



SPORTS MISSION

Venture Out *Today*

MAKING A BIG IMPACT DURING COVID-19

During this time, well-being is something that we are all being encouraged to be mindful of. Using our sport, fitness and recreation time is a fantastic way to improve or maintain good mental health and well-being. What's even better is that you don't have to do this on your own!

Now more than ever we need to share the ups and downs, twists and turns, the questions and revelations that we are experiencing.

Are you ready to take on the challenge of going beyond your daily venture and venture deeper and further than ever before? How can you further develop your trust in God and believe that no matter what this particular venture, or any other brings, that he will provide?

Preparation for any venture is always important. So before you start this one, please go to the following link to a 3 minute clip on what this venture is based, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bsc2QkCC3uI>.

The 5 well-being headings make up the themes for this series of Venture.

You could pick one that stands out to you just where you are today, work your way through each aspect over a period of time (e.g. one a week) or, if you have a virtual small group you could pick a different one each time you connect. Work through the questions or just pick the one(s) most relevant to you - it's your venture so tailor it to you.

We are all on a venture of faith, perhaps more so now than ever before, the question is how is your faith and are you willing to share it, develop it and live it out?

As you continue to read on, be prepared to be challenged, inspired and moved by God, as you consider through reflection, the personal faith journey that you are on.

As you **ASSESS, ACTION** and **APPLY** this to your not-so-ordinary everyday life, maybe this process could be a blueprint of how you can nurture, process and develop your own discipleship journey - and maybe even encourage others in theirs.

Are you ready to **question**, go **deeper** and venture **further** in your faith as you explore more of who God is? If you are, get ready to Venture Out **Today**.

Overview

3A's Rhythm

- **ASSESS** - This is your starting point. Before you set out on a venture combining sport and well-being, it's really important to focus on where you are right now both physically and spiritually. What do you know or believe?
- **ACTION** - These prompts are designed to help you put each of the 5 ways to well-being into action just where you are and to ground yourself in Gods amazing creation. This aims to help you think about what you could do in your everyday life to move beyond your starting point and start your venture.
- **APPLY** - how you apply each of the 5 ways to well-being is up to you. But we've suggested practical ways of doing this in your ordinary everyday, based on some common exercise you might be doing during this time. ***N.B. as lockdown ends, look out for a bolt on to this series to see further ways to apply each theme beyond Covid.***



In the time that is now, are you ready to go deeper?

It is just as important to go beyond just talking through our ventures - we need to continually ground ourselves in and be responsive to how God is coaching us through his Word. But do we miss him out in our daily allowance of fitness, training and virtual connection with others even when we think we're including him?

Read the paraphrased Bible text and consider the questions as you go deeper in thinking about your relationship and venture with God and link this to the 5 ways to well-being.

This is just one framework that you could use to help you unpack scripture in a more meaningful way.

Venture Deeper



ROMANS 12 PARAPHRASE ACCORDING TO SPORT DURING COVID-19

1-2 So here's what my daily reaction needs to be; to take my not-so-ordinary, everyday activity and exercise life, letting go of negative outlooks and making my daily allowance of training, sport and fitness a genuine expression of worship, thankful for all God has to offer me.

To stop comparing myself to others and trying to be someone I'm not, but by embracing what God has for me is the best thing I can do for him. So don't measure yourself against others and try to fit in but allow the Holy Spirit to change the way you see things. Be quick to see what God wants from you, bouncing on your toes ready to respond. You are perfect in God's eyes, so let him bring out the best in you.

3 God has given me grace to speak a warning about pride and to pass that baton to you. It's not about bigging ourselves up and thinking ourselves better than we are, it's about humbly knowing that your God-given faith is the marker to measure up against, knowing your true value in God's team and having self esteem that reflects your grounding in God's word.

4-6 We, as humans, are made of numerous parts that have to work together, but are each unique and important. It's just like this with the people of God; we all need to work together but each of us have something to contribute - we are crucial in our role but limited on our own. A striker or a wicket keeper can achieve very little on their own. God's marvellous grace imparts to each one of us different gifts that he has planned for us, and only us, to share in our own way with others. So whatever grace-gift God has gifted you, use it to your full ability.

