

February 2006
Fantasy Camp Reflections

Dear Theophilus,

With apologies to Robert Fulghum, all I really need to know I learned at Baseball Fantasy Camp. I told you about this upon my return last Sunday from my week in Florida and thought it might be helpful to have it in writing.

The title of my sermon, which I wrote on the flight home, was *Pain and Humility* because those were the two dominating feelings I had after playing doubleheaders every day. But I learned some other things as well.

Don't live in the past. For 25 years I have been telling stories of my baseball glory days but they didn't make a bit of difference at the Camp. I was only as good as how I played that day and no faded newspaper clippings could make me any better. It's the same way with church. How many of us look back to days of crowded worship services (in our memory if not always in reality)? God, though, is God of the present and God of the future. God doesn't live back there anymore. God has moved on. Get a move on!

Use new muscles. I never knew I had so many muscles that could be sore! We were all sore after the first day, doing things we had not done before, like run on soft fields and throw baseballs from the pitcher's mound. I pitched two days in a row and on the third day I could barely throw the ball back to the pitcher from my third base position. It's the same way with our faith. Jesus calls us to follow him and we are asked to use new muscles to do that, going to places we haven't been before, doing things we've not yet tried.

You need a good trainer. I speak for the majority of the campers when I say that we could not have played as much as we did without the training staff. After each game we would bring our sore old bones and muscles to the trainers and they would fix us up with massages, whirlpools, ice and wrappings on all parts of the body. We might not walk out as good as new but at least we could walk. In similar fashion, we all need someone to help and support us, to listen to our hurts, and give a massage once in a while.

You don't always win. It was the bottom of the last inning, we're up by two runs, bases loaded, two outs, I had a full count on the batter, and the batter hit one down the first baseline a few inches from our first baseman's glove, and three runs score. But we don't always win. It's how you take defeat that is important. Keep your head up, congratulate your teammates and the opposing team, learn from your mistakes (I should have thrown my curve ball!), and move on.

So I learned a lot last week and had a wonderful time thanks to you.

Now I am off to Egypt with my Lilly Foundation Group to look at the transformation of the church. I'm sure I will be able to share more things that I learned once I return in time for church on February 19. Until then, continue what you are doing to make LCPC a vibrant place in which to live, serve, and worship.

Grace and peace,

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