

It's Not About Performance

Ready:

“He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins.” -- 1 John 2:2a

Set

As of December 2020, LeBron James was the highest-paid player of all time, with around \$340 million. This is money for a man who has played for three different NBA teams, with each team winning at least one championship with him, and personally going to the NBA Finals ten times. Plus, he is often brought up against Michael Jordan and Kobe Bryant as the greatest of all time.

Ownership will pay that kind of money for two reasons. The smaller reason is that they have earned it with their performances in the past. But the bigger reason is that the owners expect them to keep up that performance in the future. When Mr. James is paid that much, the owners hope he will bring in championships AND more money for the franchise.

In a way, LeBron James is indebted to that team. He is getting paid, and now his job is to earn it with his performance. That is a lot of pressure. Yes, he has earned millions, his family is secure, he is all too certain for the Hall of Fame and he is loved and adored by thousands. But, he is still expected to produce results; results for which the world will be watching.

What if LeBron James could not pay that debt? What if he comes out and suddenly is not the player he was? What if he got injured? Would he be able to pay his debt then?

One word that Scripture uses is propitiation (translated to sacrifice in the verse above). Propitiation is a payment to satisfy a debt. The word is only used a few times in the New Testament, but it is always used in context with Jesus. Think about it: Jesus is God's payment for our sin debt. When the old hymns speak of us being bought with His blood, this is what is meant. We have been redeemed--been paid for--by the blood of the Son of God.

This proves the love that God has for us. Romans 5:8 reminds us that Christ died for us even though we were, and are, unworthy of it. Our performance as human beings, and even as Christians, could not redeem us. If you trust that Christ's death and resurrection have paid your sin debt, then you have been redeemed!

Coach, do you know what the love of God shown in Christ means for you? Since your faith is in Christ's work of redemption, it doesn't ultimately matter how many wins or losses you have, or how good of a practice you lead. You are still a beloved of the Father and bought with the blood of His Son. So, give it your all because your performance does not change your redemption.

Athletes, do you know what the love of God in Christ means for you? You have the freedom to play hard, no matter how good or bad it comes out. Why? Because your performance does not change your redemption.

Coach, athlete, if you are in Christ, you have been purchased with the "propitiation" of Jesus for your sin, your athletic performance cannot change that purchase, nor does it affect His love for you. The question now is have you trusted in that payment, that "propitiation"? If you are not sure, talk to someone (FCA staff, for example) and find out just how much He loves you.

Go

- What does it mean to you that Jesus died on a cross for you?
- How are you going to do to tell others about Jesus Christ?

Workout

1 Peter 2:8-10; Romans 5:8; 1 John 2:1-2

Overtime

"Father, we cannot thank You enough for Jesus and His willingness to die. We also thank You that His death has paid our debt, and we can be with You one day. Help us to show You to others. In Jesus's name, amen."

Bible Reference:

1 John 2:2

1 Peter 2:8-10

Romans 5:8

1 John 2:1-2



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