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How to Understand the Game of Life: A Worldview Perspective

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The Central City basketball team had some of the best players in the state. They were so good, in fact, that no team came within 20 points of them all the way to the state championship finals. Most expected them to easily win the state championship. But when the game started, all kinds of crazy things began to happen.

First, their star player decided he was bored with basketball and thought he would just spice things up a little by pretending he was playing football. Every time he got the ball he tried to drop kick it into the basket. It was not very long before the coach benched him.

Another player decided that the basketball court was too small. He wanted to run around more. So, when he got the ball, he dribbled right up into the stands and shot from the top row. Obviously, the coach pulled him, too.

A little later, as one of his players was resting on the bench, the coach looked over and saw him with an aluminum can in his hand. When he checked it out, it was discovered that the player was drinking a beer. Besides being a minor, that kind of thing was a violation of team rules. The coach immediately sent him to the locker room.

Another player was getting really frustrated that he was not able to get past one of the other team's defenders. After trying several times, he finally just stopped playing and blasted out a profanity laced tirade. The coach immediately called time out to have a little chat with him. But when he began to correct him, the player started cussing out the coach. Another one to the locker room.

At that point, even with their talent dwindling, Central City was still actually in the game, but they were really struggling. So the coach began calling some creative plays to give his players a bit more of an advantage. But instead of following the coaches direction, one of the players just wanted to do it his way. He totally ignored the coach's instructions and tried to run things on his own. The coach pulled him, as well.

Every Sport Has Boundaries

When it comes to sports, every game has a set of boundaries that define it. Some of the boundaries are represented by rules – rules of the game and team rules. Some of them are defined by the prerogatives of the coaches. Other boundaries are defined by the shape of the field or court. If a person wants to play a particular game, they have to follow the rules of that game and work within the boundaries of the coaches instruction and the field of play. These boundaries are not negotiable. They are an objective reality which must be followed. When they are not, consequences are imposed.

The responsibility for playing by the rules rests upon the shoulders of the players. If they want to excel, they must follow the rules. If they break a rule, they are, somehow, penalized. There are no exceptions.

The Game of Life

The life we live is, in many ways, like a sport. And the way we live our lives determines its outcome. While it may seem to many that the rules are flexible, and that we can make them up as we go, that is not entirely true.

Reality is structured in some objectively real way. If we try to live our lives outside that reality, we will receive

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consequences. It is just that some of the consequences are not as obvious as others at some points. While many people may feel that they are getting away with living life by their own rules, they are actually not. Some of the consequences are physical or emotional. Some of them are spiritual. These spiritual consequences may become evident in this life, but sometimes they are not received until the next. Other consequences may be seen in the effect it has on the lives of family, friends, or colleagues.

Now, some people might not feel that these repercussions are of any consequence because they don't really care what other people think. For example, if a person is so self centered that he or she is willing to destroy others in the process of climbing to the top positions in the company, it may seem that there are no negative consequences to the actions, but there are. There is a principle explained in the Bible that says, "You will reap what you sow." The truth is, at some point, the selfish, destructive behavior will destroy the individual's life who lives that way.

The Structure of Reality

The actual structure of reality is shared with us in the Bible. People who try to live life based on other means of looking at reality may not realize at the time that they are destroying themselves; but at some point it will become obvious. Just as the players in the example above, thought they could get away with making up their own rules while playing a basketball game, those who believe they can live by non-real lifestyle rules will, at some point, pay a price.

God is an objectively real person who exists in an objectively real way. Additionally, he has revealed to us the truth about himself, his

will, and his ways. God has defined the actual structure of reality, and individuals who choose to live life in a way that ignores or contradicts that reality will inevitably reap the consequences of their actions. Some of the consequences will be physical, as they abuse their bodies. Some will be emotional, as they abuse their psyche. And some of the consequences will be spiritual, as they reject God.

Coming out a Winner

But there is a positive side to all of this. In sports, when athletes learn and follow the rules, then hone their skills to the highest level by practice and following the teaching of their coaches, they become winners. And as winners, they become satisfied in every way with the outcome of their efforts. They become physically conditioned in a way that makes them the best they can possibly be. They become emotionally stable and excited about the results of their efforts. The discipline of following the rules and allowing themselves to be coached is not a drag on their lives, but fulfills them.

In the same way, learning about God, entering into a personal relationship with him, and following his way is not a drag. It provides for the most fulfilling life possible. God is an objectively real person who loves us. He has revealed himself so that we may know him. And he has revealed his ways so that we can live life in a way that corresponds with how reality actually works. It is this kind of life that brings ultimate fulfillment. It is rejecting God's ways that brings on personal destruction.

We get to choose what course we will take in life. If we choose God and his ways, we will live a life that corresponds with the actual structure of reality. And with that, we will be able to enjoy the highest level of fulfillment it is possible to know in life.

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