BEAUTIFUL

# LET IT GO

SESSION 10: CONTROL

## KEY VERSE:

**“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; think about Him in all your ways, and He will guide you on the right path.”**

**Proverbs 3:5-6**

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## INTRO:

We love to have things our way, don't we? It's part of our makeup as women. We want a plan for just about everything from our schedules to our diets to our relationships. And if something throws off a plan we've created, it can throw us into fits.

But in sports, there is so much beyond our control. Injuries, coaching changes, game schedules—even the weather. All of these and an endless list of other variables can insert themselves into our perfect plans and destroy our flawlessly controlled agenda. And if we've been clinging to it for security, comfort, stability or in an attempt to nullify our fears, we will be left in a panic, grasping for detrimental coping mechanisms that will help us feel like we're back in the driver's seat. Surely there has to be a better way.

---

**1** On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you like to be in control?

**2** How do you react when unexpected situations or events throw off your plans?

**3** Do you have a favorite coping mechanism for dealing with the anxiety of feeling out of control? (Common choices include anything from excessive exercise to alcohol to food restriction/addiction, excessive sleep, shopping, smoking or escaping into technology or social media.)



# THINK IT THROUGH

As athletes, you have a lot going on. You have classes, homework, practices, games, travel, social activities, community service and (hopefully) rest. And, as Christians, you also have church, Bible studies and daily routines for growing in your relationship with Jesus. All of this combined can lead to a ton of stress and anxiety. There's so much riding on everything (at least it feels that way) that you don't feel like you can afford to slip up in any area. If you do, you'll be a failure, and, obviously, that can't happen.

So you turn to control. It's the only way to stay afloat. If you can keep everything under your strict authority, you might just make it. But it won't be easy. You'll have to make sure you stay on top of your game at all times and think through every possible scenario that could go wrong and make a plan to avoid it.

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**That kind of lifestyle is almost more stress-inducing than the contributing factors! But how many of us feel so much pressure to be winners in every area that we live this kind of scenario every day?**

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1  
What aspects of your life are you working hard to control?

2  
How much anxiety are you experiencing from trying to stay in control at all times?

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Just in case you don't recognize some of your own controlling tactics, here are a few examples.

- Unmovable schedule
- Little-to-no social activity
- Uncommonly rigid diet and exercise
- Frequent manipulation of people and situations
- A tendency to lie to maintain control



**Now, this doesn't mean you can't have a disciplined lifestyle with good boundaries. We all need to have good habits as part of a healthy, God-honoring existence, and being a student-athlete involves having proper priorities.**

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But when our need for control starts to crowd out God's plan, our relationships, our health and our peace, we have an issue that needs to be confronted. Otherwise, we risk losing much more than we anticipated when the truth comes out: that we never had control to begin with.

Really, how much power do we actually have to control the world around us? Yes, we can make decisions on our own and determine where we go and what we do, but unless we live in a science experiment in which everything is controlled around us, we have zero capability to manage the forces outside our own bodies. (By the way, we don't have total control over what happens

inside our bodies, either.) We're really at the mercy of powers much bigger than we are.

Thank God.

It can sound scary to think about the idea of not really being in control of anything, but not if we know Who is. If we really know the nature and power of the God who guides us, protects us and helps us, we will be able to keep our peace even when things start moving in a direction we don't like. Why? Because we'll know that His Word says things like He'll never leave us (Hebrews 13:5) and that He causes all things to work for our good (Romans 8:28).

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**That's not to say bad or unexpected things won't happen. Jesus Himself told us that we would experience trouble in this world (John 16:33). But in that same breath, He also told us to take heart because He had overcome it.**

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Ladies, we have nothing to fear by surrendering our right to control to God. In fact, we have everything to gain. Why would we let ourselves get so entangled in our desires for control that we lose everything Jesus died to give us? His peace. His joy. His freedom. His love. His compassion for others. All of those will be limited if we commit to controlling everything and keeping it our way. Will we really sacrifice all of those wonderful, life-giving things because we're scared? Because we're afraid to trust anyone other than ourselves? It's not worth it. Especially when we never really have control at all.

Instead, let's make choices to daily surrender to the powerful, merciful, grace-filled Father we can trust with our lives and our eternity.



# THE WORD

**Let's take a look at some verses that will help us understand control and how God wants us to handle our desire for it.**

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## KEY VERSES:

Read the following verses and record how they apply to our lust for control and God's desire for us to trust and surrender to Him:

- John 16:33
  - Matthew 6:25-34
  - Psalm 46:10
  - Jeremiah 29:11
  - Romans 8:28
  - Proverbs 16:9
  - James 4:10
  - Matthew 11:29
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## TAKEAWAY POINT:

Ladies, we don't have to control everything. Yes, we may want to, but God never asked us to. In fact, He told us to do quite the opposite by surrendering to Him and trusting. Why? Because He knows we aren't Him. We don't have the ability to control things, and all of our wishing, hoping and praying for that kind of power will never make it happen. Control isn't an option for us. We're never going to be God, and it's doubtful that we'd want to be.

