

PICKLEBALL

**SPIRITUAL
WORKOUT**
S E R I E S



FAITH
in the
KITCHEN



Welcome to
SportsLife Pickleball

FAITH in the KITCHEN

This devotional experience is built for pickleball coaches, athletes, and leaders who want to follow Jesus with the same intensity, discipline, and community that drives their training and competing.

In pickleball, every practice is designed to push your limits and test your capacity. The court exposes weakness, tests strength, and forges transformation. The training demands standards. What if your faith had the same intention and intensity as your training?



Table of Contents

It's Time To Train Your Soul	page 2
Faith In The Kitchen	page 3
12 Practice Plans	
#1 Who You Are > What You Win	page 6
#2 Prepare For The Storm	page 9
#3 Push Through In Prayer	page 12
#4 Just Show Up	page 15
#5 Train Hard. Live Free.	page 18
#6 Choose Better Over Good	page 21
#7 Eat The Word	page 24
#8 Control The Fire	page 27
#9 Raise The Bar. Reflect Christ.	page 30
#10 The Time Is Now!	page 33
#11 Strength In Solitude	page 36
#12 Slay The Giant	page 39
The Purpose of SportsLife	page 45

IT'S TIME TO TRAIN YOUR SOUL

This devotional is built to train mentally, spiritually, and experientially. It's designed to help you follow Jesus with the same grit, fire, and discipline you bring to the court.

It will help you live your faith “all out” according to the Word of God.

- Not watered down.
- Not culturally adjusted.
- Not performance-based.

Get ready for full-on obedience to Jesus. Discipleship at full weight. Truth lived out every rep, every day, in every role you play.

- We don't scale the Gospel to fit our comfort. We rise to the standard Jesus set.

Let this devotional challenge you to:

- Follow Jesus fully.
- Practice the disciplines faithfully.
- Build spiritual strength daily.



FAITH in the KITCHEN

DEVOTIONAL THEMES

Each devotional falls under one of these training styles:

1. **TECHNIQUE:** *Master the basics.*

Every competitor knows you win with the basics: first touch, placement, positioning, movement, spacing. These are drilled daily because technique beats talent when talent neglects the fundamentals. The TECHNIQUE devotionals will build your spiritual base: core truths like identity in Christ, grace, freedom, discipline, and purpose.

2. **LEGACY:** *Live for something that lasts.*

Every competitor wants to leave a mark, something remembered beyond the wins and losses. Legacy comes from how you play, how you lead, and how you lift others up. The LEGACY devotionals draw from examples of biblical warriors like David, Gideon, Deborah, and Paul, men and women who pressed on and finished strong.

3. **CONDITIONING:** *Build endurance to go the distance.*

Conditioning separates good from great. It's those extra drills and hard games when your lungs burn but you keep going. The CONDITIONING devotionals focus on spiritual disciplines: prayer, worship, fasting, and Bible study. They build endurance, perseverance, and spiritual stamina.

4. **GRIND:** *Forge victorious faith.*

Every player knows the grind – those long, exhausting matches where heart outlasts talent. You dig deep, fight fatigue, and refuse to break. The GRIND devotionals focus on inner battles against pride, fear, anger, temptation, and sin.

Remember: You're not here to play it safe. **Rise to the challenge.**

THE PRACTICE PLAN

This devotional will challenge you to train your soul like you train your body: with purpose and passion.

Each devotional is called a Practice Plan and includes:

TESTIMONY

A short reflection by a coach or athlete.

WARM-UP

Prepare your heart to engage with God's truth by reflecting on the theme of the day.

DRILL

Biblical truth to encourage you in your walk.

PLAY

Reflection questions to help you put your faith in action.

COOL DOWN

A short prayer to take you into your day.

READY?

These devotionals will call you higher.

They'll train your heart to go further, fight harder, and finish stronger – on the court, in the gym, in life, and in your walk with Christ. Now find a quiet place and grab your Bible and journal.

Let's get to work!

TECHNIQUE
LEGACY
CONDITIONING
GRIND



**SPIRITUAL
WORKOUT**
S E R I E S

**12 Practice
Plans**

PRACTICE #1

WHO YOU ARE > WHAT YOU WIN

“I spent most of my career with a selfish heart posture pointed at earthly success and allowed my wins and losses to define me. The Holy Spirit has taught me that my identity is secure in Jesus and that He loves me regardless of whether I win or lose. I no longer need to prove anything to anyone! Because of this transforming truth, I can now compete in freedom and my responses to wins and losses look differently, as I know they don't define me anymore. Praise God.”



