

Playing on God's Home Field

Doing Sports God's Way with Randy Alcorn

This past summer, I had the privilege of hearing Randy Alcorn preach at the Resolved Conference. He is best-known for his book on "Heaven." Any question you can imagine is covered in this excellent book. Following Tim Tebow leading his Florida Gators to the National Championship, Randy blogged about his friendship with the Tebow family and also answered several questions about sports and Heaven. See his blog at www.randyalcorn.blogspot.com. Will there be sports in Heaven? Here is Randy's answer to this very important question about Heaven:

Just as we can look forward to cultural activities such as art, drama, and music on the New Earth, I also think we can assume that we'll also enjoy sports there.

According to the principle of continuity, we should expect the New Earth to be characterized by familiar, earthly (though uncorrupted) things. Scripture compares the Christian life to athletic competitions (1 Corinthians 9:24, 27; 2 Timothy 2:5).

Because sports aren't inherently sinful, we have every reason to believe that the same activities, games, skills, and interests we enjoy here will be available on the New Earth, with many new ones we haven't thought of. (Your favorite sport in Heaven may be one you've never heard of or one that hasn't yet been invented.) Sports and our enjoyment of them aren't a result of the Fall. I have no doubt that sinless people would have invented athletics, with probably more variations than we have today. Sports suit our minds and our bodies. They're an expression of our God-designed humanity.

People have told me, "But there can't be athletics in Heaven because competition brings out the worst in people." It's true that some people's sin spills over during athletic competition. But in Heaven, there will be no worst in us to bring out. People further object: "But in sports, someone has to lose. And in Heaven no one could lose." Who says so? I've thoroughly enjoyed many tennis matches and ten-kilometer races that I've lost. Losing a game isn't evil. It's not part of the Curse. To say that "everyone would have to win in Heaven" underestimates the nature of resurrected humanity.

Whether we eat or drink or whatever we do—including playing sports and watching them—may we do it all to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).



WARMUP

1. Watch the internet interview with Tim Tebow. Go to www.youtube.com and search for "Tim Tebow & His Faith"

WORKOUT

1. What kinds of new sports and activities might we engage in on the New Earth? Read Randy Alcorn's answer below and discuss. "The possibilities are limitless. Perhaps we'll participate in sports that were once too risky. And just as we might have stimulating conversations with theologians and writers in Heaven, we might also have the opportunity to play our favorite sports with some of our favorite sports heroes. How would you like to, in your resurrection body, play golf with Payne Stewart or play basketball with David Robinson? How would you like to play catch with Andy Pettitte or go for a run with Eric Liddell?"
2. Read Matthew 6:19-24. What are the "two kingdoms" that Christ had in mind in mind here, each characterized by its own treasures, perspectives and master? This verse also speaks of treasure. What is your treasure? What do you value most? What would you most hate to lose? What do your thoughts turn to most frequently when you are free to think what you will? What affords you the greatest pleasure?

WRAPUP

This week, memorize . . .

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it"

1 Corinthians 9:24 (ESV)

PRAYER

Lord, I desire to dedicate myself to bring you the glory and keep my mind on heavenly treasures. Help me to . . .

GOSPEL FOCUS

The truth is that according to the Bible we don't automatically go to Heaven. In fact, Hell-not Heaven-is our default destination. Unless our sin problem is solved once and for all, we can't enter Heaven. That's the bad news.

– Randy Alcorn

Gordon Thiessen is the founder of Cross Training Publishing and serves as the Director of Training and Resources for the Nebraska Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He is author of 12 books for Christian athletes and coaches that can be found at www.crosstrainingpublishing.com. Visit www.nebraskafca.org for more lessons