

Audience

Ron Brown and Will Henry on Audience

Nebraska celebrated their NCAA-record 300 consecutive game sell-out which began in 1962 with a 55-0 victory over Louisiana Lafayette. It was also the largest crowd to attend a Husker home game as well. With such a large and loud crowd, I asked receiver Will Henry and Tight End Coach Ron Brown to comment on the most important audience for the Christian athlete.

"In the past, I would have been nervous about playing in front of more than 85,000 people, but the Lord has taught me through Colossians 3:23 that I need to practice or compete with all my heart regardless of the crowd size. When I realized this biblical truth, I began to give my best effort for Him regardless of the crowd or circumstances. This helps me to be less nervous when I play in front of large crowds and has also increased my intensity level in practices. It's impossible to divide your loyalties between God and the crowds. Whether it's the fan, friends or even coaches, the Lord must be your audience of ONE"

After the football game, Coach Brown asked a very important question, "Who do you play for?" It's simple, yet profound. He went on to say, "I have questioned many football players in the past about their desire to play in front of a small crowd rather than a large crowd like we had at tonight's game. I think most guys would admit that 85,000 plus people that are screaming and yelling will cause them to play harder than a small crowd. We tend to get excited about the right person or when an important crowd of fans are watching us play. For the Christian athlete, the right audience is always watching—the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord receives the honor and glory when He alone is our audience. Whatever we do for Him will have lasting value. Playing for the Lord has a lot to do with integrity which means you play the same whether there is a large crowd or no crowd. By focusing on Jesus Christ, the Lord will help any athlete maximize their God-given abilities."

So how can you mentally picture Jesus as your only audience? Does that sound impossible? It really isn't. In fact, God wants us to live as if Jesus were physically with us. The Apostle Paul wrote, "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him..." (Colossians 2:6).

Here are two simple suggestions: First, get a good picture of Jesus in your mind. Second, mentally picture Jesus at a specific location as He is encouraging you to give your best in representing Him.



WARMUP

1. Watch the internet videos. Go to www.youtube.com and search for "Ron Brown on Audience" and "Will Henry on Audience." You can also find them at www.nebraskafca.org.

WORKOUT

1. What is the loudest crowd you have ever experienced at a game? Why was the crowd so loud? Did the noise impact the outcome of the game?
2. How can understanding your audience revolutionize your athletic performance? When your coach closely scrutinizes your performance, does it make you nervous? Why?
3. Can you think of a time when someone in the audience affected your performance? Who was it and what happened?
4. Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as a man thinks within himself, so he is." How can this verse help you understand how the proper audience can help our athletic performances?

WRAPUP

This week, memorize... "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him."
— Romans 8:9 (ESV)

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for always being present in my life. Help me avoid focusing too much on the crowd or other distractions...

GOSPEL FOCUS

One of the most seductive false gospels is moralism. This false gospel can take many forms. The basic structure of moralism comes down to this -- the belief that the Gospel can be reduced to improvements in behavior. We need to remember that we are justified by faith alone, saved by grace alone, and redeemed from our sin by Christ alone. Moralism produces sinners who are (potentially) better behaved. The Gospel of Christ transforms sinners into the adopted sons and daughters of God.— Al Mohler

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