

NFL Draft humbles Copper

Humility is our greatest friend

From Jon Copper's blog we read, "My agent called this morning, and I received an invitation to the Packers minicamp this weekend. Best-case scenario would be if things go well and they like me, then they'll offer me a free agent contract while I'm up there. . . . C.J. Mahaney in his wonderful little book 'Humility: True Greatness' wrote, 'Humility is our greatest friend! I must say that the past 12 or so hours have been humbling, knowing things are out of my hands at this point, and knowing that all my other friends on the team that have come out either got signed or drafted. It's not so much that I care about what the outcomes are; it's just the not knowing what is next that can unsettle me."

Sports provides a great training ground for developing humility.

Whether you are a weekend warrior that can't hit a golf ball straight or a college football player, competition can humble anyone. CJ Mahaney defines humility as "honestly assessing ourselves in light of God's holiness and our sinfulness." It's impossible for any honest self-evaluation without considering these two realities. Jon Copper was right about humility being our friend, but we must also realize that pride is our enemy.

John Stott put it this way, "At every stage of our Christian development and in every sphere of our Christian discipleship, pride is the greatest enemy and humility our greatest friend."



CJ Mahaney makes this point in his book "Humility." "You and I hate nothing to the degree that God hates pride. His hatred for pride is pure, and His hatred is holy." Theologian John Calvin wrote, "God cannot bear seeing his glory appropriated by the creature in even the smallest degree, so intolerable to him is the sacrilegious arrogance of those who, by praising themselves, obscure his glory as far as they can."

The Bible teaches that God opposes the proud (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). The word "opposes" in this verse is an active, present-tense verb, showing us that God's opposition to pride is an immediate and constant activity. The proud will not indefinitely escape discipline.

Pride also undermines unity which leads to quarreling among teammates. Proverbs 16:18 teaches, "Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall."

So how can you avoid pride and the problems that are created by it? Biblical transformation is only possible by believing that Jesus' ransomed his life as a sacrifice for our sin (Matthew 20:28). Remind yourself that the cross ransoms, the cross liberates, the cross transforms!

WARMUP

1. Watch the internet videos.
Go to www.youtube.com and search for "Pride and Humility" and "John Piper - What is humility?"

WORKOUT

1. How does the Bible's view of pride and humility differ from those interviewed in "Pride and Humility"?
2. What lesson will you take from the "John Piper - What is humility?" video?
3. Why is it so easy to become prideful in sports? How can humility help us become a more complete athlete?
4. CJ Mahaney has a list of suggestions to weaken pride and cultivate humility. Discuss each:
 - a. Reflect on the wonder of the cross of Christ.
 - b. Begin your day by acknowledging your dependence on God and your need for God.
 - c. Begin your day expressing gratefulness to God.
 - d. Practice the spiritual disciplines—prayer, study of God's Word, worship. Do this constantly each day and the day's outset if possible.

WRAPUP

This week, memorize . . .

"even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." – Matthew 20:28 (ESV)

PRAYER

Lord, thank you that the cross ransoms, the cross liberates, the cross transforms. Give me the strength to follow the servant example of your Son . . .

GOSPEL FOCUS

Prior to our conversion we were sin's prisoners, and even after our conversion we continue to fight the presence of sin, though we're freed from the power and penalty of sin. And if you aren't aware of this danger, you'll never sufficiently appreciate the significance of His death. – C.J. Mahaney

Gordon Thiessen is the founder of Cross Training Publishing and serves as the Director of Training and Resources for the Nebraska Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He is author of 12 books for Christian athletes and coaches that can be found at www.crosstrainingpublishing.com. Visit www.nebraskafca.org for more lessons