

Griffin leaves mark on NCAA

What are the marks of a committed Christian?

Even in defeat, Blake Griffin had few doubters that he is the best basketball player in college. After Oklahoma's loss to North Carolina in the South Regional NCAA tournament, many fans and reporters wondered if they had seen the last of him. His sophomore season ended with a 23-point, 16 rebound game leading to speculation that he will likely turn pro next year after making his mark on the NCAA this year. When his coach was asked if his 6-foot-10 star player's college career was over, Sooners coach Jeff Chapel said, "It probably is, but we'll see."

Whenever a great athlete retires or moves to the next level, he or she leaves their mark on the sport. In the NBA, Michael Jordan made his mark before passing the baton to LeBron James who at 24 years old is just beginning to make his mark.

What's true in sports, is also true spiritually. There are certain characteristics or fruit as described in the "fruits of the Spirit" that mark a person's spiritual life (Galatians 5:22-23).

Christians have displayed a number of different kinds of symbols to mark their identity as believers. More important than all the pins and stickers and buttons, are the internal, spiritual signs of a true believer.

Jesus gives three distinguishing marks of a committed Christian in John 13:31-38.

First, the committed Christian is absorbed with his **Lord's glory**. The purpose for which we exist is to give glory to God. "If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once." v.32

When Blake Griffin was asked how he glorifies the Lord in basketball, he said, "I give all the credit to God, and give Him credit for Him blessing me and putting me in the right situations around the right people."

Second, the committed Christian is preoccupied with his Lord's glory, but he also is **filled with His love**. This distinguishing mark translates into practical living and should be part of every athlete's life. "...love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." v.34

Third, the committed Christian is **loyal**. It's more implied than expressed in John 13. However, it's included in the illustration of the Apostle Peter who often struggled with sin, but ultimately proved that he had genuine faith.

While you may lack the marks of a committed Christian, God can transform you into a true disciple if you surrender and let Him have your will. The life of a committed Christian may be costly, but it is the only life that counts for eternity.



WARMUP

1. Watch the internet interview with John MacArthur. Go to www.youtube.com and search for "John MacArthur on true salvation through Jesus Christ"

WORKOUT

1. What stood out to you from watching the interview with John MacArthur? What are the marks of true salvation?
2. Read John 13:31-38. How can you give the Lord the glory in sports? What are the practical ways you can love your teammates and coaches? How would someone know that you are loyal to Christ? What might be a test of your loyalty to Christ in sports?
3. How might the life of a committed Christian be costly?

WRAPUP

This week, memorize...

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." John 13:34 (ESV)

PRAYER

Lord, help me to understand what it means to be surrendered to you and allow you to transform my life...

GOSPEL FOCUS

The Gospel is, first and foremost, God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19). It answers the eternal question of how a just God can rightly justify wicked men (Romans 3:26). It points to Christ alone, who bore the sins of His people upon the cross, was forsaken of God, and crushed under the full force of His just wrath against sin. The Good News of the Gospel is that through Christ's death, the justice of God was satisfied and salvation was won for a great multitude of people. – Paul Washer

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