

Fresh Start

By Jerry Bader

The One Contract That Never Expires

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During his last few years in Green Bay, Packers Coach Mike McCarthy became a familiar presence on television even when he was away from Lambeau Field, thanks to an endorsement he landed with a cellular service provider. Not surprisingly, his relationship with the company ended when the Packers parted ways with McCarthy.

I recently saw an ad for the company that I had seen many times before. This time was different; McCarthy's brief appearance had been edited out. Those who hadn't seen the original version would have never known McCarthy was once there, now disappeared. The company's business decision is perfectly understandable, but the ease with which someone can be erased from video existence was jarring, nonetheless.

It reminded me that many of us grew up believing God might behave the same way. If our performance didn't live up to his expectations, we believed He might turn His back on us. Fortunately, we are reminded repeatedly throughout the New Testament that ours is not a "what have you done for me lately" God:

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. Ephesians 2:8

...knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ...for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. Galatians 2:16

Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin,...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:20, 23

...who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. 2 Timothy 1:9

And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. Romans 11:6

It's a nearly impossible concept to fathom. We live in a world where we often come to believe that our value is based almost entirely on our performance – in our job, in our friendships, romantic relationships and with our family. And sometimes, sadly, one mistake can cost us any of those human relationships. I've been disappeared by people more than once.

So, isn't it reassuring to know that there is no deed we can do to earn or lose God's love? Whether we go 16-0 or 0-16 at any point in life, God's grace is the ultimate and permanent contract extension that has us covered. It has nothing to do with what we've done lately and everything to do with what Jesus did for us, once. Saved through faith; the greatest guaranteed contract of all time.