

I am Not a Role Model, but I Know the One Who Is

During the height of his Hall of Fame basketball career, Charles Barkley assured his fans that he didn't want to be viewed as a role model. On the court he was combative towards referees and sometimes unapologetic towards other players. Off the court he didn't face the scrutiny of social media and 24-hour news cycles that we have today, so he wasn't under the microscope of today's athlete. But, he was human so we know he couldn't be perfect.

Modern day athletes and public figures can't even blow their nose without press coverage. The US Women's National soccer team won the World Cup, defeating every opponent. The news media sensationalized every word and deed of this 23-person team. They certainly attracted the world's attention and they used it for several social agenda items. The media was more than willing to cooperate. In winning the World Cup they had a world-wide platform to promote their agenda.



We sometimes forget that, in addition to winning the championship and promoting a social agenda, there is a third element. Because of their success we have a tendency to look at athletes as role models. We see their success on the playing field and want to be like them. It is an unfair expectation that any human being could be viewed as a perfect role model. Every human being is far from being perfect in God's eyes. We should look higher than successful athletes for our role models. Being "One with the Father" should be our ultimate goal. God sent Jesus to live among us and to be the role model for us to follow. Jesus is the only perfect being that will ever walk the face of this earth. He is the role model for living that we should seek.

The World Cup champions are a vivid example of the three components connected to athletic success.

- **Victory:** The victory on the soccer pitch is worthy of our praise and admiration. The players showed grit, determination, teamwork and a fantastic work ethic as they achieved their dream. Their success will inspire thousands of kids to take up the sport and learn the valuable lessons of athletics.
- **Advocate for Change:** The USWNT is using the platform of success to push for social change. Our world needs to right many wrongs of human interaction, so some change is needed, as long as change is moving in a biblically correct direction, and not the other way. Just because a successful athlete promotes social change doesn't make it right. Evaluate each item on the merits of what God wants us to do, not just human goals. There is no better measuring stick of what is the right thing to do than what is biblically correct and worthy of our support. Remember, Jesus was sent to earth to change the world, but to do it according to God's commandments.
- **Role Model:** Let Jesus be the role model that you aspire to for your life.

You may have family and friends who are making an effort to live a godly life. I am surrounded by family and friends who are making the effort to godly lives and point to Jesus as their guide. They inspire me to try to live a better, godly life. But we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, so let Jesus be your ultimate role model. In the end, we all will need God's Mercy and Grace to be acceptable in God's eyes.

Jesus is the only one who fulfills all three components perfectly. His victory on the cross makes Him the advocate for change in our life. And he is the one role model we should faithfully follow. Seek to know the only One who is the perfect role model for your life.

The Bible Says: *Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).*

Prayer: Dear Lord. We see the successes of people around us and we desire success in our lives. Let us seek changes only that is consistent with your commandments. Help us to be firm in our commitment to your values as we seek to be one with You. Amen.