

Sports Participants' Prayer of Love for God and Their Neighbor

Scripture Reading:

Psalm 138:2, I John 4:7-21

Reflections of the Heart:

The fruit of the Spirit is Love. Only as we live in God's love, can we fulfill His will in our lives. The believer must become Love-inspired, Love-mastered and Love-driven.

ONE Prayer:

Almighty Father, thank You for loving all sports participants despite the way they sometimes act or think. Thank You for giving them the Holy Spirit to fill their hearts with Your love, so that they may share love with others. Thank You for utilizing sports as a means of exercising athletic gifts from You. We thank You for sports as a way to earn a living and learn or practice important life lessons, including loving others – even while they pursue victory in competitions. Lord, we come before You clapping our hands and shouting joyful praise to You. You are the great King of all the earth. You subdue the nations before us and put our enemies under our feet. Our hearts are confident in You, Father. Because of this confidence, we will sing Your praises. We will wake the dawn with our song, Lord, among all the people. We will sing Your praises among the nations for Your unfailing love is as high as the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.

Glorious Father, we decree that all sports participants will commit to loving You with all their hearts, all their souls, and all their minds. This is the greatest and most important commandment of all. In the same spirit, as they participate in sports, they will also commit to loving their neighbors as themselves. We confess that the Holy Spirit will fill and control them as they commit to doing Your will. While engaging in sports competitions, they will be patient and kind instead of acting jealous, boastful, proud or rude. They will not demand their own way, but they will be considerate of others and their opinions, including their opponents and game officials. They will not be irritable or keep a record of being wronged. But they will be joyful and quick to forgive. They commit to living a righteous life. They will be patient and will not repay evil for evil. As they compete in sports, they will let their light shine so that people will see their good works and glorify You, our Father.

As a sports participant, how will you show your love for God and for your neighbor by your actions?

Holy Spirit, as sports participants strive to improve and win as individual athletes, coaches and teams participating in sports, show them how to truly love the Father and their neighbors. Reveal to them habits, mindsets and attitudes that prevent them from being truly obedient to the Father. Help them to not deceive themselves by thinking they are walking in love while using their tongues to curse others who have been made in the Father's image. In this world where they are frequently told to put themselves first, we ask that You help them to truly put the Father first in their lives, and to esteem their neighbor better than themselves. Help them as athletes, coaches, teachers and parents to be good role models for children and youth and fans.

Exalted Father, forgive sports participants for all acts of sinfulness. Forgive them for, at times, for being disrespectful and apathetic towards You. Forgive those who murmur and complain and do not show their love and appreciation for all that You do. Forgive them when they are impatient with their neighbor. Forgive those who pick and choose to whom they will show love. Lord, forgive me for ***(list any sins that you have committed)***. Holy Spirit, remind all sports participants of those they need to forgive and help them to be quick to forgive. As for me, Holy Spirit, bring to my remembrance those I need to forgive. ***(Take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to show you names or faces of people that you may need to forgive. As He shows you, say aloud, "I forgive name of person(s)." Now, trust the Lord to heal any wounds in your soul caused by unforgiveness.)***

Holy Spirit, help all sports participants to not yield to temptation; but deliver them from the evil one.

Eternal Lord, You are God alone. You created the heavens and the earth; You put everything in its place. You made the world to be lived in, not a place of empty chaos. You are the Lord and there is no other. You only speak what is true and declare only what is right. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture References for the Written Text: Romans 5:5, Psalm 47:1-3, Psalm 57:7-10, Matthew 22:37-39, I Corinthians 13:4, I Peter 3:9, Matthew 5:16, James 3:9, Philippians 2:3, Matthew 6:13, Isaiah 45:18-19

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