



Tennessee Fury Basketball Program is a faith based AAU basketball organization founded to physically and spiritually impact youth in the Knoxville community through competitive athletics.

Value #1: Strength

KEY IDEA: *You are only as strong as the source of your strength.*

ILLUSTRATION:

When basketball players are young (6 or 7 years old) they want to shoot the three-pointer like the players they see on ESPN. In order to make a 19 ft shot, they push extra hard with their arms to make the shot go that far. By doing so players learn a lot of bad mechanics in shooting. What young players should be doing is learning to shoot from the strength of their legs and core, not developing poor arm mechanics. Learning to find strength in the legs and core is not the most obvious or the easiest way to learn to shoot—but the results over time will yield a much greater success. Without that strength you are throwing the ball, not shooting it.



THE KEY IDEA EXPLAINED: *We will only be as strong as the source of our strength.* When life gets hard—we feel rejected by friends or we perform poorly in sports or at school or we feel pressured to follow the crowd toward wrong choices—it is our source of strength that will determine how we respond. Too often we depend on the wrong source.

For example, if the source of our strength is what other people think of us, we are dependent on others for the strength required to make good decisions and stay committed to our values. By living this way we give over the power of our lives to other people. If, however, the source of our strength comes from a greater source, a source that is in our core being, then we do not give the power of our lives to the opinions of others. ***The stronger our source of strength, the stronger we are.***

Basketball metaphor: As basketball teams, if the source of our strength is in how the crowd is cheering or whether the ref's are calling the game our way or even whether our team's last shot went in, then we are vulnerable. Our confidence is very temporary and our strength will come and go depending on the game circumstances. If, however, our strength comes from confidence in the core of who we are as a team, then we will overcome rather than fall apart in the midst of adversity. Strength is something that must come from the inside, not the outside.



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SPIRITUAL LESSON:

THE CHALLENGE: Everyone faces adversity—in sports, friendships, and life. The strongest players and persons get stronger in the midst of adversity because they can count on the strength that is within. ***Adversity can teach us to find greater strength in our heart and our “core” rather than causing us to feel weak and afraid. When life gets “bigger” than us, we need a bigger source of strength in our hearts than just what we can do.***

AN EXAMPLE: In I Samuel 16, the prophet Samuel is looking for a King to replace King Saul. Saul was chosen by the people because he was a man of imposing physical stature—a head taller than the rest of the men. King Saul’s strength as a leader, however, only came from his confidence in physical body and from the confidence that others had in his physical strength. Therefore, when he encountered Goliath, the giant, or when his own soldiers challenged him, Saul would become afraid. If he was not bigger than his opponent or if the people criticized him, Saul lost all of his confidence and became very afraid. He had to be replaced. When Samuel went to pick a new king, he kept thinking it must be the oldest or strongest or most impressive of Jesse’s sons. When Samuel saw the powerful looking son of Jesse, Eliab, Samuel said, “This MUST be the guy.” But God’s response was, ***“Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” I Samuel 16:7***

David, the little guy, took on Goliath and won—because his heart had found its source of strength in God. Saul, the huge warrior, backed down from Goliath and failed as a leader—because his source of strength was limited to himself.

LIFE LESSON: ***You are only as strong as the source of your strength. Be wise where you look for strength when facing adversity. Look to the core strength that God provides in your heart rather than to the crowd or even to yourself. By doing so, you will trust in the power of God for your life. Adversity will not defeat you. Instead it will teach you how that to lean on the endless strength God provides.***