

The Loss of Sport/The Return of Sport/The Role of Sport/The Power of Sport Reflective Exercises

How can we communicate the gospel to people of sport?

How does the gospel bring good news to the brokenness of sport?

How do we utilize the influence, power and role of sport in the world to bring the gospel to the entire world?

Our ministries revolve around the gospel presented to the people of sport and utilizing the platform of sport to present to gospel to the fans of sport.

A pdf document has been created that contains the web locations of a number of videos produced by sport federations, Olympic and Paralympic committees, corporate sponsors and other stake holders in sport over the last few months. They represent how the world of sport plays such a vital part of many peoples lives, why the loss of sport is affecting so many, why the world needs a return to sport and other issues.

Below is an exercise designed to help you explore the world and culture of sport as it reflects and adjusts to the Covid 19 realities of 2020 and beyond. The exercise involves viewing some of the collected videos, reflecting on their content and messages, discussing them with others and creating a similar exercise that you can take to the people that you minister to.

How can we weave the gospel into each of these messages? How does the gospel speak to these messages? Is the gospel hidden in any of these messages?

A Reflection and Discussion Exercise

We invite you to work through the following steps:

- 1. It is suggested that each person watch the “BT Sport: Time for a new Season” video... even a few times.**

It is an amazing summary of the covid lockdown period, how it affected sport and culture. You may have to pause and take notes as the script is fast paced and full of statements, questions and observations about the world and culture of sport. If you enable “Subtitles/Close Captions” in Youtube you can see the lyrics. There is even a quote from the bible. Did you catch it? Each time you watch it, you may discover something new. Watching and reflecting on this video can help prepare you for discussing and reflecting in your chosen group discussions outlined below. How does this creative combination of an artist, a performer, a music video, a sport highlight reel, and a social statement touch you, your thinking and your approach to ministry in the covid and post covid reality?

- 2. Meet (online or in person) as a ministry team and choose one of the themes below to work through and discuss.**

Choose a theme that would interest you most or be most helpful for you to study and discuss with your local ministry team and one that can be applied your ministry audience. Suggested videos are provided but you may add or subtract videos from the full list at your group’s discretion and time limits. Most of the videos are less than 2 minutes long.

- 3. On your own:**

Watch the suggested videos for your chosen theme before you meet as a group. You may need to watch them a few times to get everything that they are communicating visually, through the music and the script. It is suggested that you take some notes as you watch. You may want to assign one person in the group to write out the entire script of select videos so that you have a record of all that is said and you can refer to it in your discussion.

Note what you liked, didn’t like, agreed with, disagreed with, gave you an “aha” moment, gave you insight into the world of sport, things you relate to as an athlete/coach, anything that made you angry or frustrated or even gave you a ministry idea.

Come up with some discussion points or questions that you could take to the group.

4. Meet as a group:

Watch again any of the videos to refresh your memory of them.

Discuss with your group the observations that you personally came up with during your individual watching.

Discuss any questions or issues that you came up with.

Work through the provided questions if they are helpful or applicable.

If you were to use these videos in your ministry (eg online groups, a conference, a weekly meeting, chapel talk etc) what are we saying to our audience? Are we endorsing the message(s) of the video, questioning their message, or reflecting on it through a gospel lens?

Talk about how to apply what you have learned to your local ministry.

Create a similar lesson or Bible study based on these videos that you can take to your ministry audience.

Choose An Exercise From One Of The Following 7 Themes:

1. Motivation/Inspiration

Choose And Watch From This List:

Adidas Ready for Sport: short

Adidas Ready for Sport

Adidas Whats One More

Adidas Xander Schauffele: The Rush

COC(Canadian Olympic Committee): Our Defining Moment

CBC: A Thousand Moments Are Coming

COC (Canadian Olympic Committee): See You In 2021 Paralympians

IPC (International Paralympic Committee): Wait For The Greats

London Sport: We are not spectators

Nike: Never Too Far Down You Can't Stop Us

Nike: Play For The World You Can't Stop Us

Nike: You Can't Stop Sport

Team England: Living Through History Commonwealth Games 2022

Suggested Discussion Questions For Your Group:

How do these videos motivate or inspire you?

What motivation "techniques" do they use? (Script, music, examples, role models)

Can you recognize any motivation "types" from AIA Total Athlete Workshop motivation series? How are they utilized or communicated?

How effective are these video messages in helping athletes and fans to not give up on sport? What makes them "work"? Where do they come up short?

What role can we play as sport ministers in continuing to motivate our athletes to not give up their sport at this time?

What good news (gospel) do we have for athletes who are still waiting for competitions to resume?