6-8 If you coach, encourage and support with all you have, remotely if needed, without judgement; if you support from the side lines, cheer every person with equal passion; if you compete, compete fairly and train to win but congratulate humbly, and when you win do so gracefully without fanfare. If you lead, lead with passion and by setting the example to others.

9-10 Have the energy and enthusiasm to serve the Lord, and keep your fire burning. Show to others the impact of the Holy Spirit through who you are, run from and play in defence of those playing dirty; hold on to good principle and be humble. Allowing Him to constantly recharge your excitement for doing his work and content with second place.

11-13 Let hope shine through you, sharing joy always with others and building them up. Don't give up when it's not going your way, when rules change, and when team mates aren't physically around you. Keep communicating with God. Keep your eyes on the needs of others (and yourself!) and don't be afraid to help or ask for help. Eagerly welcome all - everyone's part of the team!

14-16 Bless everyone (including those who have been your opponents or officials), don't forget anyone while they're not in plain sight) don't bad mouth under your breath or behind your front door. Celebrate with players, athletes and neighbours while they celebrate and don't be afraid to share their tears when they're down.

Get alongside one another, don't think yourself too good or be elitist. You are not too important to serve others too. Find new ways of friendship and relationships with those you consider weak players, but muck in in the menial talks with those humble enough to do them. Don't think you're too good for them or be smug.

20-21 If you see someone struggling - help them! Hold them up in prayer, send them a message, give them a call to give words of encouragement. Win people over with kindness. Let the challenges and set backs make you even stronger and achieve more, get the best of the worst by showing God.

Take Notice 3A's

ASSESS

- What is concerning you or causing you to be anxious at the moment?
- Does sport/exercise help or distract you from things that worry you? Why?
- How might taking part in physical activity help you to be able to be more present in the here and now?
- How does exercise relieve you of feelings of stress and anxiety?

ACTION

- *Take a moment to be present in the here and now, to slow down and take notice:*
 - Name 5 things you can see
 - Name 4 things you can hear
 - Name 3 things you can touch
 - Name 2 things you can smell
 - Name 1 thing you can taste

APPLY

- *How you apply 'take notice' is up to you, but here are some ideas based on different activities:*
- Walking: walk somewhere you've never been before
- Walking: take your normal route but at half the speed and really look around as well as looking up as you go
- Running: search out the most beautiful and unusual thing
- Running: run your route back to front
- HIIT workout or online fitness class: consider your surroundings, consider all that you have
- HIIT workout: meditate quietly for 5 minutes before you start
- Cycling: go slower for 5 minutes of your journey to notice nature and the change in seasons
- Cycling: go off road and cycle in a park or forest
- *As you take notice, pray for the people around you, consider your thoughts and feelings and ask God to allow you to enjoy the things that matter to you.*

ROMANS 12 (VERSES 1-2) PARAPHRASE ACCORDING TO SPORT DURING COVID-19

SO HERE'S WHAT MY DAILY REACTION NEEDS TO BE: TO TAKE MY NOT-SO-ORDINARY, EVERYDAY ACTIVITY AND EXERCISE LIFE, LETTING GO OF NEGATIVE OUTLOOKS AND MAKING MY DAILY ALLOWANCE OF TRAINING, SPORT, FITNESS AND RECREATION A GENUINE EXPRESSION OF WORSHIP, THANKFUL FOR ALL GOD HAS TO OFFER ME. TO STOP COMPARING MYSELF TO OTHERS AND TRYING TO BE SOMEONE I'M NOT, BUT BY

EMBRACING WHAT GOD HAS FOR ME IS THE BEST THING I CAN DO FOR HIM.

SO DON'T MEASURE YOURSELF AGAINST OTHERS AND TRY TO FIT IN, BUT ALLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT TO CHANGE THE WAY YOU SEE THINGS. BE QUICK TO SEE WHAT GOD WANTS FROM YOU, BOUNCING ON YOUR TOES READY TO RESPOND. YOU ARE PERFECT IN GOD'S EYES, SO LET HIM BRING OUT THE BEST IN YOU.

ASSESS

- When was the last time you stopped to marvel at God's creation whilst exercising or playing sport?
- Where in your sporting life do you worry about others instead of yourself?
- What God-given sporting abilities do you have that you forget to see through God's eyes? E.G. coach, athletic, encourager.
- How can sport/exercise become part of our everyday worship?

