

Pk's Perspectives... Lessons from the Diamond

Do you ever have “Aha!” experiences - moments of clarity, instances where the dots you never realized existed suddenly connect in meaningful ways? I had one such moment this past Friday while playing in our church league softball tournament.

For most of this season my coach had me playing first base. I've played a lot of softball/baseball in my life but I've never played first base on a regular basis...and certainly not in a game of any consequence. Just as with any other defensive position, there are some peculiar nuances associated with playing first base. Footwork is important – getting into position to receive a throw while “holding” the inside edge of the base with my right foot (gotta protect the Achilles!). Presenting a good target for my teammate while maintaining a flexible position that allows me to “move” with the throw if it's off target. Reading the ball off the bat is different than when playing the left side of the infield. Backing up a throw from the outfield to the cutoff and/or a throw to home plate is a bit different. I remember going through the same adjustment process back when advancing years dictated that I start moving from shortstop to second base – kind of like re-calibrating basic movements and reactions. Exceptional athletes probably can't relate to what I'm writing but many of you will understand what I'm describing. An unfamiliar position can disturb a player's confidence & comfort level!

Okay...back to Friday night's game. The pitch is hit sharply to our shortstop. He fields the ball and comes up hurling what turned out to be a major league curve ball. The ball started at my right hip and curved up the foul line toward right field. I didn't have enough stretch to get my glove on the ball. The runner sees the pass ball and makes an awkward turn toward second; I chase down the ball, turn to throw to second, see the runner is directly in my sightline and I can't clearly distinguish my second baseman. The entire tableau was foreign to me: the angles, positioning, target, etc. I made a weak throw, the runner was easily safe, I was a bit aggravated and then it came out of nowhere...a moment of clarity. Seriously, God was giving me spiritual instruction before the infield dust had settled around second base.

I'm still processing this “moment of clarity” but it goes something like this. Walking with Jesus is a journey of growth and change, which means I will constantly find myself standing at new positions in the game of life. As God grows and matures me, I'm going to perceive life a bit differently than when I was younger in the faith. I can remember viewing life a particular way from the perch of high school...my view was a bit altered from the perspective of college & seminary...marriage & parenting brought a seemingly unknown landscape into my field of vision...vocational ministry even further changed the worldview I held in high school. It's not so much that the reality of life has changed but rather the way I “see” life. The Bible says it like this: “When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put aside childish things.” (1 Corinthians 13:11)

I guess my most recent position change has come in the wake of having almost stepped into eternity only to be returned to full health. I'm striving to grasp the nuances of this new position...much like Friday night's ballgame, the game of life looks different to me. I'm trusting God to teach me how to manage this new position. I see hollowness in things that I once thought important; I see energy wasted in undertakings that I once thought necessary...even critical; I have less tolerance for issues that distract the Body of Christ from being the Body of Christ. Just know I'm working on this new position...going back to a former position is not an option when walking with Jesus! Cya, Pk.