

athlos

Volume 1

Welcome to Volume 1 of Athlos

Welcome to Athlos – a Sport and Fitness discipleship resource produced by The Salvation Army in The United Kingdom Territory with the Republic of Ireland.

We wanted to create something that enabled people who have ordinary, everyday searching questions about life and faith to explore this through the avenue of sport and play.

Athlos provides and provokes these questions in a deep and meaningful way, encouraging people to search, question and engage in discussion – opening new doors and new relationships with one another.

The videos are approximately 6-7 minutes in length, and focus on a number of key issues and topics central to Sport and fitness. There are questions and quotes included in this booklet to discuss afterwards as a group, or to reflect on personally.

As you journey from Gameplan to Focus, we hope these videos challenge you to connect your passion for Jesus with your love of sport in new ways, using this wonderful and unique mission God has given us to make a positive difference in people's lives. We hope this is an inspiring and challenging tool in your own life, and the lives of others, as we follow the call to make disciples through sport.

Gameplan

'...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things'

PHILIPPIANS 4:8 NIV

What do you feed yourself with, through the way you choose to spend your time? Do you focus on things that are spiritually nutritious, or a 'junk food diet' of activities that ultimately cannot sustain you?

Who is analysing your performance and holding you to account?

How can you be this analyst for someone else?

How can you hold them accountable in a supportive and nurturing way?



Professional sportsmen and women have a whole host of people to analyse their performance for them. They pick up on their errors and show them how to avoid these in the future. They take their good moments and suggest ways in which the athlete can make them even better and they motivate them to reach that next level.

There is a constant desire to grow the reach of the club or sportsperson so that they are recognised all over the world and more and more people are buying into what they represent.

What does your 'brand' say about who you are? You probably don't have a multi-million pound sponsorship deal, but the things you wear and consume, the way you spend your time and the words you say all create an impression of who you are. How can you ensure this behaviour reflects your values? What might you need to change to better reflect your brand as a disciple and witness for Christ?

How can we help each other in our shared gameplan of our mission for Christ?

Fitness

What does physical fitness look like to you? What is your ultimate fitness goal?

What are the spiritual benefits to physical training? What are the limits?

How can we go about training ourselves for Godliness?

What would our post-exercise selfies look like after this kind of training? How will it help us to look and act different?



Sport rarely sticks to the script and will often throw up unforeseeable situations. Good all round fitness means that the body is prepared to meet these challenges as they arise, and the same is true for our faith

'Although training your body has certain payoffs, godliness benefits all things – holding promise for life here and now and promise for the life that is coming'

1 TIMOTHY 4:8 THE VOICE

If the key principles of training are overload, frequency and intensity, what should our Godliness training involve? What do you need to add to your fitness programme in order to see the gains?

How can you prepare yourself for the unforeseeable situations, so that you are spiritually 'match fit' to cope with the things life may throw at you?



What are the implications to your Godliness training if you are holding things back? How can you give the rest of yourself over to God? Who could help to hold you to account for this?



Do you give a percentage of yourself to a life of discipleship, or do you give it your complete 100 per cent effort? Are there parts of your life that you withhold from Jesus or do you surrender completely to his will?

Image

How much of a selfie-taker are you?

Have you perfected the pout and angle, or would you rather point the camera away from you?

'We live in an age of Facebook selfies, Snapchat stories and Instagram filters. There is always that great moment when you upload an image of yourself that you are happy with and you immediately get a response'



Does God's idea of perfection match with the representation of perfection we see portrayed in the media?

Have you ever been guilty of posting online just to try to build your 'selfie-esteem'? What does it feel like when your post/photo doesn't get the response you expected?

Does God's idea of perfection match with the representation of perfection we see portrayed in the media?

How can we help each other focus on health and 'fitspiration' rather than 'thinspiration'?

'And yet I find myself always looking for "thinspiration" – you know, those people we are bombarded with by magazines and reality TV. People who have a perfect physique, sleep at the gym and live off kale smoothies! They inspire us to reach for "perfection", and for some that reach has led not to an increased self-esteem but a battered one.'



