

Do You Keep a Box Score on Yourself?

by Russell DeLong

We should focus on our own self-reflection and improvement, rather than keeping a box score on others, and let God fill in the official record.

Scripture: Proverbs 11:1, Matthew 7:1, Luke 6:41, Romans 2:1, James 4:12

Topics: "Self Reflection", "Judging Others"

Description

Russell DeLong preaches about the importance of not judging others and being aware of our own faults before criticizing others. He uses the analogy of keeping a box score in baseball to illustrate how we tend to magnify the faults of others while minimizing our own. DeLong emphasizes the need to focus on our own hits, runs, and errors, and to let God, the Official Scorer, keep track of the box scores. The sermon encourages self-reflection and honesty in evaluating our own actions before passing judgment on others.

Transcript

Scripture: Matthew 7: 1-5

Life has frequently been likened to a game. There are many analogies: goals, rules, judges, scorekeepers, training, teammates, captains, spectators, opponents, coaches, timekeepers, and trophies.

America's national pastime is baseball. In England and Australia it is cricket or Rugby.

Canada goes strongly for hockey and curling. Every country has its favorite sport or popular game. All are based on competition governed by certain rules and judged by qualified referees.

Today's sermon has but one essential truth to proclaim. It is fashioned on the framework of baseball. It might have been illustrated as well by football, cricket, soccer, hockey, or basketball.

Here is the question of the theme, "Do You Keep a Box Score on Yourself?" Just what is the import of this pertinent inquiry?

A box score is a scheme used by the official record keeper to chart runs, hits, and errors of both teams. Hits and runs are assets; errors, liabilities. It is the prerogative of the scorekeeper to decide on each play, whether the batter should be given a hit and thus improve his batting average or the fielder an error, which lowers his fielding record. Over a full season's play a high batting or fielding average means a promotion,

while a low average carries with it a demotion. The record is important. It is in the book and cannot be changed.

In baseball the scorekeeper is an appointed official and must be neutral and impartial. In life, too, God is keeping the record, which is just and true.

In baseball the sour notes come when the umpires' decisions are questioned by partisan, partial fans. Also the scorekeeper is criticized for calling an error against a certain player when that player's friends insist on a hit. On this same play the opposing partisan fans would applaud the scorekeeper's recording of an error. Partisanship, favoritism, partiality, and prejudice do not make for fair play and justice. That is why the officials must be absolutely neutral and completely impartial to teams and players.

In life it is a favorite pastime to keep a box score on others. We favor our friends and slander our enemies. One of humanity's weaknesses is to be able to see nothing bad in those we like and nothing good in those we dislike. So our box score is usually inaccurate because it is colored by prejudice and distorted by friendship and enmity.

Another strange quirk of human nature is the ease with which we find errors in others and overlook the same in ourselves. So we are very busy filling in the box score of others. We tend to reduce their hits and increase their errors. In other words, we magnify the liabilities and minimize the assets. But with ourselves we increase the home runs and decrease or eliminate the errors; i.e., we magnify our good points and minimize our bad traits.

It is very easy to see faults in others and at the same time possess these same faults ourselves and to a greater degree. If we could see ourselves as others see us, we would be less inclined to criticize others. Jesus accentuated this human tendency when in His Sermon on the Mount He said:

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye (Matt. 7: 1-5).

In other words, if your own box score is full of errors, why criticize your brother for one little error? First clean up your own box score before you fill your brother's full of errors.

There is also one other thing you should remember -- you are not the official scorekeeper.

You are only self-appointed. What you write does not affect the official record. God keeps the score and He lists all hits, runs, and errors. He misses none that should be included and He adds none that should be omitted. It is a relief and a comfort not to have to keep a box score on anybody else. And we do not even have to keep it on ourselves. Our responsibility is to make the hits, score the runs, and avoid making errors. We make the record, God fills in the box score.

We must guard against the tendency to see errors and be blind to good plays. Have you

ever driven along the highway past a farm and noticed a flock of sheep when somebody exclaims, "Oh, look at the black sheep!" There were ninety-nine white ones. So we put one black sheep in our box score and fail to write ninety-nine white.

So it is in life, it is easy to find the black. Why not look for the white?

Better still, why not turn your gaze from without to within and check your own hits, runs, and errors honestly? Record your own box score -- it might not make others look so bad.

Sheridan offered significant advice when he said, "Believe that story false that ought not to be true."

In other words, don't charge up an error against a player who should not make such a misplay -- not until it is proved to be an error. Keep his box score clean. Let God, the Official Scorer, fill it in.

Shakespeare uttered a sublime truth when he said:

"It is pretty safe to presume that about all the glaring effects or petty weaknesses which we are looking for in others may be found in ourselves, with a little careful investigation.

"Go to your bosom, knock there and ask your heart what it doth know that is like my

brother's fault; if it confess a natural guiltiness, such as his is, let it not sound a thought upon your tongue against my brother."

The moral is, don't keep a box score on others until your own is free from errors. And even then, let God do it.

So in the game of life make hits, knock home runs, win the game, make as few errors as possible. Let God, the Official Scorer, keep the box score on yourself and others.

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