

It's Easy to Love Chris Pratt

The Humble Beginnings of the future Star-Lord

Before there was Andy Dwyer and before there was Peter Quill, there was Bright Abbott.

I watched *Everwood* religiously from 2002 to 2006. A guilty pleasure for sure. As far as a person with a Christian worldview can be over a TV show, I was devastated when it was cancelled. I had just moved to Chicago and was dealing with girl problems, so I saw myself in Ephraim since he dealt with the same things. But in my watching I could not help but love Bright as well. He wasn't funny or intelligent or the star of the show. He was just likeable.

So why did I like him? At the time I wasn't sure. But a few years later the man I knew as Bright and whose real name I may have sort of known at the time, appeared on my TV screen in a trailer for *Zero Dark Thirty*. It seemed obvious to me that he didn't have a big part, but just his one-line speaking role in the trailer made the movie almost as appealing as the the actual story.

And I watched it. And later I watched *Moneyball*. And "Bright Abbott" continued to make me smile and remained close to the top of my Hollywood conscious.

Johnny Karate's Greatest Hit

Then a few years ago the guys from REO were championing a modern sitcom called *Parks and Rec* and eventually I realized that I needed to watch it. And voilà! There he was again! And for the million reasons *Parks and Rec* worked as a sitcom and [landed at the number 3 spot on our list of Top Ten Sitcoms of all-time](#), Andy was a huge one.

I doubt anyone in sitcom history has a higher laugh-per-line ratio to me than Andy Dwyer. Even George Costanza. George is still the best to me because he makes me laugh and applaud the hardest, but nearly everything Andy says is funny. Playing the role of the clueless doofus has been popular in sitcom history, like Joey Tribbiani on *Friends*. But no one has done it like Chris Pratt. It's a wonder to behold. My wife and I just finished *Parks and Rec* for the second time, and Andy has caused pools of tears in laughter. See [this scene](#) for a classic example:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4KIm9y6Rss>

It's not hyperbole to me to say that Chris Pratt is a comedic genius. Some of it is innate, which can be seen if you watch PnR outtakes (caution: they have cursing) and Pratt just shoots from the hip without a script and has all of his co-workers on the floor laughing. But some of it is just him understanding what is truly funny and having the courage to do what would embarrass 99% of people.

Summer Blockbuster Cool

Somewhere in all that I saw *Guardians of the Galaxy*. By accident. Even though Chris Pratt was that guy I liked I apparently didn't know enough about this movie to know he was in it. But one August night in 2014 I went to see the new Ninja Turtle movie and got the showtime wrong. I watched *Guardians* instead. Needless to say, by the end of that movie Chris Pratt rocketed to the top of my "I want to see it because he's in it" list.

So when it was announced a few years ago that he was going to be in the new Jurassic Park movie I was bonkers. I already love the franchise, even the oft-disparaged second and third volumes, so his involvement in *Jurassic World* made it an

opening weekend viewing for me. So I was there opening Friday night front and center to experience what would surely be amazing American cinema. I didn't think it was a great movie but I was not disappointed even one iota in Chris Pratt. Star-Lord and Owen prove that he's not lovable just because he's funny. He has something special that goes beyond that. These movies sell themselves on many things, but I don't think it's an accident that Pratt has been in three of the top 50 domestic grossing of movies of all-time all in the last three years (*Guardians 2* being the other).

Everwood Was His Bosom Buddies

In the book *Blink* by Malcom Gladwell, he talks about the first time Brian Grazer met Tom Hanks. Grazer says, "He came in and read for the movie *Splash*, and right there, in the moment, I can tell you just what I saw. We read hundreds of people for that part, and other people were funnier than him. But they weren't as likable as him. I felt like I could live inside of him. I felt like his problems were problems I could relate to."

I think Chris Pratt has the same thing Hanks does. I have never met him and doubt I ever will. But if I ever saw him I would feel like I was meeting a buddy from high school. It would probably be surreal since he is famous, but almost paradoxically I think it would feel so familiar. Because Pratt just comes across that way. Recently he was caught in the middle of a typical American controversy that some thought would offend the deaf community. And Pratt's response it—by signing an apology in sign language—was as touching and real as anything you'll see from Hollywood off screen.