Matthew Barlow

@matthewbarlow_17 @

- PPA and MLP Pro
- Top 30 ranked PPA Pro
- PPA Challenger Gold Medalist

WARM-UP

The grind reveals a lot about who you are. You can dominate on the court one day and get humbled the next. Your wins don't define you, but they do expose what drives you.

In pickleball, performance matters, but identity matters more. If your worth rises and falls with your results, you're building on shifting sand. You'll never find peace because you'll always be chasing your next win.

Before you ever step on the court, God wants to remind you that who you are is greater than what you do. In Christ, your name and identity are secure: Son. Daughter. Beloved. Redeemed.

You're not defined by your rating. **You're defined by your Redeemer.**

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me.”

Galatians 2:20

The world says you are what you achieve.

Jesus says you are **who He redeemed**.

If you base your identity on your wins, losses, or ranking, then a single defeat – or a tough season – can break you. But when it's Christ living in you, your security isn't tied to the scoreboard; it's anchored to the cross.

You don't have to prove your worth. Jesus already did. He fought your greatest battle, defeated sin and death, and secured your victory forever. He purchased your peace for eternity and set you free from all condemnation. Your value will never again be tied to your performance. Remember: Your true victory isn't on the court. It's already won in Christ.

So play from confidence, not for it.

Train from victory, not for approval.

Your value is found in who **God says you are**. Not on the court. Not on the scoreboard. In Him.

Jesus already gave the ultimate performance on the cross and then broke out of the grave. He purchased your peace for eternity and set you free from all condemnation. Your value will never again be tied to your performance.

Now go train, compete, and live from a place of peace, security, and victory. Who He says you are is way more important than what you do.

PLAY

Rally with this:

Where have you been trying to earn your worth? What false identity have you carried: athlete, performer, winner, or failure?

Now, take action:

notes

1. Write down one false identity you've believed (e.g., "I'm only as valuable as my record.")
2. Replace it with two truths from God's Word about who you are (e.g., "I'm loved," "I'm chosen," "I'm redeemed").
3. Speak those truths out loud before your next game or write them where you'll see them every day.

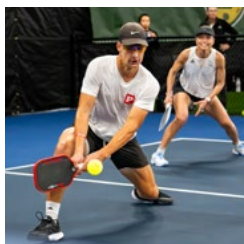
COOL DOWN

“Father, thank You that my worth isn't measured in wins or losses, but that it's measured in Your love. Help me play with that freedom and compete from it. Amen.”

PRACTICE #2

PREPARE FOR THE STORM

“I used to chase certainty – trying to control every part of my life, my calling, and my performance. It only left me anxious. Then I realized God wasn't calling me to certainty. He was calling me to trust Him. Faith is letting go of control and trusting His plan, even when I can't see where He is leading. **”**



Elliott Schupp

@elliott_schupp_pickleball @

- APP Silver Medalist
- PPA Challenger Silver Medalist
- PPA Challenger Gold Medalist

WARM-UP

Training is all about readiness – being prepared for whatever comes your way. Every rep, every drill, every game is about conditioning yourself to respond when pressure hits.

Noah's story is a masterclass in preparation. God told Noah to build an ark before there was a single cloud in the sky. It didn't make sense, but Noah obeyed anyway. For over one hundred years, he built plank by plank, trusting the promise instead of the forecast.

Faith works the same way. You can't wait for the storm to start building your foundation. Obedience prepares you for what's coming even when others don't understand.

When God calls you to move, start building.

The rain is coming, be ready.

Preparation is never wasted, even when the court is empty. Even when no one believes it.

DRILL

“Noah did everything just as God commanded him.”

Genesis 6:22

God is after **faithful followers**, not flashy faith.

Noah didn't argue, delay, or negotiate. He just built. Every swing of the hammer was worship. Every act of obedience was preparation for what God had promised.

When your partners, friends, or culture mock your convictions, will you still obey?

When progress feels slow, will you still build?

Training your body is good. But training your spirit is eternal. The body fades, but faith lasts forever. In fact, while this body is a temporary home, our spirit and everything we do for the Kingdom of Christ lives on forever.

When others laugh, keep building. The rain is coming, and your obedience will be your rescue. Your faith isn't proven in the spotlight. It's forged in the quiet grind when the crowd is gone.

Prepare for the storm before it starts.

Rally with this:

What is God asking you to build – spiritually, relationally, or personally – that doesn't yet make sense? Where do you need to stay faithful even when progress feels slow? Are you training for the applause of others or the approval of God?

