



## Champion Coach Note: Cardinal Virtue of Temperance

Legendary Notre Dame football coach, Lou Holtz, said, "Without self-discipline, success is impossible, period." Self-discipline is a key aspect of the virtue of temperance. Temperance encourages individuals to practice self-discipline and self-sacrifice in order to achieve balance in their lives.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines temperance as, "the moral virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods. It ensures the will's mastery over instincts and keeps desires within the limits of what is honorable." Desires are not inherently bad things; however, when unrestrained, desires can cloud one's moral reasoning and judgment. Practicing the virtue of temperance allows an individual to view the world through the lens of love, unclouded by passions or desires. The great philosopher, Cicero, warned, "All our disorders result from intemperance." Individuals should not allow themselves to be mastered by pleasures or ideologies. Rather, they should train themselves to control their appetites in order to focus on the things that truly matter and that help them become the best version of themselves.

Athletes, especially, must practice the virtue of temperance. Self-discipline is critical to personal development and success. Athletes must hold themselves to incredibly high standards in their training and preparation. They must eat well



"Virtues are formed by prayer. Prayer preserves temperance. Prayer suppresses anger. Prayer prevents emotions of pride and envy. Prayer draws into the soul the Holy Spirit, and raises humans to Heaven."

~ St. Ephrem of Syria

### **Athlete Reflection:**

Have your athletes watch the video and reflect on the following questions:

How bad do you want it? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsSC2vx7zFQ>

Jeremy Lin: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLzrLXQlbwM>

1. Do I hold myself to a high standard and push myself to be a better athlete and individual?
2. Do I make personal sacrifices and delay gratification?
2. Do I have balance in my life and meet obligations on and off the field?
3. Do I avoid things that will only deliver short-term pleasure, and hurt me in the long run?

and adhere to their personal training schedules, always pushing to be better while still meeting academic and personal obligations. It is critical that athletes exercise the virtue of temperance by taking care of their bodies, their minds, and their personal needs.

Temperance also helps individuals develop character and leadership qualities. Harvard professor, Bill George, said, "Self-discipline is an essential quality of an authentic leader. Without it, you cannot gain the respect of your followers." As a coach, it is your responsibility to develop the character of your athletes so that they are prepared to be future leaders. As a leader yourself, it is key to model temperance by having balance in your own life. Help your athletes understand that short-term sacrifices are key to long-term growth. Temperance involves making decisions that will positively impact one's future, which often means delaying gratification. This discipline is key for success in all facets of one's life, not just in sports. Take a positive step toward success by encouraging your athletes to practice the virtue of temperance today!