

Coaching Through Loss with the Heart of Christ

GRIT MINISTRIES

A COACHES PLAYBOOK FOR GRIEF

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What This Playbook Will Help You Do

- ✓ Offer Christlike compassion that meets people in their pain
- ✓ Step in with care and support, without overwhelming or overstepping
- ✓ Provide ongoing presence and encouragement beyond the initial loss
- ✓ Create a safe space for athletes to grieve
- ✓ Share Scripture in a way that comforts and builds trust
- ✓ Lead through prayer, offering spiritual support when words fall short

“

“I sat with my anger long enough until she told me her real name was grief.”

— C.S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed*

START WITH COMPASSION

“We coach from overflow, not from emptiness.”

COACHING INSIGHT

Before you take the field to care for others, you need to first receive Christ's compassion yourself and run to Jesus in your own suffering (Heb 4:16).

- Ask: Do I cry out to God in my own struggles?

When you experience Jesus' compassion, you can truly reflect it to others.

Hebrews 4:16

“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Exodus 34:6

“The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.’”

COACHES PLAY

- Start your day in prayer and Scripture.
- Journal one way you've seen God's kindness in your own hardship.
- Model emotional vulnerability with your team and peers.

PLAY 01

Break the Silence

“Silence isolates. Words of compassion invite people into fellowship.”

Coaching Insight

Say something simple:

“You’ve been on my heart.”

“I am praying for you.”

“I’m sorry.”

- Avoid clichés and spiritual shortcuts: Don’t start with “At least...” or “Just...”
- Use Scripture wisely. Bless, don’t preach. (Num. 6:24–27)

Coaches Play

- Text the grieving coach or athlete weekly.
- Keep it short and sincere.
- Avoid over-spiritualizing or giving unsolicited advice.

**“The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine
upon you and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance
upon you and give you peace.”**

Numbers 24-26

PLAYO2

Follow Their Lead

“Grief needs a witness, not a solution.”

Coaching Insight

Grief doesn't demand solutions—it needs presence. It needs a witness.

- Let them set the pace. Gently ask:
“Where has your mind been going lately?”
“How are your nights?”
“Is there something specific I can pray for?”

Coaches Practice Drill

- In team meetings or one-on-ones, pause and give full attention.
- Don't fill silence. Let them speak.
- Resist offering your story or trying to relate—center on their pain, not yours.

PLAY03

Take Initiative

“Don’t wait for them to ask. Show up.”

Coaching Insight

- Be active in small ways. The burden should not be on the grieving to reach out.
 - Text encouragement.
 - Drop off a meal.
 - Offer to help with life tasks (yardwork, errands).

Coaches Strategy

- Create a rotation among staff or captains to regularly check in with the grieving person.
- Remember key dates (anniversaries, holidays).

PLAYO4

Pursue Presence

“Grief doesn’t end with the funeral.
Compassion doesn’t either.”

Coaching Insight

Support often fades after the first few weeks, but true compassion lingers. It shows up when others have moved on.

- Stay Present:
 - Check in after the initial wave has passed. Presence over time matters.

Coaches Play

- Ask: “Can I pray with you right now?”
- Keep it simple and sincere.

Example: “Lord, be near. Give them strength for this moment. Let them feel Your presence.”

PLAY05

Lead Humbly

“You’re not the expert—God is.”

Coaching Insight

Your role isn’t to fix—it’s to listen, love, and lean on God’s wisdom.