Now, take action:**notes**

1. Identify one area where God is calling you to build spiritual strength for future storms.

2. Add a daily discipline that strengthens your faith in that area.

3. Commit to stay obedient even when results don't come right away.

COOL DOWN

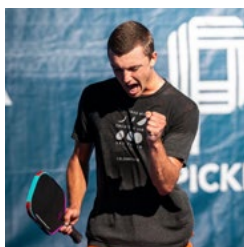
“Lord, help me build faithfully, even when no one sees and nothing makes sense. Strengthen my heart to obey You plank by plank, day by day, until the work is done. Amen.”

PRACTICE

#3

PUSH THROUGH IN PRAYER

“Prayer works. Prayer is not merely an act of meditation, or mindfulness, or mental discipline. Prayer in the name of Jesus is actual communication with the God who hears and attends to those prayers. I keep a list of answered prayers in my notes, and it has been amazing to tangibly see what God has done in my life. Pray more! **”**



Benjamin Bramblett
@BenjaminBramblett

- Pro Player

WARM-UP

In the middle of a grueling match, breathing becomes everything. When your lungs burn and your legs feel like concrete, you can either panic or find your rhythm.

Prayer is the spiritual oxygen that fuels your faith. But too often we treat prayer like an afterthought instead of the main event.

Quick prayers before meals or in emergencies aren't enough to build endurance.

God calls us to something deeper: to stay devoted in prayer, to breathe Him in continually. That's how you build spiritual stamina.

When life presses in, don't hold your breath.

Pray your way through.

“ Devote yourselves to prayer,
being watchful and thankful. ”

Colossians 4:2

Pickleball players know what devotion looks like: showing up early, staying late, doing the extra work no one sees. It's an intentional and intense commitment to someone or something we love. That's the same kind of devotion God calls us to in prayer.

Prayer is connection with your Creator. Skip the box-checking. This is the main meal, not the seasoning. Through prayer, you clear your conscience, draw strength, ask for direction, and give thanks. You worship God for His goodness. Your heart syncs with His. And you gain access to the power of the Holy Spirit.

You don't need perfect words, just persistence. Don't wait for a crisis to build your prayer life. Train it daily.

In pickleball, when fatigue hits, you don't stop – you push through.

Prayer works the same way: **Don't quit when it gets quiet.**

Prayer is your spiritual conditioning. Breathe deep. Push through. Stay in it.



PLAY

Rally with this:

How strong is your prayer conditioning? Do you pray only when you need something or as a daily discipline? What could change if you trained your prayer life with the same consistency and intensity as your game?

Now, take action:

1. Set a timer and pray for 10 uninterrupted minutes today.
2. Choose one person or situation to lift up in prayer every day this week.
3. Ask God to grow your hunger for His presence and strengthen your endurance in prayer.

notes

COOL DOWN

“Lord, teach me to breathe deeply through prayer. Help me build endurance in Your presence and depend on You for every breath, every match, and every moment. Amen.”

PRACTICE

#4

JUST SHOW UP

“As athletes, we understand that improvement comes from consistency, not just motivation. We show up to practice even on the days we don't feel like it, because growth requires commitment. I've found that faith works much the same way. We won't always feel inspired, but consistently spending time with God deepens our relationship with Him. When we make God a daily priority, He gradually transforms our hearts, minds, and the way we live.”



Nicole Conard

@nicole.conard

- 6 PPA Challenger medals
- World Cup Champion Team USA
- Carolina Hogs MLP team

WARM-UP

On some days, getting to the court is the hardest part. Success starts with showing up. Discipline starts with showing up when you don't feel like it.

You can have the best training plan, the best partners, and the best intentions, but if you don't show up, nothing changes. The same is true in your walk with God. Laziness neglects what matters most and hides behind excuses:

“I'm tired.”

“I'll do it later.”

“I don't feel like it today.”

Laziness whispers comfort while stealing growth. It robs you of the progress that only comes through consistent effort. Your spiritual growth will never outpace your willingness to show up for God. Every missed moment is a missed opportunity to grow stronger in faith.

Keep showing up for God. He's already there waiting for you.

When you do, you'll find that half the battle is won just by being present.

DRILL

“ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters. ”

Colossians 3:23

God calls you to give your whole heart not just when it's convenient, but when it costs you comfort. This is about **aligning your effort with your purpose**, not burning out.

When you train, study, pray, or serve, do it as if you're playing for the King Himself because you are. Every rep, every prayer, every act of service becomes worship when it's done for Him.

Laziness loses its grip when you remember **who you're really working for and who you are really serving**.

So get up. Grab your paddle. Step on the court.

Show up for your training.

Show up for your calling.

Show up for your God.

Showing up is half the battle. Faith grows when you do.

Show up and get ready to play.

