



Key Text: Choose one of the texts from Wednesday's portion of the lesson. Write it here and memorize it this week.

>> _____

1

Sunday
HERE'S WHAT I THINK

- >> It's Friday afternoon and you and some of your good friends have come together to play some games. Someone suggests football (either American football or soccer), and everyone agrees. As the game goes on, you find yourself becoming more and more caught up in the desire to win. Not just to win, but to annihilate the opposing team. Those people who were once such good friends have become annoying in their responses to your taunting, and every time you score, the other team has answers. What started out as a friendly game has become a battle, with each side beginning to despise the other.
- >> How will your actions affect your friendships? Is the cost of such competition worth the risk? Is there another way to play?
- >> Log on to www.guidemagazine.org/rtf to post your responses. Be up-front and honest. Say what you think.

start

THE WORST IN THE BEST OF US

(What connection do you think the following illustration has with the Bible texts on the other page?)

In the mid- to late 1980s in American basketball there was a great rivalry between the Boston Celtics and the Los Angeles Lakers. This was definitely the "pre-Shaq" Lakers. In fact, the player that was probably seen as the best of the Lakers at that time was a man everyone called "Magic." Magic Johnson played to the best of his ability, rarely if ever argued with the referees, and always had a smile on his face. However, there was no one who wanted to win more than Magic. He was fierce when it came to his own abilities and played the game to a level of excellence that would raise the level of play of everyone on the court. At this point in time we did not know of his indiscretions off the court, which would ultimately lead to the end of his career. When I was watching Magic Johnson play, I wanted to emulate him on the court. I wanted to play hard, and to help my team win, but I also wanted the smile.

Through the years Lakers fans were able to be taught what it meant to compete with a positive attitude. We saw what it meant to love the game, and to not let the other team decide how we were going to act. It was a wonderful lesson in excellence in competition and sportsmanship. It was the reason many young people got involved in competitive sports.

Unfortunately, there are very few of those good examples for us to look to when we speak of competition. It seems that competition has the ability to bring out the best or the worst in us. Competition can call out of us excellent, kingdom qualities that we have let the Holy Spirit work into us; or it can bring out qualities that are clearly inspired by the other kingdom. Perhaps competition says less about the game, and more about the competitors.

2

Monday
WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO SAY?

Different people, different opinions. Some of the quotations below represent the views of true kingdom citizens; others may not. Can you tell the difference? How do these statements compare with what God is saying in His word? After reviewing the texts in the God says . . . portion of the lesson, write a statement that captures your belief. Be prepared to quote yourself at Sabbath School.

- >> "Do not hold the delusion that your advancement is accomplished by crushing others."—*Marcus Tullius Cicero, 1st-century B.C. Roman statesman, orator, and author.*
- >> "Focus on competition has always been a formula for mediocrity."—*Daniel Burrus, current U.S. futurist.*
- >> "Forget your opponents; always play against par."—*Sam Snead, 20th-century U.S. golfer.*
- >> "Thank God for competition. When our competitors upset our plans or outdo our designs, they open infinite possibilities of our own work to us."—*Gil Atkinson, 19th-century U.S. business inventor of automatic sprinklers.*
- >> "Even in this age of passion for money getting, when competition is so sharp and methods are so unscrupulous, it is still widely acknowledged that, for a young [person] starting in life, integrity, diligence, temperance, purity, and thrift constitute a better capital than any amount of mere money."—*Ellen G. White, 19th-century inspired author and church cofounder.*

Write your own quotation.
What I say is . . .

>> _____





Tuesday
SO WHAT?

- >> Competition is a fact of life. So what does this mean for the Christian? It means you have a decision to make regarding how, if, or when you are going to compete. There are these things in life that guide us, and they are called "priorities." Each of us must decide what our guiding priorities are.
- >> For instance, if the highest priority you have is to win, then competition becomes a challenge to be better than everyone else. If your highest priority is to win no matter what the cost, this could mean hurting others, cheating, and other ill-advised activities.
- >> However, does it have to be negative? Some believe that you can choose how to compete, and through this process you can grow in character. They believe that competition can become an extremely positive influence in our lives, rather than a destructive one. However, this takes a desire to make good choices, and the will to not be caught up in the emotional aspect of competition which is very difficult to achieve. That means it takes the power of the Holy Spirit to help us overcome our natural human tendency to want to win at any cost.
- >> Only God can give us a kingdom perspective on any given day, to help us understand where this game, this test, this score, really is in the grand scheme of things. Are they more important than relationships? Are they more important than being the face of God to someone you are competing against? Are they more important than winning someone for Christ and His kingdom? That is the real "game" we are involved in on this earth. The greatest part is, there is a position just for all of us!



Thursday
WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ME?

- >> We have to be students of the Bible and of the principles that Christ put forward while He was here on earth. The more we study Christ, the more we realize that the kingdom of God is not about status, position, winning, or even getting ahead. Rather, His kingdom is about the willingness to see others as equals, regardless of their talents, and to create a cooperative effort with those with whom we come in contact.
- >> Christ is asking you to see everyone, even those on the other side of the court or field, as a brother or a sister. Play hard, to the best of your ability, but always keeping a perspective of Christ's will for you and His kingdom close to your heart.



Wednesday
GOD SAYS . . .

- >> **Proverbs 19:11 (NIV)**
"A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense."
- >> **James 1:19, 20 (NIV)**
"My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."
- >> **Ephesians 6:11-17 (NIV)**
"Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
- >> **Isaiah 54:15-17 (NIV)**
"If anyone does attack you, it will not be my doing; whoever attacks you will surrender to you. See, it is I who created the blacksmith who fans the coals into flame and forges a weapon fit for its work. And it is I who have created the destroyer to work havoc; no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me," declares the Lord."
- >> **1 Corinthians 10:23 (NIV)**
"Everything is permissible"—but not everything is beneficial. 'Everything is permissible'—but not everything is constructive."
- >> **Colossians 3:17 (TEV)**
"Everything you do or say, then, should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus."
- >> **Ecclesiastes 9:10 (NIV)**
"Whatever work your hand finds to do, do it with all your might."



Friday
HOW DOES IT WORK?

>> What is the best way to look at this competition thing? Answer the following questions in the space provided and see if you can come up with some answers yourself.

1. How competitive do you think you are? Put an X on the line where you think you are.
Very competitive _____ Not competitive
2. How do you feel when you lose?
Very unhappy _____ OK with it
3. What do you think losing says about you as a person?

4. Do you think Jesus still loves you when you lose? Yes or No?

5. Would you call yourself a good winner? Yes or No?
6. Would you call yourself a good loser? Yes or No?
7. What is more important to you: have fun or win?
Have fun _____ Win
8. Have you ever been told not to take a particular competitive situation so seriously? Yes or No? What was that situation?

9. How could you have handled the situation better?

10. How do you think you would act if you were competing against Christ?

