

He Speaks to Me Everywhere (Meditation on Christianity and Culture), Philip Graham Ryken, P & R Publishing, Philipsburg, NJ, 2004. (8 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

INTRODUCTION

1. All Is Within Christianity

Christianity includes all of life. Every realm of knowledge, every aspect of life and every fact of the universe find their place and their answer within Christianity. – Frank Gaebelin [p.13]

2. The Christian Worldview

This perspective is the Christian worldview, and its basic principals include the following:

- *Creation: God made the world and everything in it*
- *The Image of God: men, women, and children are made in the likeness of God*
- *Law: God has revealed one standard of righteousness for all people*
- *Sin: in our rebellion we have broken God's law, and now the whole world is corrupted by sin*
- *Salvation: God is working to rescue his people and renew his creation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ*
- *Providence: by the wise counsel of his will, God governs and sustains the world that he has made*
- *The Lordship of Christ: in all of life Jesus rules over the people he is working to save*
- *Final Judgement: the world will end when Jesus Christ returns to punish the wicked and take his people into everlasting joy*
- *The Glory of God: the goal of all things is for God to be praised*[p.14-15]

3. Common Grace

One further principal of the Christian worldview deserves special mention: the doctrine of the common grace. Theologians make a distinction between the grace God shows his people in salvation (saving grace) and the grace he shows to humanity in general (common grace). God has not reserved all his gifts for Christians. Even the ungodly are graced by his goodness, for “the LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made” (Ps. 145:9 ESV). This is God's common grace-common in the sense that it belongs to everyone as part of our common life in this world.

Common grace is not saving grace. In the words of the systematic theologian Louis Berkhof,

It “does not pardon or purify human nature, and does not affect the salvation of sinners.” Nevertheless, there is something gracious about it, and thus it has a positive influence on the world. As Berhof goes on to say, common grace “curbs the destructive power of sin, maintains in a measure the moral order of the universe, thus making an orderly life possible, distributes in varying degrees gifts and talents among men, promotes the development of science and art and showers untold blessings upon the children of men.” In short, common grace includes every divine blessing short of salvation. The lesser gifts of God’s common grace should never be confused with the blessings of his saving grace, but they should still be received as gifts from God.

Common Grace means that God is concerned about far more than sin and salvation. He takes an active interest in all the life of the world that he has made. God is as concerned about the body as he is the soul, about the state as he is the church, and about public life as he is personal religion. [p.15-16]

SPORTS AND LEISURE

4. The Call to Rest

God created people with the capacity and need for rest and leisure. He gave commands that obligate people to set a boundary to their work and the other responsibilities of life. In short, if God calls people to rest, they have an obligation to respond to that calling, just as much as they respond to their calling to work.- Leland Ryken[p.41]

THEY CALL ME “COACH”

5. Recognize the Voice of the Master

One way to teach players to listen for the coach’s voice is not to use a whistle during practice. I learned this from the example of Mike Krzyzewski, who coaches basketball at Duke University. Coach K, as he is called, wants his players to learn how to recognize his voice as soon as he shouts an instruction.

It occurs to me that this is good counsel for the Christian life. Jesus says, “the sheep listen to [the Good Shepherd’s] voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out...his sheep follow him because they know his voice” (John 10:3-4). If we are God’s sheep then we recognize his voice. But we need to learn how to listen for it so we can follow him. This is not always easy to do, especially when so many other things clamor for our attention: work, family, ministry, pleasure. Unless we are listening for it, we may not hear the shepherd’s voice at all. [p.52]

SHOULD I PRAY WHEN I SCORE A TOUCHDOWN?

6. God Cares about Souls

It is true, of course, that divine providence extends to the details of life. In the words of the Westminster Confession, by his providence God “governs all creatures,

actions, and things.” But God’s plan is worked out even through blocks, tackles, fumbles, and everything else that happens on the football field.

I doubt God cares very much who makes the playoffs, which probably means his people should not care too much, either. But it is certain that God cares what happens to the souls of the players who are battling to make the playoffs. So there are plenty of things for Christians who play sports to pray about.

According to the old coaching cliché “It’s not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game.” This may not be an attitude that wins many championships, but it is not bad theology. Sports, like every other area of life, provide an arena for godliness. Athletes have daily opportunities to live out the love of Jesus Christ. They should not pray for the kind of success which can be measured in wins or losses. Instead, they should pray that- win or lose- they are faithful to their head coach. [p.55]

FEELING SLEEPY?

7. Get Sleep

Sometimes it is impossible to get as much sleep as we need. Personally, I was not surprised to discover that the most sleep deprived people in America are adults with small children. Even the apostle Paul confessed that on occasion, the difficulties of his missionary work forced him to endure sleepless nights (2 Cor.6:5).

Nevertheless, God commands us to get enough sleep as often as we can. There are many good reasons for this. For starters, it is hard to work to his glory when we are feeling sleepy. People who are short on their sleep have trouble remembering and concentrating. Studies have even shown that people with poor sleep habits tend to live shorter lives. So it is for our own benefit that God commands us to rest.

This command is found, among other places, in the fifth commandment: “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates” (Ex.20:8-10). This commandment is God’s way of helping us remember to get enough rest. It is not intended to be a burden, but a blessing. As Jesus said, “the Sabbath was made for man, not man made for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27). In other words, it is for our own good that God has given us a day of rest. [p.60]

8. Give Me The Rest I Need

Solomon also said this “[The Lord] grants sleep to those he loves” (Ps.127:2). In other words, those who trust God will find their rest in his goodness and grace. This is a promise I often claim when I’m worn out. I say, “Lord, I’m so tired. But I know

that you love me. Will you please show me your love by giving me the rest that I need.” Of course, God’s promise is not intended to compensate for my own sin. So when I stay up to late working, or when I fail to get enough sleep, I cannot expect God to deliver me from the physical and spiritual consequences of my disobedience. But as I trust him for everything, and as I live the way that he wants me to live, I can count on God to give me the rest I need. Jesus promised, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matt.11:28). [p.61]