

## *Pk's Perspectives ... What Kind of Christian?*

How would you complete this statement: “I want to be a \_\_\_\_\_ kind of Christian?” Would you fill in the blank with words like faithful or strong or obedient or impactful? Maybe you would fill in the blank with a well-known name like Billy Graham, Tim Tebow, Mark Richt or the less widely known name of a parent, grandparent, or Sunday School teacher that greatly influenced your life.

If today I was required to complete the “I want to be a \_\_\_\_\_ kind of Christian” statement then I think I would put the name Joe Thomas in the blank. As in, “I want to be a Joe Thomas kind of Christian.”

I’ve never met Joe Thomas. In fact, I don’t even know whether or not Joe is a follower of Jesus Christ. But I know some things about Joe – one thing in particular – that makes me want to be a Joe Thomas kind of Christian.

Let me share the little I do know about Joe. Joe was born on December 4, 1984 in Brookfield, Wisconsin. His parents are Eric and Sally Thomas. Joe played high school football for the Brookfield Central Lancers, college football at the University of Wisconsin, was the 3<sup>rd</sup> overall pick in the 2007 draft, and is currently an offensive tackle for the Cleveland Browns of the National Football League. Joe started at left offensive tackle in his first game as a rookie...and has played every single offensive snap since. I want to make sure you grasp the magnitude of that last nugget of information. Joe has done more than simply START every game in his career; he has never missed a *PLAY* in his career. This past Sunday, Joe played his 10,000<sup>th</sup> consecutive snap since being drafted into the NFL; he is the first player to reach the milestone in NFL history.

In a sport as violent as football, all it would’ve taken is a quick roll of the ankle for Joe to miss even one snap and end the streak. Heck, he could’ve lost a shoe at one point or had his helmet ripped off and missed a play. The Cleveland Browns are 48-114 during Joe’s tenure with the team, but he never packed it in. Instead, he has been on the field every time a Browns quarterback started a play. Every time. During the span of his streak, Joe has played for six different head coaches, blocked for 22 different QB’s and 69 running backs.

To me, the fact of Joe never missing an offensive play in his NFL career reflects the depth of his character, integrity, commitment, and self-discipline. Joe shows up. He brings it. In response to all the hoopla of reaching the consecutive snaps milestone, Joe tweeted, “I’ve just always wanted to get up and play the next play...do my job. Do my part to help my team. I’ve never felt like a star.” And then he followed up with this tweet: “The spotlight should be on my teammates, coaches, support staff, family; all the way from Jr. Lancers to Browns. You guys are the real heroes/stars.”

I’m fairly certain that if I am a Joe Thomas kind of Christian then one day I will stand before Jesus in eternity and hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” I want to be a Christ follower who shows up every day and brings it every day. I want to be a Christ follower who understands that no man is an island; that I am part of something bigger than my personal ambitions. Good times or bad, I want to be the kind of Christ follower that gets up and moves forward. I want to be a Philippians 3:13-14 kind of Christian: “...forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God’s heavenly call in Christ Jesus.” What kind of Christ follower are you becoming? Cya in Sunday School & Worship, PK.