

Whose Glory?

Ready:

“Do you not know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body.” - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Set

If you are a subscriber to ESPN the Magazine, you are undoubtedly familiar with their annual “body issue” in which professional athletes from various sports pose unclothed to highlight specific parts of their bodies. After seeing their latest body issue, I was taken aback and was admittedly a little appalled that these athletes—some of whom are the best in their sports—were sending what I thought was a very self-focused message.

The bar in sports continues to be set higher and higher. Athletes, whether on the professional, college, or high school level, are constantly looking for new ways to get an advantage, especially physically. And just like with ESPN the Magazine, the media has become an influential part of this and can often be used in a negative manner.

As Christians, God specifically says in 1 Corinthians that our bodies are a holy temple and that we should honor Him with them. This can be difficult to do in the athletic scene, as the mark of perfection is always moving. If we pursue it, we’ll never achieve it, as there is clearly no limit. Instead of focusing on perfection for personal glory, which will always be just beyond our reach, the only way to “measure up” in any sense is to remember the whole point of competition: bringing glory to God.

As so much of the world bears down, it’s easy for us to lose this focus on the cross of Christ and to make it all about our glory instead of His. Just like the professional athletes in the magazine, we all, through sports, have a stage that is set and an audience who is watching every move we make and everything we do. They look up to us whether we like it or not. The only way for us to equip ourselves to make wise choices and bring glory to God is to prepare our minds and bodies to battle against the pitfalls of the world.

How do we do that? By investing time in our relationship with Christ: studying His Word, praying, and simply spending time with Him so that our hearts are prepared in the moment to give Him glory. Whether that relates to how we train and treat our bodies or simply how we conduct ourselves on the court or field, we need to keep the ultimate purpose in mind in all things: doing all things for Him, not for ourselves.

Today, remember why you compete. Remember why you train. It's not to be idolized for your appearance or ability; it's to bring glory to God and show Him to the world.

Go

1. Are there things in your life that you do for your personal glory instead of God's?
2. How would God's Kingdom be built if you sought to bring God glory in all things?
3. Think of five specific ways in which you can bring glory to God in your sport and then do your best to carry them out.

Workout

Isaiah 42:12 Ephesians 6:10-18 Philippians 1:11

Bible Reference:

Philippians 1



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