ACTION

- While exercising, for every negative thought, think of two positive things
- Pray that God will allow you to see yourself through his eyes so that you see your sporting ability as a gift from God

Venture Deeper - Take Notice

Keep Learning 3A's

ASSESS

- What are your fitness/exercise goals?
- How does it make you feel when you achieve a goal?
- How is your self-esteem impacted whilst you are working towards a fitness or sporting goal?

ACTION

- Consider the following: Re-set, re-adjust, re-start, re-focus as many times as you need to. Just don't quit.
- What in your faith or sport, do you want to commit to learning more about?

APPLY

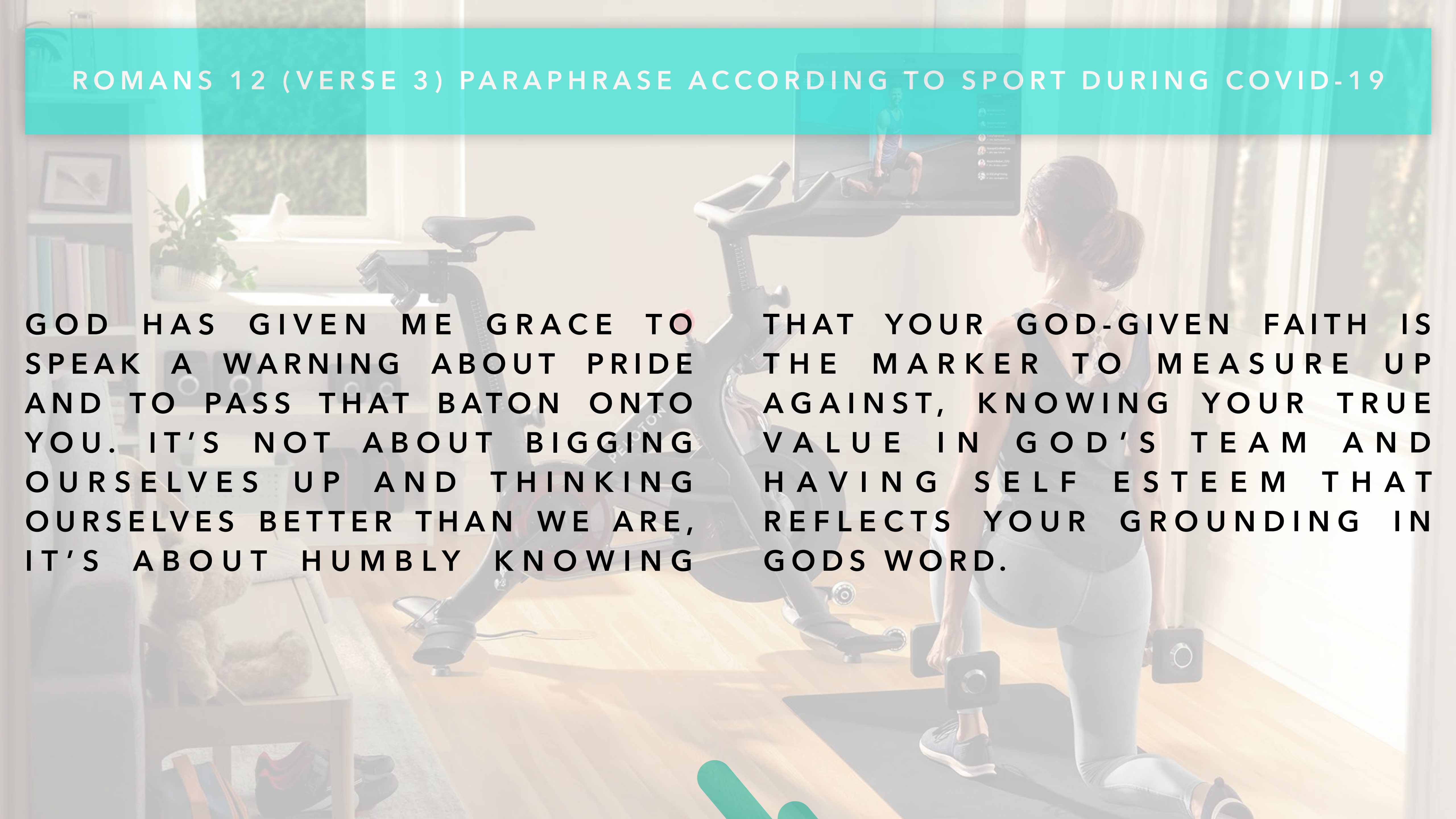
- *How you apply 'keep learning' is up to you, but here are some ideas based on different activities:*
- Walking or running: what could you listen to as you walk that will help you learn something new? Maybe subscribe to a podcast or download an audio book.

