

Winning God's Way

Ron Brown and Khiry Cooper on Winning

The Huskers had just beaten Arkansas State 38 to 9. There wasn't much doubt by the fans that their team was the winner. However, Husker sophomore receiver Khiry Cooper explained after the game that winning is more than just an outcome of a game on the scoreboard. "God's way of winning is less concerned about the scoreboard or individual stats and more concerned with giving a complete effort for the Lord's glory rather than man's glory. I like to picture Jesus as my only audience rather than focusing on the crowd or my opponent. God's way of winning also has a lot to do with not just our physical effort but also our emotional and mental effort as well. Colossians 3:23 teaches that we are to give everything we have to please Him which includes the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual components."

Husker Tight End Coach Ron Brown further explained God's definition of winning after the game. "What is winning? Is it simply determined by the team that has more points on the scoreboard? How about losing? Is it the team with less points? The Bible teaches that winning is giving your maximum effort for the Lord rather than men based upon Colossians 3:23. It says that we should do everything "heartily for the Lord." We tell our players not to leave the field until they have emptied their tanks. In other words, giving a total release for the Lord. Wes Neal coined the phrase "total release" to teach this very important biblical principle.



Coach Brown and Khiry Cooper agree that the most commonly accepted definition of winning is to "defeat your opponent." Nearly every athlete is taught this from Little League to the NFL. However, God's perspective on winning doesn't depend upon circumstances that are often beyond our control. Colossians 3:17 teaches, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." The phrase "in the name of the Lord Jesus" means you are to totally represent Jesus by saying and doing only those things he would say and do. It means you are to have his attitude in whatever you do. Besides labeling this as a "total release" I also find the term "max out" as a helpful reminder that an athlete or coach should empty their tanks in every practice or game.

Finally, it's important to remember that it's impossible to know how the attitudes that are pleasing to God without first studying His playbook, the Bible. Make it part of your daily routine to spend time in the Bible so you can have confidence that the results of competition will be His to bring him honor!

WARMUP

1. Watch the internet videos. Go to www.youtube.com and search for "Ron Brown on Winning God's Way" and "Khiry Cooper on Winning God's Way"

WORKOUT

1. Brett Favre threw for more career touchdowns than any other NFL quarterback. However, he also set another record for interceptions. Was he successful? Why or why not?
2. Read Colossians 3:23. According to this verse, how should you view winning and losing?
3. What does it mean to "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus"?
4. According to Psalm 1:3, how do you think God wants you to prosper? Why?

WRAPUP

This week, memorize . . .

"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." – Colossians 3:17 (ESV)

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for allowing me to compete in sports. Help me to better understand the proper attitudes that I should have in sports as I study your Word...

GOSPEL FOCUS

The gospel is the good news of God's saving activity in the person and work of Christ. This includes his incarnation in which he took to himself full (yet sinless) human nature; his sinless life which fulfilled the perfect law of God; his substitutionary death which paid the penalty for man's sin and satisfied the righteous wrath of God; his resurrection demonstrating God's satisfaction with his sacrifice; and his glorification and ascension to the right hand of the Father where he now reigns and intercedes for the church. – Jeff Purswell

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