

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

June 27, 2020



A pitch at 90 miles per hour gets to the plate at something well under a half second.
Many MLB pitchers throw up to 100 MPH.

“Keep your eye on the ball...”

On this date in 1980, Jerry Reuss pitched a no-hitter, an 8-0 shutout against the San Francisco Giants at Candlestick Park. I attended that game. A no-hitter is even more amazing when you consider that major league baseball hitters are so good at what they do. They can pick up the spin of the ball as it comes out of the pitcher’s hand and determine, in microseconds, whether the pitch is a fastball or a breaking ball, and decide whether to swing or not. The best hitters are right about a third of the time (a .300-plus career hitter has a good chance of landing in the Hall of Fame).

I played organized baseball from the time I was 8 years old. I played two years on Boys Club teams in Orange County, two years on Little League teams in Vallejo, a couple of years in Babe Ruth league and then two years in high school. I was poised to continue in my Junior year but something happened that I couldn’t explain.

We had just moved back to Orange County, and I was attending a new high school (again). When baseball season rolled around, I tried out for the team figuring it was automatic. After all, I had played a lot in the past and almost always as a starter. But, when I tried out for the team, I was cut after the first day. I was devastated. I had already been “cheated” out of playing football, due to moving so much, but I figured I had baseball in the bag. High school was my last real chance to play the game I loved so much.

I should have picked up on something, though. The summer before my Junior year, I was having a horrible season in Babe Ruth League. I could play stellar defense, but my hitting was almost non-existent and I had no explanation for it. I figured I was just having a bad year. It happens.

One Sunday after my disappointing experience at baseball tryouts, I was sitting on the pew next to a younger friend, one of the few who wore glasses. Before services we were goofing off (don’t tell my dad) and I grabbed the glasses off his face

and put them on. He started to take them back, but I got serious all of a sudden, and said, “wait a minute.” As I looked around, things were much clearer. I could see much better.

Obviously, I needed glasses. Is that the reason I was not able to hit my hat size? I don’t know, but that’s my story and I’m sticking to it. The old adage, “keep your eye on the ball” is based on the assumption that your eyes can actually *see* the ball. My eyes were seeing only a blurry version of it.

Spiritually, we keep our eye “on the ball” when we keep our eye on Jesus. “Looking to Jesus...” says Hebrews 12:1. But to do that, we need to constantly check our vision. There are many spiritual eye diseases that can affect us.

For instance, there is spiritual *myopia* or nearsightedness — we live only for the day and don’t think much about the fact that “it is appointed for man to die once and after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). Also, there is spiritual *farsightedness*. It’s summed up in the saying that “some are so heavenly minded they are no earthly good.” *Ouch*. We can live our lives on cruise control, just waiting for our transport to heaven, but when we do that, we miss opportunities to serve and teach while on earth. That’s not keeping your eye on the ball.

Of course, there is a kind of spiritual *macular degeneration*, too. This “spiritual eye disease” causes us to lose focus on the things that really matter and get caught up in minutiae. Jesus scolded the scribes and Pharisees for this in Matthew 23:23,

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.

It’s better that we ask the simple question the Gentiles asked Philip: “Sir, we would see Jesus” (John 12:21).

[If you haven’t heard it already, look up Lauren Daigle’s song, “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus.” It’s beautiful and expresses the message better than I have here.]