



Biblical Definition of Success by Paul Newman, MS, ATC

Bible Verses: Pro. 1:3 “Through these proverbs, people will receive instruction in discipline, good conduct, and doing what is right, just, and fair.” (NLT)
Supporting NT verses: Phil. 4:8-9 & 4:12-13, Eph. 2:8-9 and James 2:18

Champions are Consistent!

Whether ahead or behind, by a little or a lot, they **do what is right**...by that I mean, what they have been taught in practice always carries over into the game no matter what the scoreboard says. The Apostle Paul addresses this issue in the New Testament in Phil. 4:8-9. “Fix your thoughts on whatever is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.” This definition of success is not to be interpreted as a works based faith or a legalistic approach. The world wants to base success on our performance but our faith in Jesus should compel us to live lives worthy of Him (Eph. 2:8-9). Our identity in Christ should allow us to be consistent in life no matter what happens around us (Phil. 4:12-13). This is the true meaning of, “I can do all things through Christ”. Our devotion to the Savior should demand our lives be a model of dedication. James addresses it in James 2:18 when he says “... I will show you my faith by my good deeds.”

Champions Compete!

To treat another **justly** is to give them honor and respect. Champions honor and respect their opponents by bringing their “A” game every day. They don’t play down to the level of their opponent and they find a way to elevate their game when playing in a hostile environment or against a more talented team. When faced with losing, people either quit or fight. Quitting is obviously not competing but is fighting harder competing. Not necessarily. When playing a stronger, more talented opponent fighting smarter is better. To quote Benjamin Franklin, “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.”

Champions are Courageous!

It takes courage to play **fairly** when the world around you tells you to cheat, be selfish, look out for number one. To treat your opponent fairly is to play without fear in control. To treat your teammate fairly is to be unselfish. Fear and selfishness have cost more teams wins than any statistic in sports. Fear of losing paralyzes some people. For others, fear can cause us to cut corners and break rules. Selfishness causes a player to make bad decisions. Forgetting how they built a big lead or won a few games, the selfish team or player takes quick shots or gambles on defense in order to make themselves look good rather than the team. The selfish player either quits or looks to pad his stats once he has decided his team can’t win. A champion never makes that decision. He finds a way to improve his game and his team in the process and then something incredible happens. Society calls these special moments ‘miracles’. However, the miracle doesn’t really happen on the court. It happens in the competitive heart and mind of the athlete when he learns and applies the Biblical definition of success.

The world defines success by the scoreboard. The Bible teaches that success is doing what is right, just and fair. Therefore, the Christian perspective is that success defines the scoreboard rather than the other way around.

For those who want to take this a step farther consider...

Proverbs 1:7 Fear of the Lord is the foundation of true knowledge, but Fools despise wisdom and discipline.”

“This is the key verse of the entire book of Proverbs. Since Proverbs is the book of how to live life, therefore this is the key verse to all of Life and one of the greatest verses in the Bible” (Commentary by Ray Stedman)

Proverbs 3: 1-12 Lessons in Leadership

Life is a team sport. In sports, as in life, things don’t always go the way we want them to. In order to be successful the team must have a leader and be willing to follow him or her no matter what. Success is defined in the Bible as doing what is right, just and fair (Prov. 1:3). Godly leaders display a relationship with God built upon trust, fear (respect), honor and acceptance. If a leader is true to these principles with God then others will desire to follow that leader with the same values no matter what the game or life brings their way.



paul.newman@athletesinaction.org
www.iasportsperformance.org

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Paul Newman is a Certified Athletic Trainer and the Director of AIA Sports Performance, which uses the platform of sports medicine and strength & conditioning to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ; seeking to minister to team physicians, athletic trainers, physical therapists, strength coaches and other healthcare professionals by giving them the experience of missions in their field of expertise. AIA Sports Performance has impacted 21 countries on 5 continents around the world including the United States. AIA's International Headquarters is located in Xenia, Ohio and includes a Sports Complex and Retreat Center that will see over 60,000 visitors in 2009.