- Walking: learn something new about the surroundings you walk through
- Running: set yourself a new distance or time goal, listen to experts' advice on how to improve
- HIIT workout or zoom fitness class: is there something you could read-around to help improve your fitness/performance during these sessions?
- HIIT workout: can you ask for feedback from your instructor?
- Cycling: do you know how to look after your bike properly? Learning bike maintenance could help you and others.
- Cycling: set yourself a route challenge
- All sports: learn about someone's experience/journey in the sport that interests you. This could be by reading a book or blog, watching a film or listening to an interview.
- *As you 'keep learning', pray that God grants you humility in your new knowledge and that you might in turn be able to share your learning with others.*

ROMANS 12 (VERSE 3) PARAPHRASE ACCORDING TO SPORT DURING COVID-19

GOD HAS GIVEN ME GRACE TO SPEAK A WARNING ABOUT PRIDE AND TO PASS THAT BATON ONTO YOU. IT'S NOT ABOUT BIGGING OURSELVES UP AND THINKING OURSELVES BETTER THAN WE ARE, IT'S ABOUT HUMBLY KNOWING

THAT YOUR GOD-GIVEN FAITH IS THE MARKER TO MEASURE UP AGAINST, KNOWING YOUR TRUE VALUE IN GOD'S TEAM AND HAVING SELF ESTEEM THAT REFLECTS YOUR GROUNDING IN GODS WORD.



ASSESS

- Have there been times when you've thought you've known more than you did about a particular sport? If so, what happened?
- How does who we are in our sport measure up against who we try to be in our faith?
- How is your value in sport reflect your grounding in Gods word?
- What is sometimes the effect of sportsmen and women who become big headed in their ability?

ACTION

- Where do you need to ask God to help you to humbly share your faith through sport?
- Are there areas where you can humbly offer advice to others because of your sporting knowledge?
Pray that God gives you the opportunities to do this.
- Pray for opportunities that you can humbly learn and develop in your faith journey through sport, and in your exercise journey through faith.

Venture Deeper - Keep Learning

Connect 3A's

ASSESS

- Who is your 'go-to' person when you need support in your sport/fitness? What do they offer you that's helpful?
- How might connecting with others improve how you feel about your abilities or fitness or sport?
- List the people that you connected with in the last week through sport/exercise or training. Were you able to help them in anyway? If so how?

ACTION

- Consider this: 'How cool is it that the same God who created mountains and oceans and galaxies looked at you and thought the world needed one of you too!'
- Just as you might need to connect with others, others need to connect with you. Who else needs to hear this today? Instead of texting, why not pick up the phone to tell them.

APPLY

- *How you apply 'connect' is up to you, but here are some ideas based on different activities:*
- Walking: could you ask one other person to walk with you today?
- Walking: if you can't physically walk with someone, call a person you've not spoken to in a while. Ask how they are and really listen.

- Running: who could you share your run with? Give someone a call to speak to whilst you're out.
- Running: if you run the same route at a similar time each day, speak to the people you see regularly, it only needs to be a wave and 'good morning' to start with.
- HIIT workout or online fitness class: can you connect with others from your class or encourage someone who is also following a home workout regime? You could even encourage the person training!
- HIIT workout: invite someone you know to engage in the same programme and encourage each other to continue
- Cycling: be intentional on your route; could you deliver personal postcards to people you may have lost contact with to say hello to them.
- Cycling: connect with a local cycling community, you may not be able to cycle together but you can encourage and support others and share routes that you have found enjoyable.
- *As you 'connect', pray that God will speak through you to those you have conversations with. Ask God to provide opportunities to connect with new people; neighbours, work colleagues and others in your community.*

ROMANS 12 (VERSES 4-6) PARAPHRASE ACCORDING TO SPORT DURING COVID-19

WE, AS HUMANS, ARE MADE OF NUMEROUS PARTS THAT HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER, BUT ARE EACH UNIQUE AND IMPORTANT. IT'S JUST LIKE THIS WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD; WE ALL NEED TO WORK TOGETHER BUT EACH OF US HAVE SOMETHING TO CONTRIBUTE - WE ARE CRUCIAL IN OUR ROLE BUT LIMITED ON OUR OWN. A STRIKER OR A WICKET KEEPER CAN ACHIEVE VERY LITTLE ON THEIR OWN.

