

# **Football**

## **INTRO**

Watching a football (soccer) match, I watched the player's reactions to decisions and the game. God reminded me of how it reflected society – and made me take a look at myself too. This is about football but it's also about lifestyle and is appropriate for anyone whether they like football or not.

This is a good session to go with any major football (soccer) tournament.

## **LEAFLETS**

[For football tournaments, CPO often do a good range of leaflets.](#)

## **TOURNAMENT**

Is it worth organising a tournament for the Summer months with your church, other church, other agencies? What about showing games on a big screen in your church? Get coke, snacks, chocs and sell them. Have people on standby with leaflets, maybe give a quick talk before each game starts about where you're coming from – play footie at half-time and at the end of the game where appropriate.

## **VIDEO CLIP**

Record or capture some football or find a clip online. Then show it.

What are you looking for? Clips where players shout abuse at the ref, run over to the referees assistant, fight, have a go at each other, cheat by diving, try to get other player's booked etc.

If you can get any other documentaries on players, their wives, their money or any features that's all good too.

## **RAGS AND RICHES**

OK, get a list of these typical professions and the game is guess the wage (April 2019):

- Solicitor average – £41,281
- IT support average – £24,736
- Average UK salary 2008 – £26,000 (or £31,000 if just for full-time employed)

- Average salary in Exeter, England – £24,106
- Average UK salary (2019) – £35,423
- Cabin Crew average – £22,654
- Average teacher pay – £25,856
- Alexis Sanchez reported salary per week at Man Utd – (allegedly £500,000 a week)

Or go to [mysalary.co.uk](http://mysalary.co.uk) to find out UK average salaries

## SUMMARY OF THE POINTS

1. Footballers are given great honour but this often comes at great cost - see the amount of players that become alcoholic, are accused of assault or attacking women, of abusing their position. Look to the pop world and see how this is reflected in many famous people. Yet this is a position many people aspire to. That's OK but it ain't always all it's made out to be!

2. Behaviour on the pitch is like society - personal responsibility is vanishing - giving up responsibility to someone else. In football it's the referee, in society we let others take the blame ("I slipped at Tesco's so I'll sue them") or we let others take the responsibility. On the pitch it's the referee who has to make a decision. In society people do stuff until they get caught. 'Don't get caught is the 11th Commandment..'

3. We see behaviour that says I am going to win at all cost. In football it means getting someone sent off, cheating by diving, hacking people and more. In society it means cheating, taking credit, pushing people out the way with words and actions.

4. We see footballers unable to accept decisions that are made. Authority is challenged and pushed to the limit. We see this across our nations today too.

5. Lack of loyalty. While it's fair enough players have a short playing career and should get the best deal, it is relatively rare for a player to show loyalty to a football club. Again, even in our churches we see a lot of disloyalty.

## GOD'S WAY

Let's take the 5 points above:

### 1. Honour

A search of the excellent [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) site returns 273 Bible results for the word, 'honour' (with the spelling 'honor').

God alone is worthy of honour - not man or woman.

**1 Samuel 2:30 - "Therefore the LORD , the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and your father's house would minister before me forever.' But now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me! Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained.**

The correct kind of honour actually brings blessing.

**Deuteronomy 5.16 - "Honour your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you.**

**We see that we should not seek after honour - 2 Chronicles 1.10-12 - (Solomon answered God..) Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?" God said to Solomon, "Since this is your heart's desire and you have not asked for wealth, riches or honor, nor for the death of your enemies, and since you have not asked for a long life but for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people over whom I have made you king, therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you. And I will also give you wealth, riches and honor, such as no king who was before you ever had and none after you will have."**

Rather - seeking wisdom, seeking God and his Kingdom, humbling ourselves is the way to receive true, Godly honour.

**Proverbs 3:35 - The wise inherit honour, but fools he holds up to shame.  
Proverbs 22:4 - Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life.**

Self-serving and seeking honour (pride) only brings downfall -

**Proverbs 18:12 - Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor.**

## **2. Personal responsibility.**

First let's read a bit of Isaiah 59.12-15, a passage that could be aimed at us today:

**For our offenses are many in your (God's) sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities: rebellion and treachery against the LORD , turning our backs on our God, fomenting oppression and revolt, uttering lies our hearts have conceived. So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter. Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey.**

Rights and responsibilities go together like Britain and rain. Society has forgotten this kind of rule. We want the right to cheap food but don't want the responsibility of paying fair prices. We want services but don't

want them to disrupt us. We want the right to have unprotected casual sex but don't take responsibility and the result is abortion, (usually) mothers left alone to bring up children - and people paying for extra sexual health services that wouldn't be needed with greater responsibility.

