

LIVING WATER

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SALVATION IS FOR “ME”, NOT “US”

by Cale Brewster

When it comes to sports, you'll often hear the phrase “there is no ‘I’ in ‘team’”. There is no room for players to think about their individual achievements because the focus should be on winning as a team. We understand this, but it's still obvious when a single player or two is carrying a team to victory despite under-performance by the rest of the team. It's OK that not everyone on a team is a standout super-star. Every team member does their job to the best of their ability and shares in the outcome, win or loss.

The same concept applies to most of the companies we work for. Not everyone we work with is at the same talent level, even within the exact same role. We work together, we help each other however we can, and we strive to accomplish the goals set by our company. We either achieve the goals or we don't, but we do it as a collective group.

As Christians, we can draw some parallels with these truths in sports and the workplace, but with (at least) one key difference. We see similarities in that not everyone is at the same place in their spiritual walk. Some are babes who need milk to help them grow, while others are more mature and able to consume the solid food of God's Word (Hebrews 5:13-14). We see that there are different gifts or talents given to each person that help teach and edify other members. We are all different parts of one body, focused on the same goal (1 Corinthians 12). These are just a few of

the examples of the team concept within Christianity.

The difference I mentioned is where I'd like to focus the remainder of the article. In sports, the best athlete can win a game for their team. Everyone receives credit for victory, even when their contribution within a game is little to none. At work, some people can do it all and do it well, while others seemingly do the bare minimum to not get fired – but the company celebrates achieving goals with everyone. The difference for Christians, is that we won't receive the eternal “credit” just because we're on a great team.

Romans 14:10-12 says “**...For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written: “As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.” 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.”**

God has made it clear that He will evaluate each of us as individuals – not based on the “team” we're part of. Let's think about the teams we might be part of and where we need to evaluate our performance. Are you married to a spouse who excels in their role as a Christian/spouse? Do you rely too heavily on their faithfulness, rather than on what YOU should be doing? Having a faithful, God-fearing spouse will not give YOU the eternal victory. Does the congregation you attend have a preacher who rightly divides the Word of Truth every week and is helping folks grow and come to know Christ? Simply telling him that he preached a great sermon while not obeying the truths

within it does not save YOUR soul.

Where else might we look around at what others on the team are doing that gives us a false sense of security? Do some families always host the get-togethers? Do Bible classes almost always have the same teachers? Are the deacons handling everything around the building? Are the elders among the flock getting to know everyone and tending to their spiritual needs? Do the same people always seem to answer questions in Bible class? If the answer to some or all these questions is yes, that's great! You're part of a great team!

Now the question is, what is the account you'll give to God of yourself? Are you opening your home to others for fellowship? Are you giving your time and energy to teach class, while also helping yourself grow in wisdom and knowledge of God's Word? Do you have a skill or resource that could help at the building? Are you reaching out to others to see how they're doing or providing a word of encouragement? Are you actively participating in class, helping the teacher and other students with the lesson at hand? If the answer is no – why not? God will ask you for an account one day.

What gifts has God given you that you're sharing with others for their edification? If you've been sitting on the sidelines, NOW is the time to act. The team that we're part of has no salary cap and no department budget to limit the number of stand-out players. Of course we can be faithful servants without being a stand-out in every area – but we do have to participate in a meaningful, obedient way.

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 **“9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”**

We can't rely on a good team when God's judgement is directed toward us as individuals.