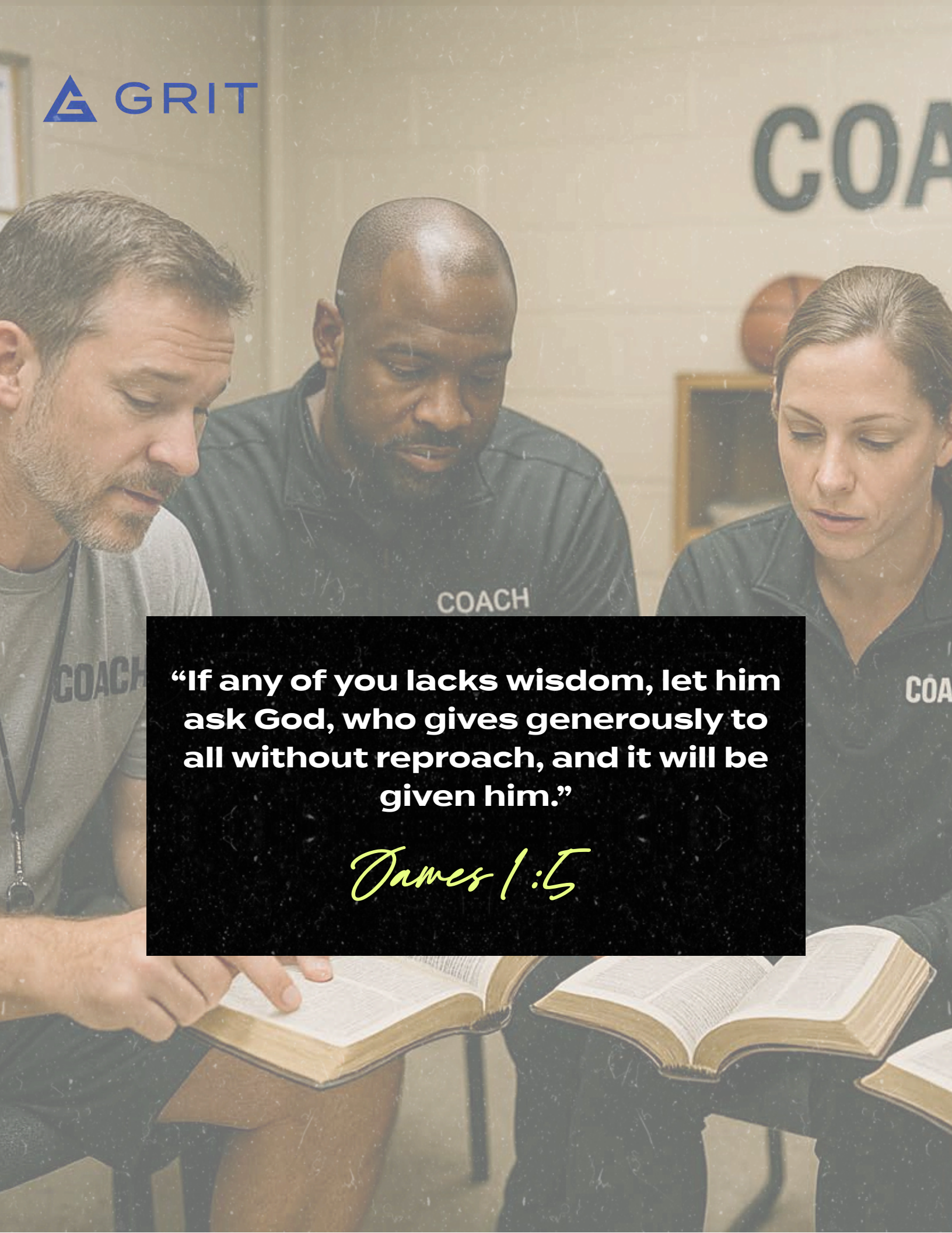
- Resist the urge to advise unless it’s clearly invited.
- Accept that you may not fully understand—and that’s okay.

On-Field Wisdom

Before you speak, ask:

- Is this rooted in compassion?
- Am I serving their needs or my discomfort?

When in doubt, ask God for wisdom (James 1:5).

A photograph of three people, two men and one woman, all wearing dark blue polo shirts with "COACH" printed on the chest. They are gathered around a table, looking down at open Bibles. The man on the left is pointing at a page in his Bible. The background is slightly blurred, showing a basketball hoop and a wall with the word "COACH" partially visible.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.”

James 1:5

PLAY06

Pray

“Prayer is not a backup plan. It’s the game plan.”

Coaching Insight

Let people know you're praying for them.

- If they're open, pray with them out loud.
- It's not about having the right words — prayer shows up. It says, "You're not alone."

Coaches Practice Drill

- Ask: "Can I pray with you right now?"
- Keep it simple and sincere.

Example: "Lord, be near. Give them strength for this moment. Let them feel Your presence."

COACH WITH THE HEART OF CHRIST

“Let all that you do be done in love.” – 1 Corinthians 16:14

MODEL JESUS

HE SERVED – JOHN 12:12-15

“When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, ‘Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.’”

HE WEPT – JOHN 11:35

“Jesus wept.”

HE LISTENS – Romans 8:26-27

“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

COACHES PLAY

“Lord, teach me. Help me. Teach me to love and to say words that build up.”

COACHES CHECKLIST

- ✓ Spend time with Jesus daily to receive His compassion
- ✓ Give space for silence without rushing to fill it
- ✓ Avoid saying phrases like “At least...” or “Just...”
- ✓ Pray for them by name throughout the week
- ✓ Listen without interrupting or shifting the focus to yourself
- ✓ Ask gentle, open-ended questions (e.g., “How have you been sleeping?”)
- ✓ Approach grieving individuals with humility, not as a problem-solver
- ✓ Initiate contact regularly—don’t wait for them to reach out
- ✓ Set calendar reminders to follow up at 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year
- ✓ Remember and acknowledge important dates (like birthdays and anniversaries)
- ✓ Reach out with simple, heartfelt words (e.g., “I’m so sorry. I’m praying for you.”)
- ✓ Ask how you can pray specifically for their needs
- ✓ Offer to pray with them in person or over a message, if they’re open
- ✓ Share Scripture only when it brings comfort, not correction or pressure
- ✓ Hold back advice unless they ask for it clearly
- ✓ Before speaking, ask yourself: “Is this the right time, tone, and truth for this moment?”
- ✓ Do something practical to support them (drop off a meal, send a text, help with errands)



**“A good coach can change
a game, a great coach can
change a life.”**

John Wooden

COACHES

GRIT is here for you. If you ever need 1:1 counsel, support, or just someone to talk to, don't hesitate to reach out. You don't have to carry it all alone—we've got your back.

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