GOD'S MARVELLOUS GRACE IMPARTS TO EACH ONE OF US DIFFERENT GIFTS THAT HE HAS PLANNED FOR US, AND ONLY US, TO SHARE IN OUR OWN WAY WITH OTHERS.

SO WHATEVER GRACE-GIFT GOD HAS GIFTED YOU, USE IT TO YOUR FULL ABILITY.

IF YOU COACH, ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT WITH ALL YOU HAVE, REMOTELY IF NEEDED, WITHOUT JUDGEMENT; IF YOU SUPPORT FROM THE SIDE LINES, CHEER EVERY PERSON WITH EQUAL PASSION; IF YOU COMPETE, COMPETE FAIRLY AND TRAIN TO WIN BUT CONGRATULATE HUMBLY, AND WHEN YOU WIN, DO SO GRACEFULLY WITHOUT FANFARE. IF YOU LEAD, LEAD WITH PASSION AND BY SETTING AN EXAMPLE TO OTHERS.

ASSESS

- What does this passage tell us about the importance of connecting with others?
- Why might this be particularly important in sport/exercise?
- What is your grace-gift in sport? E.G. encourage to train others, being active, ability to compete. How might God be wanting you to use that gift to connect with others during this time?
- During a time when we have to maintain our exercise and fitness more independently, how might our grace-gifts in sport help us to stay connected?

ACTION

- Who might you need to connect with today that has a different grace-gift to you but that you can learn from?
- Who could you connect with, through the grace-gift of sport, because they might be feeling that they don't have something to contribute.
- Pray for opportunities to lead by example through your sport and fitness lifestyle, for the power to work together and staying connected.
- Ask God to place on your heart someone who needs you to connect with them, and to encourage them either through their or your grace gift in sport.
- Thank God for the sporting grace-gift he has given you and that because of your grace-gift you are part of the most amazing team. Pray that God allows you to connect and share that knowledge with others

Venture Deeper - Connect

Be Active 3A's

ASSESS

- What is the biggest benefit of exercise for you?
- Does the sport or exercise you take part in reduce your stress and anxiety? If so how?
- Who/what has been your biggest motivation/encouragement in the activity that you do? How has this helped you?

ACTION

- *In addition to or instead of your normal exercise/training/sport today, try something new:*
- Yoga, dance class, HIIT workout, gardening
- Share your experience with someone

APPLY

- *How you apply 'be active' is up to you, but here are some ideas:*
- Do your activity at a different time of day to usual - what differences do you notice?
- Encourage one other person to be active! Could they join you either virtually (if inside) or in person (if outside)
- *While you are 'active', thank God for your ability to move and enjoy the freedom of exercise and sport that he has given us.*

ROMANS 12 (VERSES 9-13) PARAPHRASE ACCORDING TO SPORT DURING COVID-19

HAVE THE ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM TO SERVE THE LORD, AND KEEP YOUR FIRE BURNING. SHOW TO OTHERS THE IMPACT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH WHO YOU ARE, RUN FROM AND PLAY IN DEFENCE OF THOSE PLAYING DIRTY; HOLD ON TO GOOD PRINCIPLE AND BE HUMBLE. ALLOWING HIM TO CONSTANTLY RECHARGE YOUR EXCITEMENT FOR DOING HIS WORK AND CONTENT WITH SECOND PLACE.

LET HOPE SHINE THROUGH YOU, SHARING JOY ALWAYS WITH OTHERS AND BUILDING THEM UP. DON'T GIVE UP WHEN IT'S NOT GOING YOUR WAY, WHEN RULES CHANGE, AND WHEN TEAM MATES AREN'T PHYSICALLY AROUND YOU. KEEP COMMUNICATING WITH GOD. KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE NEEDS OF OTHERS (AND YOURSELF!) AND DON'T BE AFRAID TO HELP OR ASK FOR HELP. EAGERLY WELCOME ALL - EVERYONE'S PART OF THE TEAM!

