

Legendary Coaches

For Christmas I was given a collection of biographies of legendary coaches. The coaches included Phil Jackson, Bill Walsh and Dean Smith. As a quick summary:

- Jackson coached both Michael Jordan's Chicago Bulls and Kobe Bryant/Shaquille O'Neil's Lakers to a combined 11 NBA championships – more than anyone in the history of the game.
- Bill Walsh led the Jerry Rice, Joe Montana and Steve Young era of the San Francisco 49ers, winning 3 Super Bowls, the second most in NFL history.
- Dean Smith coached two national champion Tar Heel basketball teams and is third in all-time NCAA wins.

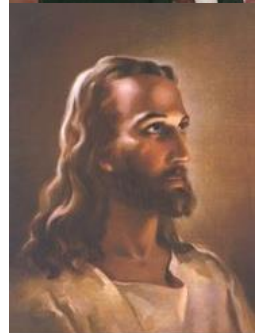
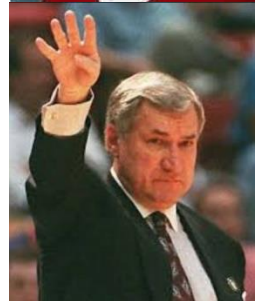
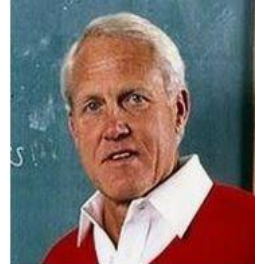
There were plenty of challenges but were highly successful coaches and leaders in their respective sport.

The biography of each legendary coach provided insight into the secret of his success. Each of the books is a textbook of what it takes in big time sports. They contain stories about dealing with the pressures and emotions inherent in a world of expectation. They talk about working with athletes like Shaquille O'Neil, Michael Jordan, Dennis Rodman, Joe Montana and personalities such as Howard Cosell and Al Davis, Jr. Each book is a "who's who" of sports personalities. I am old enough to remember everyone mentioned in the books, making it a fun read.

Aside from remembering the notable personalities I was impressed with the leadership tips outlined in each book. Each biography is a gold mine of "do's and don'ts" for people who made a difference in the sports world, and also in the transformation of players into leaders. You can easily visualize how their coaching style contributed to the success of the players. I found myself taking notes on the leadership principles outlined in each book. The principles of success in sports also apply to the business world, the community in which we live and even our families.

There is an even better leadership book that applies to the business world, the community and the family. The Bible describes battles more violent than the most vicious football game ever played. It describes courage in the face of hatred and fear. It contains Godly wisdom and mankind's ageless struggle against worldly values. It encourages us to have peace when confronted with adversity and extends God's comforting promises to us. Written by 40 authors over a 2,000 year period the Bible converts "ancient wisdom into visionary leadership," valid for us today. In her book, Jesus CEO, Laurie Beth Jones describes Jesus' leadership:

1. "One person trained twelve human beings who went on to so influence the world that time itself is now recorded as being before (B.C.) or after (A.D.) his existence.
2. This person worked with a staff that was totally human and not divine ... a staff that in spite of illiteracy, questionable backgrounds, fractious feelings, and momentary cowardice went on to accomplish the tasks he trained them to do. They did this for one main reason – to be with him again.
3. His leadership style was intended to be put to use by any of us."



Now that is championship, legendary leadership!

It is trite to say that Jesus' leadership has passed the test of time. His influence is for all time, the "alpha and omega," from the beginning to the end of time, as we know it.

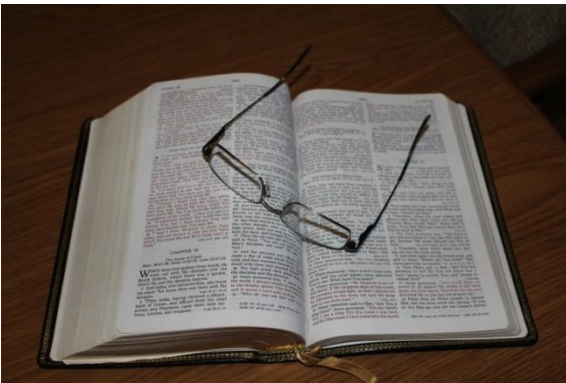
Most of the legendary coaches in my personal sports library were successful but as they retired their sports teams often fell on hard times. For example, the 2020 Super Bowl champion 49ers hadn't even played in the big game in 50 years, the year after Bill Walsh retired. The ups and downs of sports teams exemplify human nature in an ever-changing world. Jesus' leadership is world-wide and remains strong today. And He wants our help to continue spreading His Word. *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you (Matthew 28:19-20).* There is no chance that Jesus will "retire" and His Kingdom fall on hard times. *And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.* Jesus tells us how to live as we seek eternal life with Him. The model of His life is the perfect example for us to follow as we seek an eternal presence with Him.

Look at the pictures of these legendary leaders. Which one stands out to you? It may be fun to play for or follow one of the sports coaches but the one you want for your "life coach" is Jesus Christ. His game plan is spelled out in the Bible.

We can become a fan of the leadership of popular sports coaches and their respective teams. Our culture idolizes winners and success. But fame doesn't last. Domination in any sport doesn't last either. Bill Walsh described the pressure and expectation to win once you are a champion when he said, "Victory meant little more than delaying the pain of loss." You can't win them all. "Any kind of loss, mistake, or setback becomes very disturbing, even devastating, because you've attached your self-image to the results of the competition." ([The Score Takes Care of Itself – My Philosophy of Leadership](#), by Bill Walsh.

The image that Jesus wants you to seek is that of a believer. *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; ... " So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him ... (Genesis 1:26-27).*

Jesus doesn't want you to be a just a fan. Fans are fickle, demanding the reward of a championship and are disappointed when that doesn't happen all the time. When speaking to large crowds Jesus "didn't care about the size of the crowd. He cared about their commitment." (paraphrase from [Not a Fan](#), by Kyle Idleman). Jesus wants you to be part of His family.



Read His book for life-changing tips applicable to your life. The Bible tells you all you need to know about life and how to be on the "winning team." Sports books are just for fun, entertainment and fantasy. The Bible is the best-selling book of all time for a reason. It is [the book](#) to read, digest, understand history, take notes and embrace as your guide to life as you seek the victory He has already won for you.

Question: When was the last time you read God's story in the Bible?

Prayer: Heavenly Father. We often fanaticize the thrill of victory that we see in successful sports teams. We idolize the people who contributed to that success. But, we know that you don't want us to have idols, but instead, be committed to the teachings of your Son, Jesus Christ. We pray that we will spend time in your Word daily, learning how you want us to live our lives. Amen.