

Maxine
(commitment)

2 Timothy 4:7 “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful.”

Maxine loved video games. In fact, she had spent most of the summer programming her own video game called Circuit Safari. It had a few glitches at first, but she had fixed most of them. But now it was time to put Circuit Safari on the shelf and focus on soccer.

But a week before soccer practice started, Maxine saw an announcement for a new after-school video game club. She really wanted to go, but the club was at the same time as practice. She couldn't do both.

Maxine had already said she would play soccer. If she backed out, she would be leaving her team one bot short, and it was too late for them to fill her spot. The team wouldn't be able to play. But she didn't want to miss out on the video game club. She didn't know what to do.

Life is full of hard choices. Should Maxine skip the video game club and miss out on all the fun, or should she break her word to her soccer team? This is an easy one, isn't it? Maxine should play soccer, right? She gave her word, and her team is counting on her. Playing soccer is the right choice.

But what if it was you? What if you had to choose between something you really, really wanted and something you had already committed to? It's not easy, is it?

Yoshimi
(integrity)

Proverbs 10:9 “People with integrity walk safely, but those who follow crooked paths will be exposed.”

Yoshimi was the new bot in town. She didn't know any of the other bots on the team and she wasn't sure they would like her. She really, really wanted to fit in and make friends.

“Hey,” said her teammate, Mitch, during practice one day. “What's that funny-looking thing on top of your head?”

“That's just my radar dish,” said Yoshimi. “It let's me know what's happening in other places.”

Mitch computed for a moment. “So, you can tell what's happening on the other side of the street?”

“Yes,” said Yoshimi.

“And you can tell what's happening on the other side of town?” asked Mitch.

“Yes,” said Yoshimi.

“So,” said Mitch, his eyes flickering mischievously, “you could tell what the other teams are working on, wherever they are?”

“Oh,” said Yoshimi. “I guess I could. But I don't think it would be right.”

“Who cares about that?” said Mitch. “We'll know all of the other teams' secrets! We'll win every game!”

“But I don't want to cheat!” said Yoshimi.

Mitch's eyes started to glow. He looked angry. “You're new around here, right? Well, if you want people to like you, you have to show them that you're a team player. If you don't do this, no one will ever be your friend.”

What should Yoshimi do? If she spies on the other teams she would be cheating and she wouldn't feel very good about herself, but she might make lots of friends. If she doesn't cheat, she would feel good about herself, but everyone might be mad at her.

What kind of person do you want for a friend? Someone who always does the right thing.

Simon
(caring)

Philippians 2:4 “Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.”

Practice had ended and, as usual, Simon stayed behind to help clean up the equipment. He was almost finished when he noticed that someone had left a duffel bag behind. Mitch, who had stayed behind to run laps (Mitch always had to stay behind to run laps), saw the bag, too.

“Whose is it?” Mitch asked.

Simon checked the tag. “No one on our team,” he said.

Mitch’s eyes flickered mischievously. “Oh, good! If it belongs to someone on another team, we should throw it in the trash! But let’s stomp on it first so it’s good and wrecked!”

Simon picked up the bag and held it out of Mitch’s reach. “No, we’re not throwing it away and we’re not stomping on it.”

“Oh, come on!” whined Mitch. “What do you care? It’s not like it’s your bag.”

“No, it’s not my bag, but if I ever leave my bag behind, I hope that whoever finds it takes care of it.”

There was an address written on the bag, so Simon decided to drop it off on his way home from practice. He didn’t receive a reward for returning it and no one told him, “Good job,” but he felt good about what he had done. He had treated another bot the way he hoped to be treated.

Caring for others doesn’t always earn rewards or applause, but it’s always the right thing to do.

Scooter
(determination)

1 Corinthians 9:24 “Don’t you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win!”

“Oh, brother,” said Mitch loudly as Scooter rolled into practice one day. “Who let the nanobot on the field?”

It was true, Scooter was a lot smaller than any of the other bots on the team, but he played twice as hard. He might not be able to kick clear across the field or block well, but he was much quicker than Mitch who spent most of practice goofing off and not paying attention.

Have you ever been asked to play a game you weren’t very good at? Did you try your hardest or did you give up?

Scooter might not have been built for soccer, but he didn’t let that stop him from doing his best. We were all made with specific gifts and talents. Scooter might have been better at basketball or hockey, but he still gave his best when he was on the soccer field. Mitch, on the other hand, might have been the best soccer player on the team but no one would know it because he didn’t try.