Now let Us conceive
a new creation –
humanity – made in
Our image,
fashioned according
to Our likeness

GENESIS 1:26 THE VOICE

Who do you see when you look in the mirror? The person you wish you were, or the person God has made you to be, fashioned according to his likeness? How could you shift your perception of what you see to better reflect what God sees?

How can you move beyond your five-a-day and your 5k to become a reflection of God's likeness in your interactions? Where can you find your 'Himspiration'?

Teamwork

Think of a team that you are or were a part of. What is your particular role? How does this support the wider team?

Can you remember a time when this team has worked particularly well? What happened?

Can you think of a time where it all fell apart? What happened?



Talent wins
games, but
teamwork and
intelligence win
championships

MICHAEL JORDAN

Do you feel like you've been picked for the team? What's stopping you from lacing up and getting out on the pitch?

Can you think of any ways you could work better in a team you're a part of (either in sport, work, church etc)? How can you better recognise each other's strengths and weaknesses to work better together?



“

I can do things you cannot,
you can do things I cannot;
together we can do
great things

MOTHER TERESA

‘But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body’

1 CORINTHIANS 12:18-20 NRSV

What do you need to do to ‘lift your head up’ and see how you can play your part in God’s team?

Ability

What's the one thing you wish you could do, the one ability you wish you had been given?

What can you do that others wish they could do?

Look at Romans 12:1-8 together.

'Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us'

ROMANS 12:3 NLT

What do you need to let go of trying to do yourself and instead leave to those God has gifted with those abilities?

What is your 'special function' that Paul speaks of (v4 NLT)? How can you offer these back to God to worship and honour him?

“

Don't
think
you
are
better
than
you
really
are.



'But as a chopped-off finger or cut-off toe
we wouldn't amount to much, would we?'

TAKEN FROM ROMANS 12:4-6 THE MESSAGE

How can we ensure we stay connected to the Body of Christ, to make sure we get the life-supporting oxygen and nutrients we need to function?

Looking again at verses 6-8, are there any functions of the body which every part shares? What are the areas which it is important for every member of a church/community to be a part of?

How can we make sure our body functions well as one?

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I've read a number of stories about athletes' experiences, and what struck me was the value they placed, not on other sportsmen and women, but on the people at the sidelines, supporters, encouragers and volunteers at events.

How can we each encourage each other, not just in sport but in every aspect of our lives? How can we celebrate each other's abilities and help each other to be the people that God has created us to be?

Do you need to make yourself more available to God to use what he has given you? Where will you use your ability to your greatest potential for his glory?

Coach

Who do you receive instructions from? For example, your boss, parents, teachers, corps officer etc?

Who do you give instructions to? Your children, employees, team mates?

What type of leadership do you respond to best? Do you like being told what to do, or do you prefer a different approach?



Coaching is so
much more than
barking orders.
The coach has to
know his players

Can you think of good examples of leaders/coaches from your life? What was it about them or the way they lead that made them a good leader? Are there any common traits among the examples given?

Do you consider yourself a leader? Where can you have an influence even if you are not in an official leadership position?

'The best coaches don't tell, they encourage the players to discover the answers for themselves.'



**How can you
help people to
discover and
realise their
potential?**

How can you model Jesus' example of leadership in your life and actions?

How can you help people to discover and realise their potential?

Jesus said - 'If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea," and it will obey you'

LUKE 17:6 NIV



Jesus said - 'Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father'

JOHN 14:12 NIV

What will this greatness look like for you, and what could it look like for those you are leading or have influence over? What do you need to do to support them in this?

Focus

Who has ever been 'in the zone' when playing sport? Can you explain what it felt like? How was your performance different from normal?

Have you ever definitely not been in the zone, and instead had a bit of a howler? How did that feel? How did you try and snap yourself out of it (and did it work?)

'I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast, and when I run I feel his pleasure'

ERIC LIDDELL, CHARIOTS OF FIRE (1981)

“

And let
us run
with
endurance
the race
God
has set
before us

‘And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith’

HEBREWS 12:1-2 NLT

What does it mean to keep your eyes on Jesus in your own square mile? How can you stay focused on him during sport and your interactions with people in your community?

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