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**The best we can do is the best we can do. Follow God's Word and do everything for His glory and then trust Him with the results, realizing that, whether we like them or not, they will work for our good in the end (Romans 8:28). Sound easier said than done? It is. But it's worth it for the sake of knowing Him and knowing His peace.**



# TEAM TIME

**It's time to come back together and discuss the battle for control. But before you do, recognize that if you do struggle with control, you may be experiencing a desire not to tell anyone about it because you're afraid they'll make you do something to change.**

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## ACTIVITY:

Well, first, no one will make you do anything (i.e. control you). If you choose to surrender an area of struggle to the Lord, it needs to be out of obedience to Him and a desire to embrace His Lordship in your life. Don't let your fears stop you from following the Holy Spirit as He guides you into freedom. Be brave and confess what needs to be confessed!

**1** Start with a general topic. Open a discussion about control—what it looks like, why we feel like we need it and why it's an obstacle to a relationship with Christ.

- What are some instances in the Bible that illustrate a man or woman's desire to control and the consequences it brought?

**2** Using a flip chart or white board, list the most common areas over which you as student-athletes try to maintain control.

- In what ways do you pursue control in each area?
- How does it help and/or hinder you?

**3** It's important to recognize that not all schedules and rules are part of an over-controlling personality, but they certainly can be. Discuss some indications that a normal priority has spiraled into a harmful control mechanism.

**4** Now it's time to get vulnerable. (If you have a large group, break into groups of three or four.) Open up a discussion about the depth to which each of you struggles with control. Let every woman share without being interrupted.

- As each teammate shares, respond to her with verses of Scripture that apply to her emotions, thoughts and fears.
- Once each teammate has shared, pause to pray as a group and confess your desires for control to the Lord. Ask Him for the ability to trust and surrender to Him and for the wisdom to know how to operate without excessive control.

**5** Return to the group and discuss any breakthroughs that were made and finish by answering the question, "What is God saying to you, and how will you respond?"



# WORK IT OUT

**Your assignment for the week is to band together to help each other grow in the ability to live free of excessive control. Choose one or more of the following activities to carry out throughout the week and combine it with the B&B Rally Cry to help you remain submitted to God in every area.**

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**1** Write a daily prayer of surrender to God that each teammate can pray every morning before starting her day.

**2** Have each teammate create a formal letter of resignation from her role as queen and ruler of her own world. Address it to God as the true Authority, and post them in your lockers.

**3** If you are musically inclined, get creative with the lyrics to the Disney song “Let It Go” and make your own version that helps you all remember who and whose your are.

**4** Come up with your own!

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## RALLY CRY:

Once you have your plan of action, couple it with this week’s Bold and Beautiful Rally Cry. As a team, this will be your power phrase for the week. Repeat it when lies come to your mind; write it on your athletic tape; say it to each other; and remember the verse behind it.

**“LET IT GO!”**

**PROVERBS 3:5-6**





**BOLD  
+  
BEAUTIFUL**

# WRAP UP

BOLD + BEAUTIFUL

**Congratulations, Bold and Beautiful women! You've pressed in and worked hard for 10 weeks, and you've finally completed your journey. Hopefully the spiritual lessons you've covered have facilitated a deeper understanding of who you are in Christ and have enabled you to see more clearly how He designed you to be Bold and Beautiful on and off the field and court.**

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## WHAT'S NEXT:

The last thing you want to do is to forget everything you learned and go back to life as it was before the study. The race is just beginning! To keep growing in your Christian journey, we encourage you to get involved in the following:

- A discipleship relationship with a trusted, mature Christian friend, mentor or teammate.
  - A Bible-believing church.
  - An FCA Huddle group. To find a Huddle near you, visit [FCA.org](http://FCA.org) or contact a local staff person.
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In order to work these Truths into our hearts and lives, we need the help of others who are already doing what we want to do—people who can model it for us and show us how to live and, in turn, how to someday be used to make disciples ourselves.

That's the whole point, ladies. You may have thought you were doing this study just for your

own benefit, but you have no idea how many lives your commitment to Jesus will actually change. You will be able to come alongside other women who are facing issues you battled in this study and tell them about how Jesus came to your rescue. You'll be able to help them see Truth for themselves and learn to walk in His joy and freedom.

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**With that, we'll wrap things up. Know that we love each of you even if we don't know you, and it's our privilege to pray for you as you move beyond the Bold and Beautiful study into a Bold and Beautiful life in Christ.**

