

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

It is the World Series. It is the seventh game, and at the bottom of the ninth, your team is behind two runs. Two runners are on base with two outs. You are at bat, and the count is full. One more swing, and you go home either a loser or a winner. The pressure is on! Your bat is in position, the ball has just left the pitcher's hand and . . . STOP!

Woe . . . woe . . . woe! Let us think about this for a minute. You have worked your whole life for this moment, and now perhaps the greatest moment in your career, perhaps your life, is before you. What you are about to do is going to change everything. You can not go back! Are you ready for what is about to take place? If you strike out, and the team goes home, you live with the pressure that the whole season, the whole team, all the fans, and your only chance came, and you failed. You are forced to live with the failure. Some professional ball players, especially pitchers, have to see psychiatrists to help them with failure. Sometime failure leads to a deep state of depression and discouragement. Sometimes it turns people away from God. But, sometimes it makes people draw closer to God. One thing is for sure, if failure comes, and it will sooner or later, you have got to be ready for it.

But enough of the failure stuff, what if you hit the ball over the fence? You win it all! The fame, the hurrahs, the excitement, the pats on the back—all of it sounds too good to be possible. But are you ready for the victory? Are you really ready? Are you ready for the constant infringement on your privacy because of the paparazzi? Are you ready for the constant ball and pen being stuck in your face for a signature? Are you ready for the demands on your time, the interviews, the constant limelight? You may be thinking, Yea! Sure!

Ok, but what will the fanfare do for your personal life, your family, your church life or your personal relationship with God? Are you going to be closer to God now that you have won the World's Series? Is your marriage going to be stronger than ever? Did the schedule and dedication you placed yourself under to be on the team make you a stronger person, a stronger leader, a stronger follower of Christ?

This article is not about baseball. It is not about any sport. It is about life, and what you want out of it. Baseball is the example, but it could be anything that demands too much of your time and attention to accomplish. We could be talking about managing a parts store, or being a rocket scientist. Anything you do in life has the potential to take you away from what matters most. It also has to potential to make you a great leader in your home and in the church. Much depends on your priorities.

Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you," Matthew 6:33. In other words, put God first, no matter what, and anything you want will be yours. What does that mean? Well, if you put God first, truly put Him first, then your will seeks to find

His will for you. What is God's will? Paul said, "You were bought with a price, so glorify God in your body," 1 Corinthians 6:20. God wants to be glorified!

God can be glorified in anything, even winning the World's Series. But God is looking for more than just a moment. A decision to follow Him after you make it big will never work. Whether baseball or nanny, a bottle washer or a CEO for a Fortune 500 company, God is looking for more than a moment of limelight. He is looking for a lifetime commitment.

Congratulations Seniors on a job well done! The world is before you. Make good choices in life, always remembering that what you choose has the ability to make you a stronger Christian or a weaker one. The choice is yours! Ok, back to the ball game. The ball is out of the pitcher's hand and coming at you 98 miles per hour. What's next is up to you!

—Scott