

## Upcoming Youth Events

- **Youth Group**  
Sundays 6:30—7:30  
Middle & High School
- **Mission Minded Kids**  
Sundays 6:30—7:30pm  
Ages 3-5
- **Carowinds**  
August 23, 2006

Contact Pastor Scott for more details at 704-263-4275



Photo by James Guffey

## ***Losing to Win*** by Dave Nelson, Pastor of Christian Ed & Discipleship

While in middle school, I played 'little league' baseball. Unlike most kids, I didn't begin to play until I was in sixth grade; so, my skills were not as good as those who'd been playing for 3 or 4 years. Because of this, I never made my local neighborhood team, but was sent to play on 'the cut team.'

Our 'cut team' was made up of rag-tag players cut from the other six teams in our league. My first year, with the *Braves*, we surprised our competition by coming in second or third in the league. However, my following two years on the *Mets* - my beloved 'cut team' didn't fare so well. My final season, we went 0 and 18... that's right, zero wins and eighteen losses. It was so bad, I remember one of our players, Joey Porter, at midnight, shaking the fence while he yelled, "You guys can stop trying now, the ice cream store is closed!!" As I recall, we were losing 35 to 1 in the 4<sup>th</sup> inning.

Losers often hear of their losses - "It develops character." "It teaches you to deal with life's disappointments." "Winning isn't everything... it's all how you play the game." And, one of my favorites, when losers are told, "It's important to be a good loser." Among all the things losing teams and players are told, here's one I bet most of you have never heard. "Losing is great training ground for the Christian life." To many, this may sound ridiculous, so allow me to explain.

Contrary to sports - where the victors are celebrated and crowned with glory; in Christianity, the failures and the losers are celebrated and crowned with glory. In Christian faith, rightly understood, the road up always begins by going down. The first and most prominent command of John the Baptist (who pointed the way for Jesus' ministry), Jesus, Peter, and Paul (who wrote most of the New Testament) is - **repent!** Repent means to turn away from sin (rebellion against God) toward submission to God. In other words, repentance is the act of losing one's will for the sake of obeying God's will.

One of the best pictures of repentance is found in Jesus' story of two praying men. The Pharisee prayed "God, I thank you that I am not like other men-- robbers, evil-doers, adulterers-- or even like this tax collector..." But the tax collector not even looking up to heaven beat his breast and said, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner." To this Jesus said, "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." **Luke 18:10-14**

This paradox<sup>1</sup> of Christian faith is further explained by the following scriptures:

Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? **Matthew 16:24-26**

Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all." **Mark 9:35**

At the time, I didn't know how much my losing seasons on the *cut team* were preparing me to live out my Christian life; but those humbling seasons did more in me and for me than one would ever expect!

Next time you face disappointment or loss, maybe you can see it in a new light... to become a Christian, or to live the Christian life, the road up always begins by going down.

In order to be a good Christian, **its important to be a good loser, first!**



1977 Graham Rd. Dariette Mets

paradox (noun) <sup>1</sup> a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory proposition that may in fact be true.  
<sup>2</sup> a person or thing that combines contradictory features or qualities.

## You're Invited to League Day!

Sunday, August 13 will be a special day at First Presbyterian!

Why? Not only because it's the Lord's day (which makes it special first and foremost), but also because YOU are invited to worship with us!

You are, of course, invited to our morning worship services at any time--- but on that "League Day," we'd like to emphasize that invitation to all of you!

Two services to choose from: 8:30am (more contemporary in nature) or 11:00am (more traditional).

All players are encouraged to wear their uniform shirts.

Hope to see you there!



Photo by James Guffey

More photos at  
[www.fpcstanley.org](http://www.fpcstanley.org)

## Forging A Brighter Future for Your Family

- Honor your loved ones.** The most important ingredient in a successful family is placing high value on one another. When we decide someone is valuable, that's a major step in acting out our love for the person. Honoring those in our homes means making a decision that they're heavy-weights, worthy of great importance and appreciation.
- Develop Meaningful Conversation.** As we've interviewed successful families, most say they need about an hour of real conversation sprinkled throughout each day. Perhaps it's five minutes in the morning, a 10-minute phone call from work, 20 minutes at dinner and another 25 minutes carved out of the evening to provide this
- much-needed aspect of intimacy.**
- Deal with anger in a timely, healthy way.** In close-knit relationships, friction is inevitable. Often, that anger comes out of a blocked goal, an unmet expectation or as a fear-based response. Other times, it comes from a rightful sense of reaction to wrong. Usually, by genuinely seeking to understand what happened, admitting when we're wrong, and specifically asking for forgiveness, we can see anger drain away. But if anger continues to reside in your heart or that of your loved one, don't assume it will simply get better over time. Talk it through.
- Exhibit meaningful touching.** Meaningful, non-sexual touching is an important way of expressing warmth and security to a loved one. It puts actions to our words of affection and both physically and emotionally blesses those who are touched.
- Provide regular emotional bonding experiences.** Genuine friendship comes from doing something more than just sitting around talking about friendship. Emotional bonding comes in the hundreds of "little" things we do with another person and usually become the biggest factors in building a satisfying relationship. Yes, it takes effort to carve out time to play together, exercise together, enjoy each other and laugh with each other. But the closeness that results is worth it.

Smalley, Gary and Trent, John. *The Hidden Value of a Man: The Incredible Impact of a Man on His Family.* Tyndale House, 1994.

### John 3:16

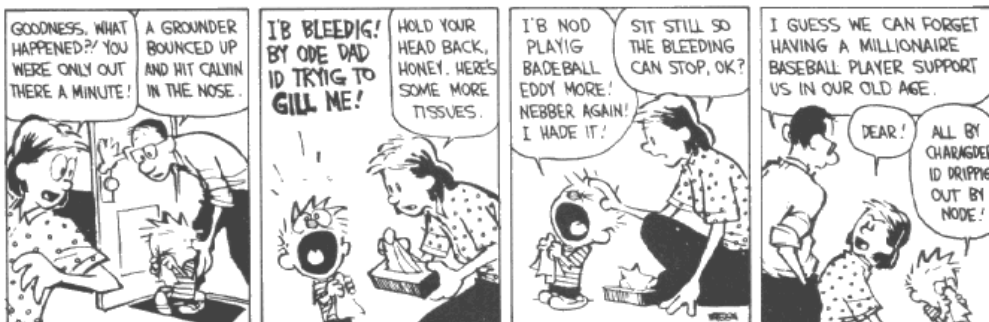
For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.



Team Pictures Aug. 7th and 8th

Come Early!

Pictures will be taken before the game begins.



First  
Presbyterian  
Church  
Stanley, North Carolina

Presenting Everyone Complete in Christ

Morning Service

- 8:30 Worship Service
- 9:45 Sunday School
- 11:00 Worship Service

Evening Service

- 6:30 Worship Service

Call us at 704.263.4275

Visit us online at  
[www.fpcstanley.org](http://www.fpcstanley.org)

Team Rosters  
Game Schedules  
Parent's Corner