

The Perfect Goal

Ron Brown and Matt May on God's Goal

Following the Husker's 49-3 victory over Florida Atlantic, Ron Brown said, "A goal is something that you aim at. For the Christian athlete, the highest goal is to be conformed to the image of Christ. This goal is much greater than simply winning a game, championship or setting a personal record. While today we were pleased to win today's football game, the higher goal is to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ as the Bible teaches in Romans 8:29. It says, "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers."

NU Linebacker Matt May agrees with Coach Brown. "The right goal is something that pleases God and produces the character of Jesus Christ. I have found that many goals fall far short of God's ultimate goal. Whether it's setting your goal to be a starter or making a big play, these goals will eventually let you down. God's goal of becoming like Christ never depends upon circumstances."

Matt isn't just speaking from theory, following the Husker's win, he had a bag of ice on his shoulder to help with the swelling and pain from a nagging injury. In fact, his shoulder problems prevented him from playing linebacker most of the game. Though he was on the field for most of his special team duties, he was only able to contribute at linebacker during the Husker's goal-line stand against Florida Atlantic.



You will never be able to duplicate the actions of Jesus in your athletic performance on your own power. Coach Brown said, "Only the Holy Spirit can duplicate the performance of Jesus through you." Your responsibility is to become sensitive to the Holy Spirit. This, along with studying God's Word will allow you to strive toward this ultimate goal to "be like Christ." During Matt's interview, he mentioned the importance of preparing for each game with reading scripture. Without understanding how Jesus Christ would respond to different circumstances, it's impossible to fully represent Him on the field. Thankfully, the Bible serves as your playbook on and off the field.

Here is some good advice from author Wes Neal. "Evaluate each practice or competition to what degree you are really performing like Jesus with his attitudes and actions. Remember, it's impossible to be a carbon copy of Jesus. You will only experience this conforming process as you consciously allow the Holy Spirit to do it through you."

WARMUP

1. Watch the internet videos.

Go to www.youtube.com and search for "Ron Brown on God's Goal" and "Matt May on God's Goal"

WORKOUT

1. What are some differences between how a non-believer competes versus a Christian?
2. Why are some Christian athletes and coaches poor examples in competition?
3. What percentage of Jesus' life do you know? How much relates to sports?
4. What are some tools for learning the life of Christ?
5. What does Romans 8:29 mean? How can you apply this verse to your athletics?

WRAPUP

This week, memorize . . .

"For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers." – Romans 8:29 (ESV)

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for giving me the ability to play sports. Give me the focus to keep the goal of representing you on the field or court at all times...

GOSPEL FOCUS

The Gospel is called the 'good news' because it addresses the most serious problem that you and I have as human beings, and that problem is simply this: God is holy and He is just, and I'm not. And at the end of my life, I'm going to stand before a just and holy God, and I'll be judged. – R.C. Sproul

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