We'll follow your lead, Star-Lord

In the Season 6 *Parks and Rec* episode "New Slogan" Andy is trying to find bands to play for a unity concert and by

accident he discovers that Ron is Duke Silver. This is a unique episode because Andy ditches, for the most part, the dim-witted persona. When he talks to Ron, he's more of an adult. In sharp contrast to "ambling down the street naked on crutches" Andy, this Andy is smooth. And cool. And bears semblance to Pratt's other roles. I am not sure why he's like this for one episode but I realize as I'm watching that it's not the shtick or the writing that makes Andy great. It's the man behind the character.

And I have little doubt his white hot career arc is just getting warmed up. Because he will bring this undefinable Tom Hanks-like personality to whatever he does. And on his 38th birthday, we celebrate the privilege of seeing his career unfold in real time.

To Combat "Rape Culture", New Trend Sees Women Getting Fetal Permission to Abort

A [recent trend](#) has shown that some forward thinking young mothers are combatting the "rape culture" in our society by asking for their infant's permission before picking them up or holding them. In regards to her six month old son, [one such mother said](#):

Since the moment he was born, we've always asked before we pick him up. I always feel for his "yes." Why? Because we want

him to know that his body is his, and that others' bodies are theirs, and no one gets to make choices about someone else's body.

Apparently, this progressive choice is not strong enough for many of the more socially conscious members of our society. There is now a movement of young, pregnant, biological females who are not interested in carrying their baby full-term, to ask the fetus's permission to abort them. Cindy S of Kalamazoo, MI puts it this way:

I do everything I can to fight against the oppressive and destructive patriarchal rape mentality in our country. That is why I have asked my unborn fetus their permission to abort them. I don't want to infringe on its rights. The fetus's body belongs to the fetus. No one else gets to make this choice for its body. Strangely enough, my fetus did not choose to go through with the abortion and I have to honor that choice.

More and more women are joining their voices in support of this paradigm shift in societal worldviews. Jessie M of Springfield, MO had this to offer:

The thing is, I really wanted to get an abortion. I am a huge advocate of women's rights and have supported Planned Parenthood for years. (Jessie is 19.) But I realized that if I wanted to be on the right side of history, I needed to have a conversation with my fetus to get its input on the abortion. My fetus is not in favor of the abortion at this time so I am planning on birthing it six months from now. At least this young person will grow up in a home that values individual rights and hopefully won't be a sexual predator or victim because I have instilled in it a fierce personal identity and self-worth.

At this time, it is not clear the long-term ramifications this new mindset will have on society at large. A wait and see approach seems appropriate.

(Editor's note: We interviewed dozens of pregnant biological women who have chosen to seek input from their fetuses for permission to abort them. In all cases, the fetuses have opted to not be aborted.)

When God Hates the Sinner

“Our job is not to love the sinner, hate their sin, but to love the sinner and hate our sin.” (Rosaria Butterfield)



A couple of times on here I have mentioned that I do not like to communicate in cliches, especially Christian ones. The social media fad of posting memes with eight words that neatly and simplistically sum up complex political and theological topics unnerves me.

So I'm not inclined to say things like "Love the sinner, hate the sin". I'm not alone on this. Some people really do not like this phrase. But what makes this Christian cliché so unique is that people in two diametrically opposite camps have condemned it.

On one hand, there are people who feel completely ostracized by Christians and their churches. They have spoken out vehemently against this platitude because, from what I can tell, the words ring hollow and self-righteously judgmental. To them, Christians have substituted loving and humble relationship for an empty, Sunday School answer theology. The message is shouted from a distance, focused on hatred and does not square with their reality. Hating their sin is, in essence, hating them. But I confess I am still quite ignorant in this area and I cannot fully represent other people's views.

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An Exegetical Fallacy

Yet as interesting, I have read conservative Christian scholars speak out against this phrase as well. Most notably, D. A. Carson, a professor of Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School says:

One evangelical cliché has it that God hates the sin but loves the sinner. There is a small element of truth in these words: God has nothing but hate for the sin, but this cannot be said with respect to how God sees the sinner. Nevertheless the cliché is false on the face of it, and should be abandoned. Fourteen times in the first fifty psalms alone, the psalmists state that God hates the sinner, that His wrath is on the liar, and so forth. In the Bible the wrath of God rests on both the sin (Rom. 1:18-23) and the sinner (1:24-32; 2:5; John 3:36). [1. Carson, D. A. "God's Love and God's Wrath." Bibliotheca Sacra 156 (October-December 1999): 387-398.]

