

**WHO IS YOUR UMPIRE?**

My brother-in-law is a baseball umpire and basketball referee. When he calls balls and strikes or fouls (depending on the sport) there will be those who don't like the call. Many times during high school activities this writer has complained during and after a ball game that "the referees took the game from us; if they hadn't called so many fouls we would have won." At that time, I was looking at the judgments made by the official from a very prejudiced point of view, if the call didn't go way, I didn't like it.

Now as I look back on those games, I see that the official was just doing his job to the best of his ability, and that in most cases the calls he made were correct ones which I didn't want to accept. I also realize now that if he had made those calls while I was on the other team, I would have reacted in quite a different manner. The official was then to keep the game "in order!" and enforce the rules as best he could.

Paul wrote the Ephesians that Jesus Christ is the umpire in our "game of life He said in chapter 3, verse 15, "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful" (NASB). According to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, the word 'rule' in the original language can also mean "to umpire." Paul is that Christ should be the one to determine whether we are "playing by the rules" when it comes to daily living.

When we decide to do something we have a perfectly fair and impartial judge to tell us whether the activity we choose is good or bad. When we become a Christian, Jesus should rule our lives because He is Lord (Ac. 2:37). This means that as umpire He make some calls that are unpopular to the sinner but in perfect agreement with those who desire to live a godly life.

Many times during sports activities I have felt that the umpire or referee had not been fair to either side. Fortunately, I know that when Christ rules life, all of His judgments will be fair and in my best, interests.

Sin has always troubled man and made his life difficult. The Bible says that way of the transgressor is hard (Prov. 13:15). When Jesus tells us (through His word, the Bible) that we should not engage in certain activities, He does to help us prevent our hurting ourselves. Man cannot direct, his own footsteps (Jer. 10:23); therefore we need someone who knows our struggles and problems and has overcome them to help us guide our lives.

Jesus is that person who can accurately rule for us. The Hebrew writer stated that "Jesus was tempted in ways such as we are, and without sin (Heb. 4:15). We may not always agree with the call but we recognize that Jesus as umpire will always direct us toward greater spirituality and more productive living. This means we can have a PSA (Positive Spiritual Attitude). To those who claim to know Jesus as their Savior and do not let Him rule in their hearts will be greatly frustrated in making correct decisions of right and wrong.

As I look back at my immaturity in viewing high school sports, I can also look back at my immaturity in spiritual matters as well. Now by letting Christ rule (umpire) I can protect the "inner man", be thankful, and in knowledge of Him.

Until next time, memorize Ephesians 3:15 and have a PSA.