



Basketball is a simple game. On one end, you're tasked with putting a round ball through a circular hoop ten feet off the floor. On the other end, you're trying to prevent your opponent from doing the same. The game plays with many challenges along the way much like life itself.

WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

1ST QUARTER - THE GAME PLAN

A coach always has a plan on how to play and win a game. First, he looks at his team to see how they are playing. Next he considers the opposing team with their strengths and weaknesses. Then after looking at all the aspects of the game, he comes up with a plan. God has done the very same thing. He has looked at us very closely and everything we face in life then came up with a plan. He wants us on His team, to follow His game plan, and to win by knowing, loving, and enjoying Him forever.

"These are the commands, decrees, and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe ... so that you, your children, and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all His decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life." Deuteronomy 6:1-2

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your mind." Matthew 22:37

"This is eternal life: that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ." John 17:3

Time Out: God is personally and deeply concerned about you. Are you convinced you have eternal life? If not, you need another game plan.

2ND QUARTER - CAN'T DO IT ALONE

Basketball is a team game, but many players try to win games all on their own. Their pride and selfishness hurt them and their team. They don't become better basketball players and they don't win games. The head coach has to teach all the players how to play the game and follow the game plan.

It's the same thing in life. People try to win in life and reach God in their own efforts by going to church or doing good things. But our good efforts do not follow or measure up to God's Plan. Only God has a strategy to overcome our weaknesses and limitations. And the big problem we face is the problem of sin.

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23

"Your sins have separated you from God." Isaiah 59:2

"The wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23

Time Out: You may think you're winning, but you are really losing. And to lose the game of life means death, separated from God and everything that is good.

HALF-TIME - SO, HOW'S IT GOING?

The score at half-time doesn't always show who will win the game. When you are losing at half-time, you have two choices. You can just give up, or you can listen to the coach, adjust your play, and then go out to win. How are you going to choose?



3RD QUARTER - THE SUBSTITUTE

During any game, things can go wrong. A player may be shooting or passing badly. The team on the court might not be working together as a unit. When those things start to go wrong the head coach needs to bring in a substitute to help. He wants to put in the right substitute at the right time.

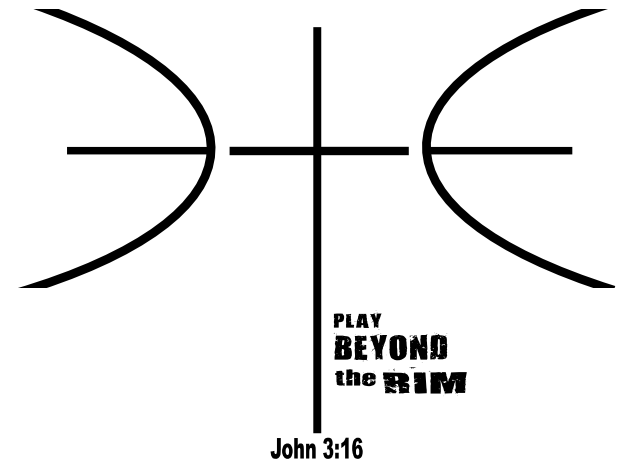
God did the exact same thing for us. We were losing, and God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, the perfect substitute to take our place. Through His death on the cross Jesus became our substitute, and through His resurrection won the victory for us, and all mankind.

"While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Roman 5:8

"He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life so that we would be justified and be acceptable to God." Romans 4:25

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6

Time Out: God cared about us and our situation so much He sent His Son Jesus to die in our place so that we could win in life and in the life to come.



PLAY
BEYOND
the RIM

John 3:16

4TH QUARTER - CRUNCH TIME

A good head coach has a game plan that goes all the way to the final second and the very last shot. The expert player needs to do more than just know the coach's game plan. The smart player has to trust the coach completely and follow his plan even when the whole thing seems impossible and doesn't make any sense.

So, are you going to trust God's Game Plan? Will you decide to follow His Plan, believing in what Jesus did on the cross?

"To all who received Him, to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become the children of God." John 1:12

"For it is by grace you are saved through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no man can boast." Ephesians 2:8,9

Time Out: Are you willing to trust God and His Son completely by faith and turn from your sin which keeps you from being a winner?

GAME'S OVER - THE FINAL SCORE

There it is. Every sport team needs a good head coach to help them win the game. The plain fact is we are going to lose in the game of life if we don't follow the Head Coach's game plan.

Here is a simple prayer: "God, I admit I have done wrong things and cannot win at life by myself. I believe that Jesus died on the cross in my place for my sins and rose from the dead. I trust in Him alone as my Saviour and Lord. Thank you for all you have done for me. In Jesus' Name, Amen."

Time Out: If you are trusting God and His Game Plan, you are assured of heaven and victory. This is because of what God has already done for you through His Son Jesus.

PLAY YOUR POSITION

Here are some things God says about us when we put our trust in Him and His Son Jesus:

1. *You are a totally new person in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17*
2. *You have everything you need to live life the way God wants you to live it. 2 Peter 1:3*
3. *You are loved by God totally and unconditionally. Ephesians 1:6*
4. *You are forgiven. 1 John 1:9*
5. *You have eternal life. John 5:24*
6. *You are a witness of what God can do in people's lives. Acts 1:8*
7. *You have God's Holy Spirit living in you. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20*

TRAINING KEEPS YOU FIT

1. Dedicate yourself to being the kind of person God wants you to be. *"...godliness is profitable for all things, holding the promise for this life and for the life to come." 1 Timothy 4:8*
2. Obey God's commands. *"...teaching them to obey all I have commanded you..." Matthew 28:20*
3. Read God's Word, the Bible. *"...they examined the Scriptures every day..." Acts 17:11*
4. Learn how to pray and talk to God. *"...give us this day our daily bread" Matthew 6:11*
5. Tell people about what has happened to you. It's the best news in the whole world. *"...they never stopped proclaiming the good news of Jesus." Acts 5:42*
6. Spend time with people who have put their trust in God. *"...Encourage one another daily." Hebrews 3:13*

WELCOME TO THE TEAM!



If you would like to know more about meeting and knowing the Head Coach, please contact the address below:



Special thanks to Coach Todd James for the wordage and sharing this with HOOPZONE Basketball!