Rally with this:

Where have you grown lazy or inconsistent in your walk with God? What disciplines or commitments have you been putting off? What would change if you treated your spiritual growth like your pickleball training – non-negotiable, every day?

Now, take action:**notes**

1. Identify one area of life where you've been complacent or slacking off.
2. Choose one spiritual discipline you've been avoiding and commit to practicing it daily for the next week.
3. Set your alarm 15 minutes earlier for prayer or Bible reading and ask a trusted partner or friend to keep you accountable.

COOL DOWN

“Lord, thank you for never giving up on me. Give me the discipline to show up when I don't feel like it and the strength to give you my best in everything I do. Amen.”

PRACTICE

#5

TRAIN HARD. LIVE FREE.

“There will always be tough moments in your career where you feel like giving up. But the only thing that separates the best from the rest is their ability to keep fighting when all hope seems lost. Just as Jesus faced challenges throughout His life, we will also face challenges and backlash. But by trusting in God and keeping our identity in our faith, we can overcome any challenge.”



Andre Mercado

@andremercado.az @

- 16-year-old signed PPA Pro
- 2x U16 National Champ in men's
- U16 National Champ in singles and mixed
- Ranked #1 U16 in the world at 15 years old

WARM-UP

Both physical and spiritual progress require discipline. But discipline without the right mindset can become a burden instead of a blessing. It's easy to mistake the Christian life for religious rule-following. But following Christ is about relationship, not rules. You don't earn God's acceptance and pleasure through spiritual performance. You enjoy it because you've been set free.

On the court, you **train with purpose**. Every warm-up, every drill, every game has meaning. You don't work to earn the title of "player." You already are one.

Spiritually, it's the same truth. You don't strive for God's acceptance – you already have it. His unconditional love is the foundation of your training, not a reward for effort.

When you understand that truth, the grind shifts. Time in the Word becomes a “get to,” not a “have to.” Prayer becomes connection, not a chore. Every moment becomes part of the way you glorify God in all you do.

DRILL

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”

Galatians 5:1

Christ didn't set you free to live casually. He set you free to live courageously.

Real freedom is the presence of purpose, not the absence of rules.

Freedom is the power to do what's right, not just what you want.

Before you knew Jesus, you were chained to performance and trying to prove your worth through what you did. But now, you train from freedom. You're not working for God's approval; you're living out of it.

So stand firm. Don't go back to old patterns of guilt, fear, or striving. You've been set free from sin's grip, and you've been called to live for something greater.

This is what it means to **train hard and live free** – to push yourself with excellence while standing firm in the unshakable truth that Christ already won your victory.

PLAY

Rally with this:

Are you training for God's approval or from His acceptance? What would it look like to live free while still giving your all? How can your daily training – on and off the court – become worship?

Now, take action:

notes

1. Examine your heart. What's driving your effort today: pressure or purpose?
2. Invite Christ into every part of your rhythm from warm-up to your toughest game.
3. Declare this truth out loud:
"Christ in me is greater than anything against me."

COOL DOWN

“ Lord, thank You for setting me free. Help me train hard not to earn Your love, but because I already have it. Let everything I do, on and off the court, bring glory to You. Amen. ”

PRACTICE #6

CHOOSE BETTER OVER GOOD

“Life on tour is busy and chaotic, and it’s important to recenter yourself. We’re all guilty of being like Martha in the story of Martha and Mary – busy and distracted. How lucky are we that Jesus redirects us just like her!”



Michael Loyd

@michaelloydpb @ X

- MLP Cup Champion
- 2x PPA Tour Medalist
- 3x APP Tour Medalist

WARM-UP

Distractions can derail even the best training sessions. When you’re scattered and thinking about the next drill, your ranking, or what’s happening off the court, you lose your edge. But when you’re locked in – fully present and focused – progress comes faster, cleaner, and stronger.

Life works the same way. It’s easy to stay busy doing good things and still miss the best thing.

Mary and Martha learned that lesson firsthand. When Jesus visited their home, Martha got caught up in serving, cleaning, and preparing. All good things. But Mary sat at His feet, listening to His voice. What Martha did was good, but what Mary did was better.

Every day brings new noise, new responsibilities, and new distractions. Are you chasing what’s good or choosing what’s better?

DRILL

“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed – or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better.”

Luke 10:41–42

Jesus didn't scold Martha for working hard, He simply redirected her focus. He reminded her that the most important thing wasn't the work for Him, but time with Him.

In pickleball, we often equate hard work with productivity. But spiritual strength is built through attention, not just effort.

You can do a lot of “good” things for God and still miss time with God. And when that happens, even your hard work runs on empty.

