

the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

Ah, mid-winter—that special time of year when the crisp smell of hairspray, gold, sweat, and ambition floats on the air as the season for awards shows and sports championships heats up. You’ve got everything from the Golden Globes and the Oscars—where what the attendees look like pre-show makes more news than what awards they leave with, to the Super Bowl—where millions of people tune in to watch millions of dollars’ worth of career-making moves . . . during the commercials and halftime show.

It’s enough to make you wonder (as you scarf down your game-day chips and seven-layer taco dip), what is it all worth? Do those who are up for awards care whether they win or lose? Do those men on the 50-yard line count the cost of all the hours they’ve spent away from family and friends, practicing and traveling and pushing their bodies to meet with various forms of professional punishment?

Perhaps the meaning of such events has been summed up well by Don Shula, the coach who led the Miami Dolphins to two Super Bowl wins and to the only perfect NFL season in history, who was quoted as saying, “When you get to a Super Bowl, both teams are treated the same, talked about in glowing terms. But when the game is over, only the team that won matters.”

As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above news story to read. After all teens have had the opportunity to read the article, discuss it in this way:

What do you think about what Don Shula said? Is that true? In a competition (think of any competition that matters to you), is it only who wins that matters? Explain your answer.

List some motivations people have for rising to the top of their profession. What things make you want to work toward being the best at what you do?

Imagine attending an awards dinner for the Best Christian Servant of the Year. How do you think that awards event would be different from events such as the Academy Awards or the Super Bowl? How might it be the same? What qualities would you choose to be the criteria for judging who wins this award?

Success doesn’t happen by accident. Effort is required. Today we examine three key principles for achieving success in God’s service.