

## **Who Do You Live Your Life to Please?**

### **Ready:**

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters." Colossians 3:23

### **Set**

Pittsburgh Penguin Matt Cullen has achieved the highest success for a professional hockey player by winning the Stanley Cup with the Pittsburgh Penguins in 2016 and 2017. For Matt, it was the third time being part of a championship team having also won the cup in 2006 with the Carolina Hurricanes.

You might think that a star athlete like Matt, who has played in 1,500 NHL games over more than two decades, at the highest level of hockey excellence, would claim credit for his own success and storied career. But the reality is just the reverse. "I know that I play for an audience of one," Matt says, giving God the glory for his great professional career. "I have found that the more I trust God and the less I rely on my own plans, the more things work out."

As King David said to explain his joyous dance before the Lord when the people of God returned the Ark to Jerusalem, "I was dancing before the LORD who chose me over [King Saul] and his whole family to appoint me ruler over the LORD's people Israel. I will celebrate before the LORD," 2 Samuel 6:21

His dedication to hard work, perseverance, and striving to honor God has anchored Matt through an NHL career with eight teams beginning with the Mighty Ducks of Anaheim in 1997. Since then there have been many moves for Matt and his family. Through it all, Matt remains committed to the Lord first, and then his family, keeping athletics in perspective.

"So many things are out of your own control," he says, "you must lean on God and dedicate yourself to using the gifts that He has given to you." He adds, "During the Stanley Cup finals I never felt closer to God, never leaned more on God. It's one of the things I love most about hockey, how it forces you to lean on God and serve Him alone. That's something I really treasure."

Living through your own ego, be it in sports or in life, "is a recipe for disaster," Matt stresses. "But real success is how you do it—doing what honors God." Striving to achieve all we can is good and using God's gifts to us to the best of our ability to please him is the way to put God first.

### **An Audience of One**

"I live before the Audience of One. Before others I have nothing to prove, nothing to gain,

nothing to lose."

~ Os Guinness

## Go

1. What are you striving for?
2. Who do you live to please?
3. Think about the humility of a star athlete like Matt Cullen, who competes hard and achieves excellence but aims to please God. How can you imitate that?

## Workout

1 Corinthians 4:7; Proverbs 18:12; 1 Samuel 16:7; 2 Samuel 6:21; Matthew 6:1-4; Ephesians 5:6-11, 15-17

## Bible Reference:

1 Corinthians 4:7

Proverbs 18:12

1 Samuel 16:7

2 Samuel 6:21



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