

MAUPIN MESSAGE

High School Football and Fields of Faith

The calendar says Summer is winding down even as the August heat cranks up. Here in Arkansas, the High School Football season is about to begin (Aug. 20 for some; Aug. 27 for most). I've been privileged to serve on campus weekly (except during the month of June for reasons outlined in the last Maupin Message) at two nearby high schools—including my son's (Brian), Joe T. Robinson and Little Rock Christian Academy.

Here's what I get to do: I come alongside the coaching staff at each school, ask them why they chose coaching, and I listen. Then I offer to come alongside them on a consistent basis to help them achieve what they are setting out to accomplish. Coaches have an amazing influence on their student athletes. The coaches and I encourage players to **PURSUE** these four aspects as they practice and play: Leadership, Teamwork, Integrity and Character. Those traits are obviously valuable on the field and off and I get to echo the coach's enthusiasm with a voice that isn't "one of the coaches" but comes from an invested observer. I also get to emphasize that all four of these traits are exemplified by the person of Jesus Christ. FCA is a ministry that God uses to amplify those traits. What I do with each team is show up at practices, look for individuals who exemplify those traits in their workout and recognize them with a symbolic T-shirt emblazoned with FCA's focus for the year, **PURSUE**. I seek out the athlete who is pursuing those four attributes as they practice. I get to tell the team that the foundation of those attributes is a personal relationship with Jesus and that He provides the power for that pursuit. What an amazing privilege! Thank you for your faithful partnership in prayer and giving!

The planning has begun for an outreach that prior to Covid cancellations was a benchmark event for FCA. Fields of Faith is a youth outreach that leverages church student ministry and athletics as hundreds of students gather together to share/hear testimonies from their peers and a direct invitation to enter into a personal relationship with Jesus. I've been asked to provide leadership to bring Fields of Faith back to Central Arkansas this year (in October). Please pray that God will be glorified by many students and student-athletes attending, where they'll get fed with burgers and hot dogs and with spiritual food that changes lives. We are looking to host the event at one of the high schools I serve, and we still face the real possibility of another Covid cancellation this year. As many of you know, Psalm 116 encourages all believers that God "inclines His ear" as he hears our prayers and responds. Please pray His favor on this event and I'll keep you posted on the progress.

