

WEEK 25 | Who Was Your Greatest Teacher?



When he was 11 years old, Kobe played in a very prominent summer league in Philadelphia called the Sonny Hill League. His father, his uncle, and NBA legends like Wilt Chamberlain and Earl the Pearl Monroe played in this league. He went the entire summer without scoring one point. Kobe said he was terrible and still growing into his body, and he didn't score a single point at all. He said that he remembered crying about it and his father just gave him a hug and said:

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Kobe Bryant was asked a simple question, "Who was your greatest teacher growing up?"

Kobe said he had a lot of great teachers, and that included his parents. They instilled in him the importance of imagination and curiosity. They also taught him that he could do whatever he wants, but he has to put in the work to get there.

Because of his parents, Kobe grew up with the fundamental belief that he could do anything he wanted if he was willing to put in the work.

But basketball wasn't always easy for him. When he was 11 years old, he played in a very prominent summer league in Philadelphia called the Sonny Hill League. His father, his uncle, and NBA legends like Wilt Chamberlain and Earl the Pearl Monroe played in this league. He went the entire summer without scoring one point. Kobe said he was terrible and still growing into his body, but he didn't score a single point at all. He said that he remembered crying about it and his father just gave him a hug and said, "Listen, whether you score 0 or score 60, I'm going to love you no matter what." Kobe said, "That is the most important thing that you can say to a child because it gave me all the confidence to fail - I have security there."

This story is so powerful for me because we are as strong as our foundation. When we have a strong, healthy foundation, we have what it takes to go out and try and fail because we know we have a safety net that we can fall back on. Kobe's dad was that safety net early on for him. His love for his son made his son comfortable and confident enough to take chances and take risks.

How often do you not go for something because you think you might fail?

This story reminds me of the greatest teacher in my life. That teacher is Jesus. His message, His stories, His teachings, and the words of the Bible are my foundation. We can do all things through Christ, who gives us strength (Philippians 4:13). Jesus said to His disciples, "I am the vine and you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me, you can do nothing (John 15:5)."

Remaining in Jesus means to pray, read your Bible, and fix your thoughts on things that are good for you and things that are good for the people around you.

It won't mean that you will live a life without trouble. Jesus told his disciples, "I have said these things to you that in me, you may have peace. In the world, you will have trouble. But take heart; I have overcome the world (John 16:33)."

Kobe's dad never told him that he would not have trouble and adversity on his basketball journey. He told him that he loves him no matter what. But Kobe, with the confidence to fail, said he would rather go for 60 than 0, and he went to work. He said this is when he learned about the importance of having a long-term view. He wasn't going to catch up to these kids in a week or a year; he needed a plan. Kobe created a menu of things that he wanted to work on, and he began working on them each year.

By the time Kobe was 14 years old, he was the best player in the state. He focused on the basics and the fundamentals, and because he stuck to the fundamentals, he caught up to all the kids who he couldn't score against.

The fundamentals of being a follower of Christ include reading the Bible and praying. Find different areas of your life that you want to work on, find Bible verses about them, read them, think about them, pray about them, and over time, you will find victory over them.

Show up every single day and do the work.

THIS WEEK

1 - What is ONE thing that you want to get better at this week? It could be a performance skill like dribbling with your left hand or making more pull-up jump shots. It could be a character skill like working on your focus or patience.

If you don't know what to choose, the fruits of the spirit are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. One of those are a great place to start!

2 - What are you going to do to work on this ONE thing this week?

3 - What is one thing that will hold you back or distract you from improving on or working on that one thing?

4 - What is a story or Bible verse that you can use to keep you motivated to push through all distractions and barriers so that you can continue to grow in this ONE thing?

In Colossians 3:2, Paul wrote, "Set your minds and keep them set on what is above, not on things that are on the earth." Decide who you want to be, and figure out what you have to do to do it. Then set your mind and keep it set on those things.