Your faith, your family, and your calling all flow from that quiet time in His presence. So slow down. Sit with Him. Let the One who gave you your mission refuel your heart before you get back in the game.

Don't just do more. Do what matters most. Busyness builds fatigue. Focus builds faith. **Choose better over good.**

Rally with this:

Are you chasing what's good or choosing what's better? How often do you start your day with Jesus before you enter the grind? What would change if you kicked off every day with Him? How might it affect your mind and heart?

Now, take action:**notes**

1. Block 10 quiet minutes today – no phone, no tasks – and sit with Jesus and ask Him to refocus your heart.
2. Identify one “good” thing that’s been crowding out what’s better and lay it down for a season.
3. Step into your next game or moment with a heart fueled by His presence, not your pace.

COOL DOWN

“Lord, help me slow down long enough to hear Your voice. Show me what’s truly important and give me the courage to choose it every time. Amen.”

PRACTICE

#7

EAT THE WORD

“Before I start every day, my desire is to spend time in God’s Word and prayer. When I do this, I’ve noticed how my mind and heart are at peace, having my priorities set into place. Being reminded in the Bible who I am in Christ and who He is helps with whatever challenge I may face. Although losses are rough, they don’t ultimately define who I am. Remembering what Jesus Christ has done on the cross for me is the truth that helps put everything into its rightful place.”



Vivienne David

@viviennedavid97 @

- Pro Player 2019-2025
- Former #2 PPA mixed doubles

WARM-UP

What you put into your body determines what you get out of it. The wrong fuel leads to fatigue, sluggishness, and breakdown. The right nutrition builds strength, recovery, and endurance.

The same is true for your soul. If you feed your spirit with motivational sound bites, social media posts, or occasional inspiration, you’ll run out of energy fast. But if you consistently feed on God’s Word, you’ll build lasting spiritual strength.

The Bible is your daily meal. Treat it like one.

You can't expect to play well spiritually if you're showing up underfed. You don't get strong by eating once a week; you grow through steady, repeated reps – Bible reading, prayer, and applying God's truth every day.

DRILL

“ Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. ”

Matthew 4:4

When Jesus faced temptation, He didn't respond with emotion. He answered with Scripture. That's what it means to **eat the Word**: to internalize God's truth so deeply that it becomes your natural response in every situation.

The Word of God is alive and active. It strengthens, corrects, and sustains you. God's voice builds faith, shapes wisdom, and trains you for life's challenges. Turn up the volume.

If you only feed on the Word once a week, your spirit will grow weak. But when you make it a daily rhythm – feeding, studying, memorizing, applying – you'll find your heart and mind stay strong under pressure.

Spiritual endurance is built the same way as physical endurance: through repetition. So keep showing up. Keep reading. Keep consuming truth. Strong faith needs strong fuel. Don't snack on Scripture. Feed on it daily.

PLAY

Rally with this:

What's been feeding your thoughts lately? Truth or noise? How consistent is your spiritual nutrition plan? What would change if you fueled your spirit daily with God's Word instead of waiting for Sunday?

Now, take action:

1. Choose one book of the Bible – like **Proverbs** or **John** – and read one chapter a day this week.
2. Write down a verse that speaks to you and revisit it three times daily.
3. Ask God to make His Word as necessary to you as your next meal.

notes

COOL DOWN

“Father, thank You for giving me Your Word as my daily bread. Teach me to crave it more than comfort, to chew on it until it becomes part of me, and to find my strength in Your truth. Amen.”

PRACTICE

#8

CONTROL THE FIRE

“Christian athletes must learn how to engage with the fire within us. We either get consumed by it or are empowered by it. There is a song called “The Wick” by Housefires that helps me center myself. It goes like this, “My heart is the wick, your love is the flame, I want to burn for your name.” When passion, anger, and other feelings rise, sit back and remember who you burn for.”



Eli Steiner

@elisteiner.pb



- Pickleball Pro and Coach
- Gold Medalist PPA Challenger

WARM-UP

Fire can heat a room or burn it down. It all depends on control. The same flame that refines metal can also destroy everything in its path.

In pickleball, adrenaline is your fire. It helps you push harder, play longer, and dig deeper when your body wants to quit. But lose control, and that same fire can wreck your game, drain your energy, or lead to costly mistakes.

Anger works the same way.

It's not always wrong, but when it burns unchecked, it scorches everything it touches: your peace, your relationships, and your witness.

There's a kind of anger that's righteous: anger that revolts against injustice and evil. But most of our anger? It's selfish. It's frustration when we're challenged, inconvenienced, or don't get our way.

The goal is to harness the fire, not kill it.