The consequences of our actions can be harsh - we do well to remember this:

**Matthew 27.3-5 - When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.**

If we want to look at God's guidance in the Bible we just need to look at the character of God and the life of Jesus. The Great Commandments mentioned above are just summaries of the Bible. If we love God and love other people as ourselves there are things we won't do. Dishonesty, injustice, hate, being irresponsible, cheating are wrong. Why? Well if we are to summarize it easily - because it's not in God's character, it's offensive to God and it harms other people.

A lady from Taiwan once said to me about how to treat other people - 'I just think of me standing in someone else's shoes.' Think about it.

### **3. Winning at all cost**

In society and on the football pitch there are people who do anything to win. Let's look at that kind of attitude and what the Bible has to say:

**Matthew 10.38-40 - ..and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me.**

**Luke 9.23-25 - Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?**

**Luke 17.32-34 - Remember Lot's wife! Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left.**

**John 12.24-26 - I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates**

**his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.**

The one thing we do know is that through Jesus we already have the victory. So we don't need to fight for the ultimate victory. What we do have to do is to fight for God - fight the enemy - arm ourselves daily - use the Bible to speak life, protect yourself and claim ground for God - fight in prayer for God's kingdom.

#### **4. Authority**

At heart I like to be different! When I worked for Connexions in schools I was told that the 'uniform' so to speak was smart trousers, shoes, smart tops etc. So what did I wear? Jeans, Nike's and hoodies. Not cos I'm a rebel but because that's who I am and helped me relate!

What does the Bible say? First we'll look at what God said to Moses:

**Deuteronomy 1.15 - So I took the leading men of your tribes, wise and respected men, and appointed them to have authority over you-as commanders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens and as tribal officials.**

Jesus had authority -

**Daniel 7:13-14 - "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.**

**Matthew 7:29 - ..because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.**

God has the ultimate authority -

**Acts 1:7 - He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.**

We should obey those in authority and let our light shine to point people to Jesus -

**Romans 13.1-2 - Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.**

**1 Peter 2.12-14 - Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.**

## **5. Loyalty**

Finally, we see that God asks for, even demands our loyalty to him.

Show a video or DVD clip of Lord Of The Rings: The Return Of The King (when it comes out). The clip you want is fairly early on with Pippin swearing an oath to Denethor, the Lord Steward of Gondor, out of gratitude for Boromir's sacrifice to save the Pippin and Merry. Pippin then honours this allegiance. It's the same with God.

King David spoke to God asking for the people to be loyal to God:

**O LORD, God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep this desire in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you.**

1 Chronicles 12.33 speaks of the kind of loyalty that makes a difference

**Men of Zebulun, experienced soldiers prepared for battle with every type of weapon, to help David with undivided loyalty-50,000..**

If we look again at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) we find 232 references to the word 'faithful'. Just take a look through the lives and times of the Kings of Israel and Judah in 1 and 2 Chronicles. Where people's hearts were faithful to God there was blessing, where people were unfaithful there were major problems.

Remember that 'Our God is a faithful God.' When I think of the word 'faithful' or 'loyal' I think of a pet dog. I've had various Cavalier King Charles dogs and like most dogs, they've all been very loyal and faithful. They knew us, knew our voice and obeyed us (well, mostly.. unless the other choice was interesting sniffs or food). But dogs are loyal. There are stories of dogs lying by dying or dead owners. This is what faithfulness means.

If you want a clip on this kind of faithfulness go see Snow Dogs (in Scene 21 you'll find the snow dogs looking after 'Jack' by sleeping on his body to keep him warm).

Think about your own life and what it means to be faithful to God. Maybe you should write these headings and add your own words:

**1. What does it mean to be faithful to God?**

**2. How can I become more faithful to God in practical ways?**