



PARKSIDE CHAPEL

LIFE NEWS

THE THRILL OF VICTORY
...THE AGONY OF
DEFEAT

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parksidevisalia.org

This month is a great time to be a sports fan! Baseball season is wrapping up as teams scramble to make the playoffs, and football season is just beginning with high hopes for your favorite team. There is seemingly no end to the amount of sports news available to read, hear, and see. Therein lies the rub for me.

I used to spend a great deal of my time, discretionary and otherwise, checking out the available news and views on sports, especially my favorite teams. Over time I discovered that how my team was doing could actually affect my attitude at that moment in time. If my team was doing well (i.e., the San Francisco Giants last year), I might find myself in a better mood. However, if my team was stumbling and bumbling (i.e., the Giants this year), I could find myself frustrated and angry.

A few years back, I determined that it was not a good thing to allow sports to have such an effect on me. I didn't want my Christian character, my desire to live a life honoring to God, to be swayed by how well my favorite teams were playing. I recognized that it was time to apply 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 to my sports fandom and ... "take every thought captive to obey Christ."

Notice that the Scripture says, "take every thought," not just some thoughts. While watching my teams play, my thoughts were being hijacked by the mediocrity and outright poor performance of the players. In order to "capture my thoughts" in a way that honored Christ, I had to stop watching the games! I'm not suggesting that this is what others need to do, but for me, I have found that I don't want sports stealing my joy. I am still a fan. I regularly check the scores, and if my team is actually playing well and has a healthy lead, I might

dare to watch for a while. Often, however, the minute I start watching, my team begins playing poorly again, so thank the Lord for the remote control!

One additional thought at no extra charge ... I have found this same issue to be true in watching the news. For me, if I watch the news for very long, I find myself getting frustrated and angry. Left, right, or anywhere in between, fallible men and women are airing their opinions, frustrations, and anger, and I am affected. Once again, I do want to be in touch with what is going on in the world, but I do not want to be so influenced by the mess of this world that it gets my focus off of the kingdom of Christ and robs me of the joy and peace He has for me.

Again, please understand that I am not suggesting that others stop watching sports and the news, but this happens to be my issue at this moment in time, not necessarily one that affects you. For me, focusing on sports and the news is a "weight" that slows me down in running the race set before me, which requires me to set my eyes on Jesus and not be entangled and distracted by the lesser things on earth. (Hebrews 12:1, 2) And, for what it's worth, there are tons of other things that entangle and distract me as well!

I much prefer to enjoy the thrill of victory in Jesus rather than the agony of defeat this world entails so ... "We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God (*much of what we hear all around us*) and take every thought captive (*filter out the distractions*) to obey Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:5)

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Pastor Ron