

LeaderImpact Podcast – Episode 35 - John Chick - The Outspoken Athlete

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Episode Summary:

John grew up in Gillette, Wyoming, surrounded by an unbelievable support network. He attended Utah State University where he graduated with his bachelor's in exercise science. He signed with the Houston Texans and went on to a 12-year professional football career in both the NFL and CFL with the Saskatchewan Roughriders Indianapolis Colts, Jacksonville Jaguars, Hamilton Tiger-Cats, and the Edmonton Eskimos. He is a two-time Grey Cup champion and three-time All-Star, a three-time nominee for the CFL's most outstanding defensive player. His more cherished accomplishments during his football career was in the way he was able to serve the communities he lived in as a national advocate for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, a condition in which he proudly has conquered daily since the age of 14.

In 2018, John stepped away from his football to provide a more stable life for his amazing wife Catherine and their 10 children. He started two businesses, Iron Will Fitness and Kickin' It Coed, and recently became a director of prison ministry. He loves to work out, play board games, and pick up basketball. And I heard he submitted a video for the Titan games because of his belief in himself, his family, and Jesus Christ.

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Show Notes:

0:00 - Show introduction

0:42 - John's introduction

2:10 - John's submission to the Titan games

2:57 - John's health challenges growing up and how they shaped him

- 3:58 - was diagnosed with diabetes at 14
- 5:05 - had resolve and support through family and coaches
- 5:35 - had a conquering mentality and wasn't going to be stopped
- 6:25 - felt isolated as a Christian and an athlete

6:33 - Healthy habits he had to develop early on

- 7:05 - was a learning experience especially with nutrition

“I can be a mighty warrior on the field and still be a Christian.”

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8:15 - His university career at Utah State and his experience as a Catholic in a predominantly Mormon school

- 8:38 - had a great experience. He grew up in faith, but could not defend his faith.
- 9:23 - half the team was 2 years older than him because they had served on missions earlier
- 9:42 - only 1 building with at Catholic presence, other smaller churches
- 9:56 - generally there were 2 groups of people, those who were Mormon and those who were rebelling
- 10:13 - was an incredible time in his faith as he had to develop the answers, and not just get them from his dad. Learning the why's of his faith
- 10:44 - met his wife there
- 11:20 - was an isolating experience and throughout his football career

12:23 - Transition from a football career to his career after football

- 12:46 - many people try to help athletes transition, but there is no training. Some go right into coaching
- 13:21 - wanted to serve using his faith. Saw that example growing up

- 13:42 - can see how football can have an impact on a community, different than having a consistent ministry
- 14:33 - the transition is very difficult because as an athlete there is a definitive goal all the time and all their energy is put into that goal and their attention
- 16:26 - the week of a football player is very regimented and detail-oriented
- 17:20 - and then leaving sports, life is not as regimented. Goals are there but they are less clear. What does a week look like now?
- 18:39 - athletes miss the impact they have on a community, on top of having to replace income and losing the camaraderie with the team
- 19:03 - not easy. Hard to duplicate that teamwork

19:34 - Transitioning and finding purpose

- 20:21 - Purpose-driven. How is he making an impact today?
- 20:49 - started 2 businesses when he retired. Working with men on their body, mind, and spirit
- 21:05 - played with others who talked about Jesus, but lived a different way
- 21:22 - the people in the early church, Christ was part of their whole life, and wanted to help men live a life like that
- 22:56 - was asked to go on a retreat with a prison ministry, but couldn't give his yes right away. Eventually, he could say yes and started as a volunteer
- 23:43 - the executive director resigned and he felt called to put his name forward, and he was chosen

“What the Lord has given me I have to return to him because he gave it to me.”

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25:06 - How John showed he was a Christian when he was a professional athlete on a daily basis

- 25:40 - seeing himself as a sinner
- 27:00 - there is a lot of dialog with teammates and there were great conversations throughout his career from high school to the pros
- 27:39 - had chaplains and found ways to serve the community
- 28:03 - serving in the community was a way to help others see faith through serving
- 28:31 - when he first started his career he was already married and had a child, which is different when most athletes are having kids they are closer the end of their career. So that separated him from his teammates. He was respected by his teammates.

- 29:36 - his daily routine was important which included Bible reading and prayer
- 30:07 - 2008 was an injury-filled season and fell in love with a particular teacher and Bible study and from that year on he and his wife would host Bible studies with his teammates and their families.
- 30:40 - wherever he was playing he found a way to go to mass. He would invite others to mass. He didn't get many people who came again, but it was a chance to share his faith.

31:43 - talks about some ex teammates

32:20 - experience as an athlete as a Christian

- 33:14 - yes and no. He wondered if there were multiple factors that placed a mark on him. Does wonder if his faith had a negative effect on his athletic career.
- 33:55 - he always wanted to stand up for his faith even if it was with those who were "rough around the edges" and he would have faith conversations
- 35:17 - in college and in the pros there are Christians who are too nice on the field and he was not like that.
- 35:47 - there are tough people in the Bible like David who conquered Goliath.
- 36:17 - he used his gifts and talents to glorify God even if it might hurt someone. He is doing job
- 37:25 - being Christ principled, he needs to be all in

38:01 - What John wants his faith legacy to be.

- 38:21 - relentlessness. What led into Iron Will. Running to win. Want to be know to run even though there were obstacles with God's will.
- 39:37 - time, treasure, and talents of the best of what God has given him

40:04 - What brings John the greatest joy

- 40:18 - serving God along with his wife and children
- 40:40 - the encounter with Jesus when he goes into a prison and meets with those who are suffering and he is part of relieving that
- 41:56 - spending time in the mountains

43:06 - has 10 children ages 17 - 1.

45:40 - Outro

**“It is in the struggles of life that we have our
experiences.”**

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