Create a bible study, discussion session or group presentation on this theme that you can take to your ministry audience.

2. Benefits of Sport/Power of sport/Role of sport

Choose And Watch From This List:

Adidas AllBlacks Ready for Sport

Adidas Runners Chasing Meaning: Ready for Sport

Adidas Donovan Mitchell: Playing for Something

Adidas Mikaela Shiffrin: The return

Adidas Patrick Mahomes: Playing for Change

Adidas Ready for Sport : short

Ready for Sport

Adidas Xander Schauffele: The Rush

AIA USA Leadership Academy

COC(Canadian Olympic Committee): Our Defining Moment

COC (Canadian Olympic Committee): See You In 2021 Paralympians

Chelsea Football Back to the Bridge

FA 90 Minutes to Change the World

Formula E Racing Purpose Driven Positively Charged

McLaren: We Race as One

Nike: Play For The World You Cant Stop Us

Wales Cricket: The Weight

Suggested Discussion Questions For Your Group:

Sport seems to provide great benefits to those who participate and for all of society. According to the videos some benefits include joy, unity, collective identity, life lessons, and giving us a story bigger than ourselves.

Do your athletes embrace the benefits that sport can bring to their lives? Do you talk about them as “gifts from God” or use other biblical language about the beauty and positive aspects of sport with your athletes? How do they respond?

From these videos, sport also seems to have an important role in the world and its’ role has just increased, become more important and more relevant.

Do your athletes accept and/or embrace these roles and responsibilities?

Do they feel any pressure or added burden as a role model, spokesperson, influencer?

Is it part of our job as sport ministers or sport chaplains to help athletes carry out these roles? If yes:

Are we doing a good job? How can we help them carry out these roles?

Does the gospel or message of the scriptures include these responsibilities in your opinion?

How can we encourage our more high profile athletes to be visible and vocal about their faith in Jesus without manipulating or exploiting them?

In what ways can we build into them and prepare them for these roles?

If not:

How do we address these issues and give our athletes a perspective on them?

Is our society or our various sport stake holders expecting too much from sport?

Where/how can sport contribute to society? Where or when will it fail?

Create a bible study, discussion session or group presentation on this theme that you can take to your ministry audience.

3. Women in Sport

Watch:

AIA Women's Basketball Leadership Academy

Adidas Candace Parker: What we leave behind

Adidas Garbiñe Muguruza Inside Out

Adidas Mikaela Shiffrin: The return

Adidas Sarah Nurse: Ready For Change

Netball: Together Will Rise Again

World Rugby: Start Rugby become Unstoppable

World Rugby: Start Rugby become Unstoppable 2 (same script, different images)

Suggested Discussion Questions For Your Group:

As a male I hesitate to even suggest how to discuss this topic. If you don't like these suggested discussion questions or ideas please feel free to discard them and develop your own.

How are these videos portraying women in sport? Are you in agreement with these portrayals? How are they motivating women in sport?

What kind of role models are they providing for girls and women? In what ways are they healthy? In what ways might they be hurting?

What is in the message and life of Jesus that might be missing from their approach?

How can sport ministries develop new ways to communicate the gospel to girls and women in sport? What issues need to be addressed?

Where should sport ministries expand their ministry to female sport?

Create a discussion module to take to the girls and women in your ministry audience to that addresses women's issues and integrates the gospel message.

4. Sport Needs To Lead Or Gives A Platform For Social Change

Watch:

Adidas Candace Parker: What we leave behind
Adidas Donovan Mitchell: Playing for Something
Adidas Patrick Mahomes: Playing for Change
Adidas Sarah Nurse: Ready For Change
FA 90 Minutes to Change the World
Formula E Racing Purpose Driven Positively Charged
Lewis Hamilton Still Rising
McLaren: We Race as One
Nike: You Can't Stop Sport

Suggested Discussion Questions For Your Group:

How have these videos summarized or portrayed the renewed interest in the need for social change in sport and all of society?
What have you personally learned from the athletes in these videos?
How have you personally been affected by any of these issues. (share only if you feel comfortable)
Are you seeing an increased interest or involvement in these issues in the people of your ministry audience?
Should sport ministries become actively involved in these issues?
What Good News (gospel) do we have for the broken, forgotten or marginalized in the world of sport? How do we lovingly communicate that?

Create a bible study, discussion session or group presentation on this theme that you can take to your ministry audience.

