

Are You Kidding Me?

Ready:

"So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want." -Galatians 5:16-17 (NIV)

Set

A few years ago, while watching an NFL game, I saw something that made me scream. I hollered a saying that everyone, especially sports commentators, uses when there is an incredible play. "Are you kidding me?" I yelled.

Yes, it was a great play, but it wasn't the great play that actually caused my reaction. Even though it was an extraordinary catch--one in which the receiver had to leap over two defenders for a touchdown--I did not yell because of his incredible display of athletic ability, but because of what he did after the play. With all the attention on this pro football player, he reached above his head and with both hands pointed to his name on the back of the jersey. I forgot his name (even though he tried really hard to make sure I would remember), but I did not forget his gesture!

"Are you kidding me?" I yelled more than once. A team is not about the individual, but the entire team. My response would have been different if he'd pointed to the team name on the front of his jersey. How about pointing to the quarterback who threaded the needle with a perfect pass? What about the six offensive linemen who provided great pass protection to allow the quarterback time to find the open whatshisname receiver. What about pointing to the coaches who called the perfect play? What about pointing toward the team's owner who pays his salary? And last but not least, maybe pointing upward toward his Maker who gave him those talents, gifts and abilities to catch the ball would have been the right thing to do.

I know I'm being hard on the guy whose name I can't remember, but I think this kind of behavior permeates our culture. We have grown numb to self-centered people so much so that we don't even notice their behavior. And unfortunately, this behavior has become part of our lives as Christians. We often lift up gifted individuals for the public value they have for the Kingdom and forego lifting up Jesus Christ as the Source of that talent. When people acknowledge the impact we are making for Christ, we point to our name on the back of the jersey.

Maybe I took special notice because God was speaking to me when the receiver pointed to his name on the back of his jersey. I felt the Lord saying to me, "Dan, you don't outwardly point to your name on your jersey, but you do it inwardly. You want people to notice you. You

think you are better than this receiver because you don't point externally to your name, but take a look inside." The Lord convicted me through this athlete's selfish behavior. As I said to this athlete "Are you kidding me?" I heard the Lord say right back to me "Are you kidding Me?"

When I compete, I need to die to myself. I can't point to myself, not even in the hidden areas of my heart. There needs to be a total sacrifice of the flesh, pointing toward God on the outside and on the inside. Our competition should bring attention to the only Famous One: Jesus Christ!

Go

1. How does it make you feel when you see your name either on a jersey or in print? Be honest.
2. Why is our society consumed with the spotlight? Why is selfishness so prevalent in the world of sports?
3. Name someone who is a great example of bringing attention to the Famous One.
4. Ask God to reveal the things in your life that are preventing you from giving Him all the glory.
5. What are some practical ways you can point to God externally and internally?

Workout

Psalm 24:3-6

Galatians 5:16-26

Overtime

"Famous One, Lord Jesus, I want to make You great. I want to give You glory inwardly and outwardly. It is easy to give glory outwardly, but in the depths of my soul, there is a pride and selfishness that rises up and prevents me from laying it all at Your feet. I keep glory for myself. Help me, Lord, to give You all the glory all the time, both on and off the field of competition. Today, I die to myself so that You will live in and through me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen."



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8701 Leeds Road | Kansas City, MO 64129 | 800.289.0909
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