



IS YOUR GAME SECULAR OR SACRED

by Julie Caldwell

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Colorado Springs CO

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It is not difficult to see that there is a “dark side” to sports. Too often we hear of coaches or athletes who are trapped in the pride, self-centeredness, greed, cheating or corruption of sports. But does sports have to be “dark”? What if sports was conducted in such a way that it was considered SACRED rather than SECULAR? What if the ground on which you played or coached was as holy as the ground on which you planted your knees in prayer?

- How would you define sacred?

A few synonyms for sacred include: holy, set apart, consecrated, or devoted. It denotes being devoted to God. It signifies an act or state in which people or things are separated from ordinary or common usage and reserved exclusively for God.

If you have personally placed your trust in Jesus as Savior or Rescuer, you have been separated from ordinary or common usage and reserved exclusively for God (1 Peter 2:9-12). But have you ever considered the things you do as being SACRED?

How easily we can get caught in the trap of categorizing areas of our lives as sacred or secular. For example, we may classify money, music, food, school, work, social networking or hobbies as secular, but studying God’s Word, praying or sharing our faith in Jesus as sacred. Yet, is it possible that each of these could be either secular or sacred?

- Choose two of the areas mentioned and describe in what ways they could be considered secular and in what ways they could be considered sacred.

As you think about what makes something secular or sacred, consider this: **What if God’s design included just ONE category, and we viewed ALL of life as if EVERYTHING was sacred?** I think the Apostle Paul might have had this in mind when he challenged us with the following words: “So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

- What are some things you could include in the “whatever you do” category of your everyday life?

For many of you, sports is an aspect of your everyday life. The question then becomes, has your time on the field or court been designated as sacred? In other words, has your attitude, actions and words on the field or court been separated from ordinary or common usage and reserved exclusively for God’s glory?

Consider and answer the following questions:

- As an athlete or coach, have you considered your time on the field or court more as secular or sacred? What are some examples of how you have view it as secular?
- If the field or court is already a sacred place for you, or if it were to become a sacred place, how might this affect the way you practice, compete or coach?
- What are some things you can do to prepare yourself or remind yourself that the field or court is becoming a sacred place for you?

When Moses met with God, he heard, "...you are standing on holy ground!" (see Exodus 3:5 and Acts 7:30-33). Joshua heard the words, "Where you are standing is holy ground!" just before he went into battle (see Joshua 5:15). As it was with Moses and Joshua, may it also be with you. As you enter the field or step on the court, may you hear God declare, "You are standing on holy ground!" And as you hear these words, may you be reminded that it is, *"Not to us, LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness."* (Psalm 115:1)



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