

# AWARENESS

Be Alert; Guard Your Heart

- Proverbs 4:23 (above all else, guard your heart)
- Matthew 7:3-5 (speck & plank illustration)
- 1 Corinthians 16:13 (be on your guard)
- 2 Corinthians 10:5 (take every thought captive)
- Ephesians 6:10-18 (The Armor of God, learn how to use it)
- Hebrews 12:2 (fix your eyes on Jesus)
- 1 Peter 3:15 (always be prepared to give an answer)
- 1 Peter 5:8 (be alert)

Lack of awareness by professional athletes is becoming a visible problem. Players often don't seem to be aware of what needs to happen in specific situations (especially at the end of games). Achieving great success in sports requires athletes to understand what is going on around them as well as what is going on in their own hearts and minds.

We need to pay attention to our thoughts and emotions just as much as our surroundings. God challenges us to be aware of both the outside and in the inside. He urges us to "guard our hearts". What does it mean to guard something? First, the thing you are guarding must have value. Know the value. Second, if the thing is truly valuable, one must be ready to protect it no matter what. Third, in order to guard something, one must constantly be on the lookout for danger. There is no time to rest. There is no time to let down one's guard.

In sports, preparation allows us to better understand what to do in specific situations. Learn from the past. Work hard in practice. Try to simulate potential scenarios. Anticipate. Study your opponent. Ask for help. Be part of the team.

We must do the same things in our spiritual walk. Read the Bible. Attend church. Know your enemy (Satan). Learn from the past. Work hard to prepare for battle. Ask for guidance. Share your knowledge with others. Find teammates.

Awareness takes a great amount of time and effort. It also requires us to be honest with ourselves (accepting the truth can be difficult). Begin to train yourself to pay attention to your surrounds while also paying attention to what is going on in your heart and mind.

Think about your teammates and how your style of play impacts them.