5. Adidas vs Nike: The Elite Athlete's Platform

Watch:

Adidas AllBlacks Ready for Sport
Adidas Candace Parker: What we leave behind
Adidas Mikaela Shiffrin: The return
Adidas Xander Schauffele: The Rush
Nike: Never Too Far Down You Can't Stop Us
Nike: Play For The World You Cant Stop Us
Nike: You Can't Stop Sport

Suggested Discussion Questions For Your Group:

These two sport clothing companies are sport culture giants, money makers, cultural influencers, sponsors and rivals. They each have produced very creative videos during the covid pandemic that feature their sponsored athletes. But the two companies seem to take a different approach.

What is the difference in their marketing message?

What is the difference in their portrayal of the elite athlete?

How are they creating, utilizing, enhancing or exploiting the platform of these athletes?

How do they communicate their responsibility to be a role model?

These companies want/need to sell their products to millions of people. How do you think their audience (which are the same people we want to take the message of the gospel to) reacts to their messaging? What parts of their messaging in your opinion is healthy? What parts are hurtful or maybe even deceptive? What is a sport ministry response to their messages?

These videos never mention or highlight the products that their companies sell. Yet their audience spends millions of dollars purchasing their products in response to these commercials. How do you account for this?

How can we be influencers for the gospel in light of their massive appeal, power, reach and messaging?

Create a bible study, discussion session or group presentation on this theme that you can take to your ministry audience.

6. 3rd Age of Sport: The Future Of Sport – The Future Of Sport Ministry

Watch: Mailman 3rd Age of Sport

Read: Mailman 3rd Age of Sport Manifesto.

Suggested Discussion Questions For Your Group:

Do you agree or disagree with their assessment, evaluations and recommendations?

They state: *“With competition for peoples’ attention fiercer than ever, we must reduce the friction.”* How can sport ministries get peoples attention so that we can share the Good News in compassionate, relevant ways and with integrity?”

They state: *“We must throw out our old play books and reflect the way our audiences consume, engage and participate.”*

Does your sport ministry organization or your personal ministry need to do this? Why? and in what ways?

Do you feel equipped to be a minister of the gospel to the world of sport and utilizing the world of sport now and in the post covid world?

As a group:

Rewrite the manifesto (or create a video) in one of the following options:

- as if you were writing your sport ministry manifesto
- as a sport ministry vision statement for the future
- as the communication strategy for your ministry's social media (website, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter etc)
- as a communication piece for donor development or personal fund raising
- as a lesson or discussion time that you would take to your athletes to challenge/invite them to have a ministry to their peers in sport or use their platform to share Christ to the world.

7. Analyze The Videos Through The "Creation/Fall/Redemption Grid" Of Genesis 1-3.

Read and familiarize yourself again the main points of Genesis chapters 1 to 3.

Watch:

Adidas AllBlacks: Ready for Sport

Adidas Garbine Muguruza: Inside Out

Adidas: Ready for Sport : short

Adidas: Ready for Sport

Adidas Runners Chasing Meaning: Ready for Sport

BT Sport: Time for a new Season

CBC: A Thousand Moments Are Coming

Chelsea Football Back to the Bridge

COC (Canadian Olympic Committee) see you in 2021 Paralympians

IPC Wait for the Greats

Lewis Hamilton Still Rising

Suggested Discussion Questions For Your Group:

God called everything He created "good". The essence of play and sport must therefore be good. How do the videos reflect on, rejoice in or describe that good?

Sin entered the world through Eve and Adam's disobedience. All of creation is frustrated and "groans" (Rom 8:20-22). Some of the effects are: hiding from God, "fig leaf" human solutions, shame, and blame are now part of the human condition and are reflected in and through sport.

How do the videos portray, display, lament or maybe even glorify/justify the brokenness of sport?

God initiates with the humans, provides a better solution to their fig leaf covering (leather covering) which required the spilling of blood. He promises someone who will provide victory and defeat Satan. Jesus is the fulfillment of those actions and His promises.

Do the videos reflect any of this hope? What kind of hope or vision for the future do they reflect through sport?

Are there any new ways that we can take this message of forgiveness and hope to the people and world of sport?

As you have viewed these videos and studied the passage what have you learned? Do you have any renewed motivation or vision for taking the gospel to the people of sport?

Create a discussion group/Bible study based on this Genesis grid applied to sport and share it with your ministry audience.

Other Videos

If you speak Spanish or Arabic take a look at these two videos. Let us know what message they are communicating.

Adidas Lionel Messi: Ready for Sport

Adidas Mohamed Salah No More Waiting: Ready for Sport

Some Fun

If you just need a break from all this serious reflection and discussion here are a few fun, humorous and feel good videos:

Barilla pasta commercial: Federer Rooftop Match

Paddy Power: The Safest Party in Town

Tennis: Play Your Way

If you have questions, issues, ideas, want to talk through the subjects or are looking for more resources on certain subjects please email me at davej@athletesinaction.ca