DRILL

“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”

James 1:19–20

Uncontrolled anger is like a player out of position – wide open to attack. When you lose emotional control, you lose your court awareness and strategic advantage.

God's Word gives us the formula: **be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.**

That takes wisdom, not weakness.

Before reacting, breathe.

Before speaking, pray.

Before attacking, seek understanding.

The Holy Spirit can take your heat and turn it into holy fuel, transforming frustration into focus, emotion into intercession, and anger into action that builds rather than breaks.

Anger doesn't have to master you.

In Christ, you can channel the fire for purpose instead of destruction.

Don't let anger run your game. Let the Spirit call the shots.

PLAY

Rally with this:

What lights your fuse the fastest? Anger, frustration, or pride? How has losing emotional control affected your relationships or witness? What would it look like to let the Holy Spirit turn your heat into holy fire?

Now, take action:

1. Identify one area where anger has been simmering under the surface.
2. When frustration rises, pause, breathe, pray, and listen before you react.
3. Reach out to one person you've been short with and take a step toward peace today.

notes

COOL DOWN

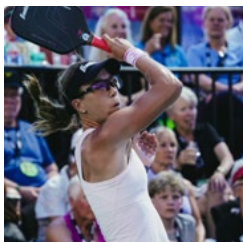
“Lord, help me control the fire inside me. When anger rises, remind me to pause, listen, and pray. Use my energy for healing, not harm, and let my strength bring You glory. Amen.”

PRACTICE

#9

RAISE THE BAR. REFLECT CHRIST.

“Holiness is not about perfection or image – it means being set apart for God and reflecting His character. As children of God, we are called to imitate our Father, not simply follow rules or do just the bare minimum. Worldly standards are not acceptable. Jesus raised the standard from outward behavior to inward transformation. My conduct becomes my testimony, and my goal is not to do the minimum, but to become more like Him each day in all that I do as an athlete, an ambassador for my sport, a mother, wife, and most importantly, a child of God.”



Megan Fudge

@officialmeganfudge @

- APP #1 doubles & mixed player
- APP All Time Medal record holder
- 3x US Open Champion
- 2x USA National Champion

WARM-UP

In pickleball, standards matter. The ref doesn't grade your effort – the call is what it is. A point isn't a point until the ball lands in bounds. A winner isn't a winner until it's unreachable.

You can give full effort, but if you don't meet the standard, it doesn't count. The standard doesn't change to match your performance; you adjust to meet it.

God calls His people to a higher standard – in purity, purpose, and integrity – not just performance. He’s after your heart, not just your skill.

Holiness means being set apart, not being perfect. Do what’s right when it’s hard. Stay true when no one’s watching. Repent quickly when you miss the mark.

The court tests your skill. Life tests your character. God’s calling you to raise the bar in both.

DRILL

“But just as He who called you is holy,
so be holy in all you do.”

1 Peter 1:15

Jesus didn’t lower the bar. He raised it.

He called His followers to live differently, not just outwardly but inwardly, to reflect His heart in everything. Holiness is about imitation, not image. It’s about becoming more like Christ in attitude, words, and action.

When you train spiritually with a “close enough” mentality, you settle for less than God’s best. But when you pursue His standard, His criteria, with humility and persistence, you grow stronger, steadier, and sharper in every area of life.

Your conduct becomes your testimony.

Your discipline becomes your witness.

The standard you live by shapes the message you send to the world. Don’t train to meet the minimum. Train to reflect the Master.

Don’t just play to win. Play to reflect Christ.

PLAY

Rally with this:

What standard or criteria are you living by: God's or the world's? Where have you lowered the bar or let comfort shape your character? What would your life look like if holiness became your measure of success?

Now, take action:

1. Examine one area where you've settled for "good enough" and raise the standard to God's level.
2. Choose integrity even when no one's watching.
3. Remind yourself daily:
**Jesus isn't just my Savior.
He's my standard.**

notes

COOL DOWN

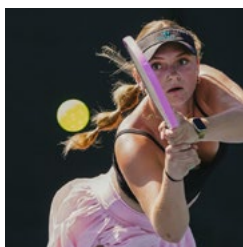
“ Lord, help me live to Your standard, not mine. Make my life a reflection of Your holiness and my actions a testimony of Your grace. Raise my vision, sharpen my character, and help me honor You in everything I do. Amen. ”

PRACTICE

#10

THE TIME IS NOW!

“I find it hard to speak up and be bold in my faith at times. I would never turn away from someone if they asked me about my beliefs, but I'm typically not the first to bring it up. I want to be bolder in sharing my faith with those around me in situations where I may feel uncomfortable. I pray that the Lord will give me boldness and that His will be done! **”**



Abigail O'Kelley

@Abbyo_pickleball

- Pro Pickleball Player
- Signed player with the APP National Team
- Top 3 girl in the APP Next program

WARM-UP

Courage means choosing to act in spite of fear. Fear doesn't have to leave before you move.

