

## What Can Satisfy the Soul?

### *What's the Answer?*

Anyone with a computer or TV couldn't help but see the recent photograph of superstar swimmer Michael Phelps filling his lungs from a bong of marijuana. The picture first appeared in a British tabloid with the Phelps acknowledging that he had been "youthful and inappropriate."

This Phelps' photograph should remind all of us that before conversion, we were all sinners, held captive by sin, pursuing the fleeting pleasures of this world.

While most sports fans were tiring of the Phelps photo, the news broke that another superstar, Alex Rodriguez had used performance-enhancing drugs. When confronted by reporters, he confessed, "I was young. I was stupid. I was naive. And I wanted to prove to everyone that, you know, I was worth being one of the greatest players of all time. And I did take a banned substance. You know, for that I'm very sorry and deeply regretful."

So what was Phelps searching for in that bong pipe? Why was it so important for Rodriguez to prove himself to everyone? What emptiness in their souls were they trying to satisfy?

Here is a biblical view from Pastor CJ Mahaney on the emptiness success can bring to the soul:

If you listen to the media (with the exception of my man Michael Wilbon of the Washington Post) you hear a common chorus of excuses like "Give Phelps a break, nothing he did was anything worse than happens in an average weekend at a typical college campus."

But we are not talking about a typical American college student. Phelps is a rich superstar.

This is what I find so striking: A man whose chest has been covered with gold medals, has achieved international fame, showered with awards, and blessed with an incomprehensible amount of money, still feels compelled to press his face to a bong.

It was Augustine who said that the soul is restless until it finds its rest in God. So true. Only God can satisfy the soul. Only the gospel of Jesus Christ provides forgiveness of sin, and therefore it is here in this gospel that we find rest for our restless souls.

The unflattering picture of Michael Phelps should be a reminder of the deceitfulness of sin and the superficiality of fame and money. But it should also remind us of the message of Christ and him crucified for restless sinners like you, and me, and Michael Phelps.



### WARMUP

1. Watch the internet interview with Tom Brady.  
Go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and search for Tom Brady "More than this"

### WORKOUT

1. Discuss Tom Brady's statement during the interview: "Why do I have three Super Bowl rings and still think there's something greater out there for me? I mean, maybe a lot of people would say, 'Hey man, this is what is.' I reached my goal, my dream, my life. Me, I think, 'It's got to be more than this.' I mean this isn't, this can't be what it's all cracked up to be."
2. One of the books in the Bible specifically addresses the futility of trying to find satisfaction apart from God. Ecclesiastes says that everything is "vanity." Solomon, the author, pursued wisdom, knowledge, success and pleasure, but nothing could ultimately satisfy. Yet the quest to find satisfaction is inevitable because, as he put it, God "has put eternity into man's heart" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). In what ways have you searched for satisfaction apart from God? Have you found satisfaction in Jesus?

### WRAPUP

This week, memorize...

"He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake." Psalm 23:3 (NASB)

### PRAYER

"Lord, you made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in you." This prayer was expressed by Augustine, an African Christian leader from the 5th century.

### GOSPEL FOCUS

Jesus came on a search and rescue mission. He came to reconcile people to God. And he accomplished this mission by living on earth as a representative of sinners like you and me. Then, in an act of incredible love and sacrifice, he stood before God a substitute for any and all sinners who are willing to trust him as Lord. He exchanged his life for theirs by enduring God's wrath against sin in his death on the cross. That is what enables God to forgive us of our sins. – Tom Ascol

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