



REFLECTIONS

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"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?"

Luke 15:4

Playing the Percentages

Perhaps no other sport relies on percentages more than baseball. Everything it seems is translated into a statistic. The percentage of times a batter gets a hit, or the percentage of times a batter hits the ball to certain part of the field, or whether he swings most often at pitches high or low in the strike zone. It seems the list of statistics has no end, and managers use seem to use them all to guide their decisions during a game and a season. Only those decisions don't always work out.

Low percentage hitters sometimes come through in clutch situations, high percentage hitters still strike out, and the best pitchers sometimes throw bad pitches. But if percentages are played correctly and the matchups and circumstances right, the games won will be greater than games lost. In a season, the playoff contenders are determined by the highest number of games won. And isn't that what the game is all about?

We tend to make many life decisions based on percentages too—the odds of success or failure. But there are times when playing the percentages won't do the job.

Then Jesus told them this parable: "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. (Luke 15:3-7)

A once popular YouTube video captured an old man observing a boy strolling on the beach near the water's edge. With every few steps, the boy bent down and picked up something and tossed it into the ocean. A closer look found the beach littered by hundreds of starfish washed ashore to most surely die. But the boy had other ideas. One by one, he picked them up and cast them back into the water.

The old man approached the boy with some words of reality. "Why are you doing that," he asked the boy. "There are so many starfish, you can't possibly save enough to make a difference." The young man quietly bent down, picked up another starfish, and tossed it into the water. "It made a difference to that one," he said.

And isn't that what the game of life is all about?

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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