Every pickleball player knows that moment in a match – the score's close, chest tight, body running on empty – and you face a choice: go for it or play it safe, attack or pull back. The difference between winning and losing often comes down to one decision: to go when everything in you says stop.

Esther faced her own moment like that. A young Jewish woman in Persia, chosen as queen, she learned of a royal decree to annihilate her people. Speaking up could cost her everything. The law said anyone entering the king's court uninvited could be executed – even her.

If she stayed silent, her people would perish. If she spoke up, she might die trying. But Esther understood something deeper: **God had positioned her for a purpose.**

She didn't feel ready, but she stepped forward anyway.

The time to act wasn't later. It was now.

DRILL

“And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”

Esther 4:14

Mordecai's words cut through fear and hesitation: This is your moment.

Esther wasn't queen by accident, and you're not where you are by accident either. God places His people with precision. Sometimes it's for influence, sometimes for service, and often for courage to stand, speak, or act when it matters most.

You won't always feel ready. The enemy whispers, “Stay quiet. Play it safe. Wait for a better time.” But obedience doesn't wait for perfect conditions. It moves when God says move.

When the moment comes, courage gets revealed.

You weren't made for comfort. You were made for courage.

The time is now.

When the ball is in the air, don't hesitate.

Rally with this:

What has fear or hesitation kept you from doing? Where might God be positioning you for a bold act of obedience? How long will you wait before stepping into the moment He's calling you to?

Now, take action:**notes**

1. Identify one area where God is calling you to stand, speak, or act boldly.
2. Take one courageous step of obedience this week even if it scares you.
3. Pray: **"Lord, give me courage for the calling."**

COOL DOWN

“Father, thank You for putting me where I am for a purpose. When fear rises, remind me that You are with me. Give me the courage to obey and the faith to act right here, right now. Amen.”

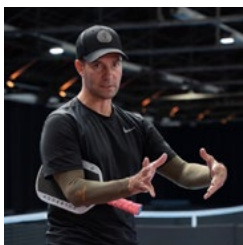
PRACTICE

#11

STRENGTH IN SOLITUDE

“Quiet and stillness is hard to find in today’s noisy world. I think of King David who knew the importance of quietness and wrote in the Psalms, ‘He leads me beside still waters, he restores my soul.’

Finding a quiet place isn’t about the place – it’s about the person. It’s about meeting with God and God meeting with us. This is a place where He can restore us and speak to us. The Bible says God comes to us with a still, small voice. He comes to us with gentleness, and we need to be in a quiet place to be able to hear from our Father in Heaven. Find stillness and connection with God today and watch your life flourish from the inside out! **”**



Mark Price

@markpricepickleball @ f

- Pro Pickleball Coach
- 3x Georgia State Champion

WARM-UP

In pickleball, recovery days are just as vital as training days. You can’t go full throttle and expect to perform your best. Your body needs time to rebuild.

Your soul does too.

Our culture glorifies noise, speed, and constant motion. The schedule never stops, the phone never rests, and quiet feels almost unnatural. But solitude takes wisdom and courage. You step back to refocus, not to escape.

In solitude, God does His deepest work. The noise fades and the distractions die down. Suddenly, His voice becomes clear again. Many avoid solitude because silence feels awkward and stillness feels unproductive, but that's exactly why it's powerful.

Stillness is strength under control.

When you strip away the noise, you remember what matters. You remember Who's in charge. You remember who you are.

There is strength in solitude.

DRILL

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed.”

Mark 1:35

Even Jesus – God in the flesh – made solitude a non-negotiable part of His routine. He pulled away from the crowd not because He was tired of people but because He needed to connect with the Father.

Solitude wasn't withdrawal, it was preparation.

In those quiet moments, Jesus re-centered His heart, recharged His purpose, and renewed His strength. He didn't lead from depletion; He led from overflow.

You can't pour out what you haven't filled. Time alone with God is essential. That's where your soul gets refueled, your mind gets recalibrated, and your spirit gets realigned with truth.

When you slow down enough to listen, you'll find God's been speaking all along. You just needed space to hear Him.

Solitude is intentional connection with God, and it strengthens you for what's ahead.

PLAY

Rally with this:

When was the last time you slowed down long enough to truly hear God's voice? Do you view solitude as strength or weakness? What would happen if quiet time became your secret weapon instead of your last resort?

