



Truth Matters

A Publication Discussing Matters Related To Truth Because Truth Matters

Scripture Reading
Week of
Feb 27th - March 5th



Monday

- ❖ Leviticus 25
- ❖ Psalm 41
- ❖ Mark 13

Tuesday

- ❖ Leviticus 26
- ❖ Psalm 42
- ❖ Mark 14

Wednesday

- ❖ Leviticus 27
- ❖ Psalm 43
- ❖ Mark 15

Thursday

- ❖ Numbers 1, 2
- ❖ Psalm 44
- ❖ Mark 16

Friday

- ❖ Numbers 3, 4
- ❖ Psalm 45
- ❖ Luke 1

Saturday

- ❖ Numbers 5, 6

Sunday

- ❖ Numbers 7, 8



Spectator Sports, Sand-Sucking & Vicarious Church-Goers

Football, baseball, basketball, golf, tennis, NASCAR, rodeo, and under-water basket weaving – Labels that differentiate the different doors that line the hallway in the American throne room. And the deities who sit upon these thrones include the likes of Bret Favre, Sammy Sosa, Kobe Bryant, Tiger Woods, Venus and Serena Williams, Matt Kenseth, Ty Murray, Granny Wilson (whose baskets and iron lungs merited her a blue ribbon at the Atlantis County Fair), and a host of others.

I believe that sports thrive as a source of entertainment and as a multi-billion dollar-a-year industry mainly because, as

humans created in the image of God for the beholding of God, we are created with a desire to be dazzled. However, to be dazzled by anything short of God's glory is the essence of sin. "For all have sinned and fall short of God's glory" (Rom. 3:23). Sports must find its proper place under God!

More to the point, I believe we are drawn to the dazzling feats of sports and athletes because as fallen humans, we are more prone to live vicariously through the greats. Every boy dreams of playing in the big-leagues, the majors, etc. We become enamored with the greats and fill our heads with facts and figures as we go "star gazing." Who is Bret Favre,

after all? He is simply a hell-bound or heaven-bound soul no different from you and me.

This ranting of mine has not to do with star-gazing as much as it does with vicarious living. By that I mean we all get a pseudo-fulfillment in the accomplishments of others when they are what we really want to become but will never become. When young boys close their eyes and drift into the world of make-believe, they see themselves at bat in the bottom of the ninth inning of game seven of the World Series. That practice becomes a habit, I'm a afraid, that still exists in 40 year-old (boys) men who have not put off childish things (1 Cor. 13:11).

I see a similar trend developing in the habits of modern-day truth-driven evangelical church-goers. They come in Sunday after Sunday, not to participate in the life of the church but to "spectate." They just smile, pay the price of admission, bask in the hard work and headaches of those who perform, and

Spectator Sports, Sand-Sucking & Vicarious Church-Goers

then return to life in their “real-world.” They have no ambition to work hard and endure headaches themselves. They are far too easily pleased with the pseudo-fulfillment that comes by living off the work of others. Jeremiah would refer to them as “sand-suckers” (Jer. 2:13). They won’t go to the self-replenishing fountain of fresh water for themselves because they are far too easily satisfied with the meager amount of grimy moisture they get by sucking on the sand of drainage pits.

Sucking moisture from the sand of cisterns is very unhealthy! All kinds of bacteria exist in the stagnant clay; but oh how clear and clean is the water of a mountain spring! You can tell a person who drinks from the fountain by their exultation and their exaltation. In other words, they beam with satisfaction and they beckon others to go to the source of their satisfaction. They cannot shut off their joy and they will not be silenced. But the “sand-suckers,” on the other hand, are sad, somber, sullen, sunk and sickly. They don’t talk. They don’t sing (though they may recite the words to a tune). They don’t open up. They certainly do not emote; for nothing has grabbed nor plucked their heart strings. Poor representatives they are for the self-replenishing fountain of joy they claim to have tasted. Either they lie and have not really tasted the fountain for themselves but simply know of its location; or God lies and he is really not all that satisfying. “Let God be true and every man a liar!” (Rom. 3:4; cf. 1 John 2:4).

Once you have truly tasted of the fountain of God you become like a man who “in his jubilation” went and sold all that he had so that he

could buy the fountain (cf. Matt. 13:44. I changed the metaphor from field to fountain.). You become like the Apostle Paul who counted all the merits of his very successful career up that point as a pile of dung (Philip. 3:8). You become like the Samaritan woman at the well, who after drinking from this water, went to town with the intention of bringing all her friends to the fountain, “You have to taste this water. Nothing compares to the joy and satisfaction it has brought me!” (cf. John 4: 39-42).

There are two tests that emerge from these examples for evaluating whether or not you are truly drinking from the right fountain:

1. You possess an insatiable appetite to return time and again for more of this great water! You never tire of being taught but you desire even more to be trained – “How can I make the most of my efforts for drinking so as to maximize my intake?” In other words, you want all the help you can get in honing your spiritual disciplines so as to achieve maximum input. Practically speaking, one Sunday morning service alone is extremely insufficient. The way you magnify a self-replenishing, all-satisfying spring is by bringing as many empty buckets as you can. That says to the spring, “You are worth it!” But that in itself will not be all.

2. You bring an increasing train of followers as you return time and again for more of this great water! If the water is as pure and satisfying as you claim it to be, you cannot keep it to yourself. That would be as immoral as a man who has found the cure for AIDS keeping it locked up for the day he needs it!

Meanwhile, thousands die each year in Africa alone! But so many evangelical spectators have no ambition of getting up off their couches and participating in the game.

I define church as the active participation in the lives of other people as we come together into God’s presence for worship. If you have really tasted this water, you will first long to exalt the fountain in the presence of those who have been there. You will carry the wounded back on your shoulders if need be; but you will see to it that everyone is coming back continually.

The Samaritan woman went back to town and declared to the people: “You have to taste this water. Nothing compares to the joy and satisfaction it has brought me!” (cf. John 4: 39-42). But you must pay special attention to v. 42: “They [her friends from town] said to the woman, ‘It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for **we have heard for ourselves**, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.’” (**Emphasis added**). We are not content with letting unbelievers live vicariously through our joy. We want them to find it for themselves!

First, you must find it! Then, you must bring your train!