

Dearly Beloved of God,

I pray that this e-mail finds you in good health and prospering even as your soul prospers. If I have cluttered your in-box, feel free to delete. If these words have encouraged you, feel free to pass them on.

I wish I could take full credit for this word of encouragement, but I can't. Much of the credit goes to H.B. London, Jr. who is Vice President for Pastoral Ministries at Focus on the Family. I'm passing this along because: 1) the message is in a language that speaks to me, and 2) I want you to be blessed, right where you are, right now.

For those of you who do not follow American football, especially at the college level, please forgive me. What happened last week when Stanford beat USC was the equivalent of me beating John MacEnroe in tennis, the Kansas City Royals sweeping the NY Yankees in a 7 game series, or the Jamaican bobsled team beating the Swiss team. It was huge. So what can we learn from this?

On Saturday, October 6, the unranked Stanford Cardinals defeated the Southern California Trojans (ranked number one in one national poll and number two in another) in a very exciting game. USC, undefeated before the game, was favored to win by 41 points. The loss dropped them to 10th place in the rankings, and probably eliminated them from contention for a national championship. The pre-season polls had them at #1.

After the game, the USC quarterback, John David Booty, who threw several interceptions, made a somewhat profound statement. In so many words, he said, **"The best team does not always win. Sometimes, it is just the team that plays the best that comes away with the victory."**

There is no doubt about the "best" team losing on Saturday, but don't you play the game to play your best? I go back to Booty's statement about **"the team that plays the best."** In this mega-church world, some of us are out-manned, out-financed, out-marketed and looked upon with limited expectations; but remember it is not about any of the above. It is all about our **passion**, our **attitude**, our **confidence**, our **call** and our **dependence** upon the One who called and equipped us. In Christ we are all winners! I just think each of us needs to "play the best game" he/she can play, hold our heads high and **go for it** on fourth down.

Look what God helped Gideon to do with just 300 men (**"For the Lord and for Gideon"** — Judges 7:20). He divided the men into three groups of 100 — offense, defense and special teams. They were victorious — and so shall you be. The key: **"Each man held his position"** (Judges 7:21).

Don't look over your shoulder, my friend. **"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith — so that you will not grow weary and lose heart"** (Heb. 12:2,3). Just **"give thanks to God WHO gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"** and.....

Go for it! Have a great week!

Yours for His Purposes,

Pastor Les

Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)

13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.