Now, take action:

1. Schedule 20 minutes alone today – no phone, no distractions – just you and God.
2. Read **Psalm 46** and meditate on:
"Be still, and know that I am God."
3. Ask God to reveal what He's been saying that you've been too busy to hear.

notes

COOL DOWN

“Lord, help me slow down. Quiet the noise in my mind so I can hear Your voice. Fill me with strength that comes from stillness and remind me that my worth isn't in my work, it's in You. Amen.”

PRACTICE

#12

SLAY THE GIANT

“Pride makes us believe we can take up our own cross. It makes us selfish and exposes our sinful human nature, revealing our need for Jesus Christ. Because He took the cross for us, we can rest humbly in His finished work. Let us then look to Christ daily with humility and allow surrender to be our foundation.”



Wade Bryant

@Ginganinjapickleball @

- Pro Pickleball Player
- Top 20 finish PPA Challenger

WARM-UP

Pride is sneaky. On the court, pride is that voice telling you to go harder when your game is breaking down or to ignore coaching because you “already know.” It’s the drive to look dominant instead of developing discipline. Pride pushes you to try shots you haven’t drilled or to keep swinging when your form – or your character – is falling apart.

Spiritually, pride makes you care more about how you look on the outside than who you’re becoming on the inside. It keeps you posing for approval while hiding your pain. Sometimes it’s loud and boastful, but more often, it’s subtle. It hides behind independence, refuses help, and quietly says, “I’ve got this.”

Pride blinds you to your weakness. It doesn’t make you strong.

It keeps you from hearing God's voice. And if left unchecked, it can take you down faster than any opponent.

Pride is the giant standing between you and your next level of growth. It's time to slay it.

DRILL

“God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”

James 4:6

Pride is the original rebellion, the sin that turned angels into enemies. It shifts trust from God to self and puts you in direct opposition to the One who gives strength.

Humility is alignment with God not weakness before men.

It's not thinking less of yourself; it's thinking of yourself less.

It's living so focused on God's glory that there's no room for ego.

When pride leads, grace leaves.

But when humility takes over, favor flows.

The only way to win the struggle of pride is through acknowledging your dependence on God in every area, every day, not just in crisis. That kind of humility invites His power to do what your own effort never could.

Don't play for recognition. Play for refinement. Slay the giant of pride before it takes you down.

Rally with this:

Where might pride be hiding? In your independence, competitiveness, or need for control? How often do you seek credit instead of giving glory to God? What would humility look like in your next game or decision?

Now, take action:

1. Ask God to expose one area of pride in your life.
2. Practice humility, serve quietly, accept correction, or celebrate someone else's win.
3. Pray daily: **“Lord, keep me humble, hungry, and dependent on You.”**

notes

COOL DOWN >

“God, search my heart and expose any pride in me. Teach me to depend on You for every victory. Keep me grounded, grateful, and guided by Your grace. Amen.”

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. A large, thick red 'X' is drawn across the upper-left portion of the page, extending from the top edge down towards the middle. The rest of the page is blank, showing only the horizontal lines.





Scripture quotations marked CSB have been taken from the Christian Standard Bible®. Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

Scripture quotations taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used with permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com

Photography was provided by participating coaches and athletes and used by permission.



WHY SPORTSLIFE

To build sports communities **FOR KINGDOM IMPACT**

WHAT IS OUR MISSION

To infuse **LIFE** into **SPORTS** leaders around the world

*“Jesus said, ‘I am the way and the truth and the LIFE,
and no one comes to the Father except through me.’”*

John 14:6

WHO WE IMPACT

Coaches, Athletes, Sports Leaders

WHERE WE GO

Locally & Globally

*“You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem,
and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

Acts 1:8

HOW WE DO IT

TRAINING

In Relationship

3D Coaching
Certifications
Leadership Development
Leadership Discipleship
Leadership Coaching
LifeGroups
Spiritual Formation

RESOURCES

In Hand

Bible Reading Plans
Devotionals
Podcasts
Spiritual Formation Books
Sports Bibles
Study Videos

EVENTS

In Person

Camps
Challenges
Clinics
Competitions
Conferences
Masterminds
Outreaches
Retreats
Tournaments



[PICKLEBALL.SPORTSLIFELEADERSHIP.COM](https://pickleball.sportslifeleadership.com)

For more info on
SportsLife Pickleball



This devotional is a SportsLife Leadership Resource.



[SportsLifePickleball](https://www.instagram.com/SportsLifePickleball)



[SportsLifePickleball](https://www.facebook.com/SportsLifePickleball)

Contact: pickleball@sportslifeleadership.com

Copyright © 2026 SportsLife Leadership. All rights reserved.