

May 2008



## Playing to our AUDIENCE OF ONE!

### 2 ways to live memory test!

From last time: Box 1 - Revelation 4:11. Box 2 - Romans 3:10-12

For next time: Box 3 - Hebrews 9:27. Box 4 - 1 Peter 3:18

### Warm up

Can you remember a game where you've known someone important to you was watching (e.g. a coach, scout, parent, boy/girlfriend, family)? How did you feel? What happened?

### Game theory (an adaptation of the Prisoner's Dilemma)

Average tour de France times increased since 1991 by approx 3 mph. Schermer argues it's now rational to cheat in cycling/sport.

- Drugs are effective and very hard to detect
- Payoffs for success are high (money, recognition)
- Clean riders become so non-competitive that they get cut
- Penalties not high enough

### 1 Kings 18:18-40

Background:

- Under rule of King Ahab, who did more evil than any king before him (16:29-34)
- Ahab set up Baal (God of fertility and storm) to be worshipped alongside God
- It's a time of spiritual crisis, 3 years of drought have gone. Rain won't fall until Elijah gives word.

		MY OPPONENT'S STRATEGY	
		CASE I COOPERATE (abide by rules)	CASE II DEFECT (cheat with drugs)
MY STRATEGY	COOPERATE (abide by rules)	\$1 million (High Payoff)	-\$0.4 million (Sucker Payoff)
	DEFECT (cheat with drugs)	\$8.9 million (Temptation Payoff)	\$0.8 million (Low Payoff)

### Questions

- v 21. How is Elijah's ultimatum reflected in the new testament?
- v 26-29. Anything surprise you?
- v 33. Why does Elijah tip all this water on the wood?
- v 36-37. What is the heart of Elijah's pray?
- v 39. How was Elijah's prayer answered? How did the people respond?

NB. God probably may not answer our prayers with 'fire', we've already been answered in an even more powerful and climatic way through Jesus sacrifice and resurrection once for all time.

### An AUDIENCE OF ONE?

Is your self worth dependent on what people think of your performance? Are you 'only as good as your last game'?

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In contrast to the world's view of sport, as followers of Jesus our biggest concern is not winning or impressing our peers but pleasing God (1 Thessalonians 4:1, John 8:29). Arguably, 'game theory' is no longer relevant since we no longer compete for what we can get out of sport but how we can worship God, our Creator, through it.

As Christians we still get caught up in the highs and lows of sport, we still have emotions, we still share these times with our team-mates/training partners (Romans 12:15-16) but we remember God's desire for us to have no other images of God. We are already that image (Genesis 1:26). We are also forbidden to put objects/places/people/sporting performance in the place of where God needs to be (Exodus 20:1-5).

So now, in view of what Jesus has done for us in restoring us to a right relationship with God we are to worship, please and live for God wherever we are (Romans 12:1-2). To play for our AUDIENCE OF ONE.

### Discussion

Performance isn't what really matters in sport but pleasing God and playing to Him as the AUDIENCE OF ONE does. How does this look in our sports? What will change about the way we compete? What does it look like to make sport worship? Does this mean that we don't care what other people think about us? Can we still compete?

### Prayer points

- Pray for each other as we compete in sport. That God would help us think through how we play and help us to compete with only Him as our AUDIENCE OF ONE (Elijah's prayer!)
- For your team-mates/training partners. Commit to pray for specific people. That you'd have opportunities to share something about Jesus through the way you play and in what you say

### Thought for the changing room

After each game/training session/race let's ask God what he thinks of our performance before we think about what others/we think.

Remember we don't compete or perform for God in the sense that we have to do something to earn His favour, rather we perform as a **thank-you response** for what he has **already done** for us in Christ.

### Resources

- Two ways to live: <http://www.matthiasmedia.com.au/2wtl/index.asp>
- The Doping Dilemma. Michael Schermer. <http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=the-doping-dilemma> .
- Game day glory. Life changing principles for sport. John & Cindy White. Athletes in Action
- Born to play. Graham Daniels & Stuart Weir [http://www.christiansinsport.org.uk/downloads/files/Born\\_To\\_Play-English.pdf](http://www.christiansinsport.org.uk/downloads/files/Born_To_Play-English.pdf)