

## **Cheerleaders or Critics**

### **Ready:**

“Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us... Consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, so that you won’t grow weary and give up.” -- Hebrews 12:1, 3

### **Set**

A few years ago, I was privileged to participate in the memorial service of a man who was a faithful servant, dear friend and former head football coach. More than 2,000 of this man’s family, friends, colleagues and student-athletes attended the service. As I stepped into the pulpit of the church, I thought, “Look at all these people. Everyone here is a cheerleader. What a great send-off for a coach — and a great testimony to a life well lived.”

As we compete in the world of athletics, we’ll find people cheering or booing, depending on the circumstances of the moment. When we step into the spiritual realm, we read about that heavenly stadium filled with that “large cloud of witnesses,” encouraging and cheering us — God’s earthly team — to victory.

Imagine them applauding, yelling for us to finish the course, to fight the fight, to keep the faith. They are shouting for us to persevere, to fix our eyes on Jesus, and to remember that, as bad as we may think our circumstances are, Jesus’ circumstances, for our sake, were far worse.

As we go through each day, we might encounter both critics and cheerleaders. But we can’t let them distract us from our Savior and that heavenly host of fans who’ve “got our backs” — no matter what!

### **Go**

- What could you do to hear the heavenly cheerleaders’ shouts over the jeers of earthly critics?
- How can you be a teammate’s or a friend’s cheerleader today, instead of their critic?

### **Workout**

[Psalm 20:7-8](#)

[Hebrews 12:1-3](#)

### **Overtime**

“Father, thank You that I am never alone in this race. Help me to cheer others on as together

we fix our eyes on Jesus! Amen.”



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