No matter what you do, do your best. Run your fastest. Kick your farthest. Be the best you can be so that when the game is over you know that you did all you could.

Tess
(endurance)

Romans 12:12 “Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble and keep on praying.”

Tess was having a hard time concentrating on practice. Her older brother, Niko, had caught a computer virus and had spent the last few days at the programmer's. It had been a rough week for the Labot family.

But Tess knew that, even though she was worried about Niko, the programmer knew how to fix her brother. Things were bad now, but they wouldn't always be. Tess would just have to keep on going, even in the hard times.

Have you ever been worried about something and nothing else seemed important? You couldn't eat or sleep or play because your problem was just so big?

The Bible tells us that, even when we have big problems, like a sick family member, we have to keep going. We have to keep eating and sleeping and playing, even when we don't feel like it.

Burt
(service)

1 Peter 4:9 “Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay.”

It was the first game of the season. The other team was coming from all the way across town. Everyone was very excited.

Burt wanted to welcome the visiting team, so he decided to buy them all drinks and popcorn from the concession stand. He arranged the snacks on the other team’s bench so they would find them waiting when they arrived.

“ARE YOU MALFUNCTIONING?!” shouted Mitch when he saw what Burt had done. “Those snacks should go on OUR bench, not theirs!”

Burt smiled. “I thought it would be a nice surprise.”

“Oh, you thought it would be a nice surprise, did you?” Sparks were starting to fly from Mitch’s antenna. “I can’t believe this!” He stormed off.

Burt understood why Mitch felt upset, he felt like visiting team was supposed to be the enemy. But Burt also knew that it was more important to treat the visiting team with kindness and respect, to make them feel welcome. They were far from home, and sometimes that can feel a little scary.

Can you remember a time when you were in a new and scary place and someone did something to help you feel welcome?

Chip
(loyalty)

Proverbs 17:17 “A friend is always loyal, and a brother is born to help in time of need.”

One day after practice Chip was walking home with some of his friends. Bob started to complain about how mean Mitch was. Art, too, began to complain. Soon, everyone was talking about how mean and unkind “Mitch the glitch” was.

“That’s enough!” said Chip. “I know Mitch isn’t very nice most of the time, but that doesn’t give us the right to be mean to him. He’s my teammate and I’m going to treat him the way I want him to treat me.”

Sometimes it feels pretty good to say mean things about someone when they’ve been mean to us, but it only feels good for a moment. It always feels better to forgive others and to treat them kindly. We need to remember that we should treat everyone, our friends AND our enemies, with love and respect.

If you have a problem with someone, the right thing to do is to talk to them about it. Maybe they’ll listen and you can solve the problem.

Chip didn’t like Mitch any more than the others did, but he knew it was wrong to say mean things about others. He made the right choice and he felt good about himself.

Ann
(selflessness)

Philippians 2:3 “Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.”

Behind his back, they called him, “Mitch the glitch.” Mitch always had something unkind to say about everything. There was just something in his programming that made him unpleasant, and because of that, Mitch didn’t have very many friends. To be exact, Mitch had one friend and he didn’t even know it.

Ann did her best to be kind to everyone. She always congratulated the other team when they won, she never got upset when her own teammates missed a shot, and she always did her best to make friends wherever she went.

Ann was walking home after practice and noticed an oil bottle on the sidewalk. It said, “Property of Mitch,” on the side. Mitch lived near Ann. Ann decided she would drop the oil bottle off at Mitch’s house.

A few minutes later, Ann noticed a wrench on the ground. Someone had etched “Mitch” into the side of the wrench. “Oh, no,” Ann thought. “Mitch’s duffle bag must have a rip in the bottom.” As she walked, Ann noticed more and more things on the ground: a spare lightbulb, a brand-new bag of ball-bearings, Mitch’s team jersey... She picked up each item and tucked it safely into her own duffle bag.

When she got home Ann emptied out her duffle bag. She used the vacuum cleaner to get out the dust and all of the little bits of fuzz and lint. On the side of the bag where her name was printed, she stitched a fresh patch and wrote, “MITCH.” in big, bold letters. Then she put all of the things she had found on the sidewalk into the duffle bag.

The next morning, Mitch found a clean, slightly used duffle bag sitting on his front porch. Inside it were all of the things he thought he’d lost the night before. He looked around, but there was no one in sight.

Ann was willing to give up something that belonged to her for her friend. Mitch never found out who his secret friend was, but after that day, he treated everyone a little nicer.