

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing." (Galatians 2:20-21)

**PRE-SEASON TRAINING SESSIONS 9 & 10: THE GALATIAN CHALLENGE (I.E. READ THE BOOK/LETTER!)**

The mission of Sports Quest is to share biblical truth to reach, teach and encourage next generation leaders through soccer. Since 1996, the Lord has enabled us to reach thousands of young people through the sport they love, and many times, the game itself provides unique opportunities to illustrate important biblical principles. Here's an example from this week...

Think of the unbridled joy of goal scoring and of those occasions when our heroes appear to be sharing an out of body experience with the world in real time. We've seen:

- "The Tim Cahill" – Pummeling the corner flag like a punch bag
- "The Lee Sharpe" – Singing with the corner flag as his microphone
- "The Cristiano Ronaldo" – Leap and spread
- "The Steven Gerrard" – Kissing the camera
- "The Peter Crouch" – Robotics dance
- We've been entertained by back-flips and front-flips, Zoro masks and selfies, shirt twirling, salutes, knee slides and belly flops...All expressions of joy – Exhilaration – for putting the ball in the net!



In Galatians 4:15, Paul asks, "What has happened to all your joy?" He was perplexed that after beginning with the Spirit, they were now trying to attain their goal by human effort (3:3). Slavery to the law was crippling them, not only causing their faith to waver, but also calling Paul's message and authority into question. So there we have it. Biblical joy (or lack of) introduced and illustrated through the lens of soccer. And here's another example from the week, this time relating to "Freedom"...



Remember the days when a defender's job was simply to stop the other team from scoring? No tricks, no frills, and certainly no crossing the half way line! Thankfully, times have moved on, and "defenders" are now encouraged (even expected) to be forward thinking in possession. The term, "attacking full-back" is common soccer lingo, and goalkeepers are no longer just shot stoppers, they are the first line of offense. How liberating! How freeing. The shackles have been removed and the game can be enjoyed for what it is – a fast flowing, exciting, dynamic experience rather than a static, lifeless, boring existence with no "adventure" attached.

In the same way, what the Galatians needed to hear (and what Christians today need to embrace) is that, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free" (5:1). Jesus came to set us free! Free to live for Him; free to love others; free to serve; free to forgive; free to pray to the One who daily bears our burdens; free to encourage; free to sacrifice; free to use our gifts and talents for His glory; free to live the abundant life promised in John 10:10. Free. Free. Free. The pages of Scripture scream "FREEDOM!" Not freedom to sin or self-indulge, but freedom to be a light in the world and to be all that God created us to be.

*"Some people have just enough religion to make them miserable." (Dwight L. Moody)*

**Challenge**

If you belong to the Lord Jesus Christ – if the Holy Spirit lives inside your heart – then you've been set free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2). Live like it! No more striving to be or become someone – You are accepted just as you are. Reject the lie of performance based living. Nothing will steal your joy more than legalism and "religion." Instead, remember...God is good (all the time), and one day, believers will experience the inexplicable, unimaginable, unspeakable joy of spending eternity with their Savior free from the penalty, punishment and presence of sin. After all, "if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:36) So..."Rejoice in the Lord always," says Paul. "I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4)

See you next week!

Jim Spence: Head Coach - HCYA Hurricanes  
 Founder - Sports Quest  
[www.sportsquesttraining.com](http://www.sportsquesttraining.com) / 832.593.7777