ASSESS

- What do you do on days where you don't feel like being active?
- How can being enthusiastic in your sport and play shine God's light?
- How does not having team mates around us impact our ability to build each other up and motivate one another to keep being active?
- How do we make sure all are encouraged to be active and that no one is left out?

ACTION

- Seek out God in your every day 'activeness' as you workout both physically and spiritually
- Increase your activity and connectivity, going out of your way to be salt and light to others
- Pray that God will shine through your willingness to be a 'joy bringer' to your neighbours and those that you love.
- Re-charge, re-activate, re-establish, re-imagine as many times as you need, just don't give up!

Venture Deeper - Be Active

Give 3A's

ASSESS

- What is the best sporting gift someone has given you?
- What do you feel you have to offer others in sport or recreation?
- How important is the simple act of giving time? Why?

ACTION

- What could you give to actively enable others to take part in sport?
- Sort through your sports wear or equipment. What do you have that you don't use and could someone else make better use of?

APPLY

- *How you apply 'give' is up to you, but here are some ideas based on different activities:*
- Walking: who can you give time to by calling whilst you walk?
- Walking: could you deliver something to someone en route? A cup of tea or some flowers?

- Running: how many people do you see while on your run? Saying hello or smiling might just be all that person needs from you.
- Running: when events happen locally; could you volunteer rather than compete?
- Cycling: maybe you could deliver something 'meals on wheels style' to somebody who would benefit from your kindness?
- Cycling: maybe you could teach someone how to ride a bike at a social distance?
- HIIT: who do you know that is trying to improve their fitness? What encouragement can you give to them?
- HIIT: instead of receiving, maybe you could lead an online workout for people who have a phobia of workouts?
- *Whilst reflecting on 'giving', thank God for all that you have that allows you the privilege of giving, and that even for those who have so little to offer, the gifts most worth giving cost nothing.*

ROMANS 12 (VERSES 14-16, 20/21) PARAPHRASE ACCORDING TO SPORT DURING COVID-19

BLESS EVERYONE (INCLUDING THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN YOUR OPPONENTS OR OFFICIALS), DON'T FORGET ANYONE WHILE THEY'RE NOT IN PLAIN SIGHT) DON'T BAD MOUTH UNDER YOUR BREATH OR BEHIND YOUR FRONT DOOR. CELEBRATE WITH PLAYERS, ATHLETES AND NEIGHBOURS WHILE THEY CELEBRATE AND DON'T BE AFRAID TO SHARE THEIR TEARS WHEN THEY'RE DOWN.

GET ALONGSIDE ONE ANOTHER, DON'T THINK YOURSELF TOO GOOD OR BE ELITIST. YOU ARE NOT TOO IMPORTANT TO SERVE OTHERS TOO.

FIND NEW WAYS OF FRIENDSHIP AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH THOSE YOU CONSIDER WEAK PLAYERS, AND MUCK IN IN THE MENIAL TASKS WITH THOSE HUMBLE ENOUGH TO DO THEM. DON'T THINK YOUR TOO GOOD FOR THEM OR BE SMUG.

IF YOU SEE SOMEONE STRUGGLING, HELP THEM! HOLD THEM UP IN PRAYER, SEND A MESSAGE, GIVE THEM A CALL TO GIVE WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT. WIN PEOPLE OVER WITH KINDNESS. LET THE CHALLENGES AND SET BACKS MAKE YOU EVEN STRONGER AND ACHIEVE MORE, GET THE BEST OF THE WORST BY SHOWING GOD.

ASSESS

- What has been the best act of giving you have seen in sport recently?
- Who/what are you at risk of forgetting while you're not training with others?
- How can giving within sport translate to the other side of sport?
- How does our own giving lift others up and give them a glimpse of God?

ACTION

- Reflect on the 5 themes from this Venture. Which one(s) have you been impacted by the most? Why?
- What will you give as a result of this series of Venture?
- Ask God to keep us humble, never thinking ourselves too good to offer help and support to others.
- Pray for opportunities to give and share your faith with others through sport and play
- Thank God for occasions where you have already been able to give in His name and help others to see Him through your actions.

Venture Deeper - Give