

For Him

Guidance for Christian Athletes

Written by Vickie Benson

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Acknowledgements

I would like to take a moment to thank all of my former teammates, coaches, and players. Without all of you, I would not have had the experiences written about in this book. I am so thankful that the Lord put a desire and passion in my heart for athletics! So much of who I am was shaped through the lessons I have learned through sports!

Thank you, Meaghan, Taylor and Molly. You know why!

Thank you, Jillyn, for the awesome job you did on the cover!

I also want to thank my Hyde Park family for believing in me and giving me the opportunity to serve the Lord at such an amazing place!

Thank you, Bonnie, for all of your help and wisdom!

Thank you, Brian and Jacqujoy Littlefield, for all you have done!

Thank you, Kacy, for being an amazing husband and father to our incredible children!

About the Author

Vickie Benson lives in Pflugerville, Texas, with her husband, Kacy and two sons, Coleton and Tyton. She teaches and coaches at Hyde Park Baptist School in Austin, Texas, where she teaches bible classes and is the Girl's Athletic Director and Head Girl's Basketball coach. Vickie has been coaching Varsity sports at Hyde Park since 2001. She has taken teams to the State Tournament 7 times in 7 years at Hyde Park, earning 1 State Title, 2 Finalist Title, and 4 Semi-Finalist Titles. Vickie has a desire to serve the Lord in all she does. She is able to travel with Kacy and speak to girls across the country. Vickie loves her family and enjoys every moment she gets with them.

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my mom and dad, who have always been the biggest encouragers to me. Thanks, Mom and Dad, for not letting me quit basketball when I was discouraged and frustrated. Thanks for loving me no matter how many points I scored or how fast I could run. Thanks, Dad for building me a basketball goal when I was 10 so I could pursue something I loved. Thanks for spurring me on to write this book. Thanks for listening when I was nervous and uncertain. Thanks for praying me through to the finish! I love you!



Dear Coach,

I searched many bookstores and Internet sites when I began coaching to find a book to help me facilitate devotions with the girls I coached. I could not find what I was looking for. I decided to write my own from my personal experiences. What you are about to read is a collection of devotions I wrote. Some of the devotions are great to read on game days, right before a game. Others are good to assign your team to read between one game and the next or on the bus on the way to a game. Some are a wonderful way to fellowship together when your team is traveling to overnight tournaments. Each devotion shares a real story, along with “pre-game energizers.” These pre-game energizers are food for your athletes to think about and discuss together. There is also a journal section after each set of “pre-game energizers,” called a “game summary” for your athletes to write about each game or week. There is also a section at the end of the book for your athletes to sum up their season. The memories they will have on paper will be priceless as they prepare for life.

*Blessings,
Vickie*

Dear Athlete,

What an exciting time of life you are in! Participating in athletics and being a part of a team is an opportunity for you to learn life lessons while doing something you love. God cares about everything in your life, including sports. I believe that if you seek God in the area of athletics, He will show you things to help you use your talents and gifts He has given you as well as prepare for the future. Through sports, He can help you practice to be a strong Christian woman, wife, and mother. Before you read each devotion, ask God to open your heart and eyes to see the lesson for you and your team. If your team does not currently participate in devotions, ask your teammates to read along with you. Even if it starts with just one other person than you, start now. Read a devotion on the way to a game, while you are at a tournament, or even in the locker room after practice. Talk about it with your teammates. Share with them the things that God reveals to you. At the end of each set of “pre-game energizers,” there is a journal section called “Game Summary.” Write a game summary after each game or once a week. See what God will do with you and your teammates by the end of the season. There is also a section at the end of the book for you to sum up the season. I am hopeful that after you read this devotion all the way through that God will have grown you and your team! I pray that your season will be blessed and that God will move in your team in ways you never could have imagined.

*Blessings,
Vickie*

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I'm Not Good Enough

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Psalm 139:13-14

So many girls spend their lives feeling as if they are not good enough and will never measure up. That simply is not true. God does not mess up. He has never made a mistake. It is time to get rid of that negative voice inside that says, "I am not good enough."

We spend so much time comparing ourselves to others. We think things like, "If only I was as strong as she is, or if only I could shoot like she does, or if only I was as pretty as she is, or if only I was as athletic as she is. The wish list will never end. If we attain one thing, we will be left wanting another. The only way to break that cycle is to be content with who we are. We do not spend enough time being thankful for what it is that makes us unique and set apart from anybody else. Sure, we may not be "as good" as somebody else no matter how hard we work, but we are what we are. Yes, we should strive to improve, but we cannot compare ourselves to what others are or have. It is not healthy for us to do that.

Much of my childhood I spent wishing I was somebody else. It would have been so great to trade places with a cute, thin, beautiful girl. I had been a chubby girl when I was young. People at school used to tease me, and I was so embarrassed. My personality was pretty shy, and I was not able even to talk to my parents about it. Somehow, I thought they would agree with everybody else. There were so many negative feelings I had, such as I did not deserve anything good. As I got older and involved in sports, I felt

even more inadequate. My body was not toned or even in that great shape. I got into high school and fell into the trap of an abusive relationship. I really thought that was what I deserved. That left me feeling even more worthless. Much of what was going on then was what led to the eating disorders I struggled with a few years later. At that point, I just wanted to be somebody, anybody else. I could not escape my lowly feelings.

It is not possible for us to become someone else, but we can transform the way we think about ourselves. We can also decide who we will surround ourselves with and what voices we will choose to listen to. When I separated myself from people and things that made me feel inferior, I began to feel greater esteem about myself. Then, when I was about to graduate from college and made the life-changing decision to ask Jesus to be Lord of my life, my thoughts about myself changed as well. I started to read Scripture and see what God had to say about me. I made new choices to surround myself with people who would encourage me and build me up.

Our world today tells us to be like everybody else. That is not the way God intended it. We are to be who we are. So many of us do not even know what that would be because we have tried to be somebody we are not. Discovering who you are and being confident about it can also change the way you see yourself as an athlete. Be you, work hard, and know that you are good enough. Remember, God does not make mistakes.

All beautiful you are, my darling; there is no flaw in you.

Song of Solomon 4:7

Pre-Game Energizer

1. Describe a time when you felt like you didn't measure up.
2. What is something significant and unique about you?

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