Let me make note that in Carson's explanation, the point is how *God* sees the sin and the sinner. The cliché is often used to how *Christians* are supposed to react to both. I am not quite as concerned with how accurate it is in either case as much as I care about understanding and listening to people and trying to communicate with genuineness and theology that is well-developed and nuanced. The Bible explained in context—and not pithy clichés—is the only thing I think should offend people. So its 'biblicalness' is not my focus here.

Instead I want to speak to Dr. Carson's point about God hating the sinner. I've read Psalm 5:5 and 11:5 many times over the years and I cannot get past the mention of God hating people and not merely sin. Same for Proverbs 6:19. And for Esau in Malachi and Romans. And so on.

So there must be some sense in which God hates sinners. At the same time, I don't think we can deny that God loves all sinners in that he wants relationship with them[2. 2 Peter 3:9] and gives them some measure of blessing[3. Matthew 5:45], among other nuanced definitions of love. We cannot state succinctly and unilaterally that "God hates sinners". Yet the verses in Psalms and Proverbs and about Esau have to mean something that keeps us just as honestly from saying "God doesn't hate sinners." Language is often too multi-dimensional and the Bible too often creates conflicting tensions in logic for us to try to capture this in meme or cliché form.

God still pursues and God still blesses but unless a person comes with the humility of a child, God rejects. In that sense, he 'hates'.

Hate As Volition, Not Feeling

I think the resolution of the tension comes from understanding that 'hate' in both the OT and the NT means that God 'rejects

in relationship'. Covenant relationship with God is a relational standing, like marriage[4. The parallels are so deep, the Hebrew word for 'hate' in Malachi has 'divorce' in its semantic range.]. God wants relationship with everyone, but he only welcomes those in who are humble enough to receive Him by grace instead of trying to earn it by works, intelligence or philosophy. God still pursues and God still blesses but unless a person comes with the humility of a child, God rejects. In that sense, he 'hates'.

Which brings me to my point. In Amos 6:8, God says, "*I abhor the pride of Jacob and hate his strongholds...*" The book of Amos was written in part to express the idea that God hates pride from all peoples and will execute judgment impartially. Because pride prevents the relationship. Yet even his own people in covenant were still guilty of it. It is here that God does love the sinner and hate the sin. But to be like God, we must hate ours as well.

I'm So Humbled By How Great I Am

All the time on social media I see Christians brag on their accomplishments. From education to fitness to sports to serving the poor. I suppose there is something detached from reality about it on the internet that we feel comfortable doing it. I once noticed a comment from a professing Christ follower on my wife's Facebook that said she had lost X amount of weight and that she was "so proud of herself".

How easily we hate the acts of terrorists who shed innocent blood yet sit in comfortable community with those who create disunity in churches. God absolutely hates both.

If the same person had put on Facebook that she left a child in a hot car, the reaction would have been swift and harsh. Instead, people liked the status and praised her. Let me be clear: God hates pride as much as he does the worst things

humans are capable of. God finds human pride as gross, disgusting and reprehensible as the worst human acts of evil imaginable, including abuse and murder. How easily we hate the acts of terrorists who shed innocent blood yet sit in comfortable community with those with proud eyes who create disunity in churches! God absolutely hates both[5. Proverbs 6:16-19].

I confess I have used social media to pridefully promote myself so I'm not casting stones here. But make no mistake, Amos 6 tells us clearly that Israel had puffed herself up due to her accomplishments and feelings of superiority over others. And God expressed passionately that he hated it. He still does. God clearly says, *"Let someone else praise you, and not your own mouth"* and teaches, *"So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do, to be honored by others. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret."* Yet social media is often a breeding ground for violating these verses. Often in clever, proud-of-my-humility ways.

Why He Must Increase and We Decrease

I do not think biblically it is wrong for a Christian to ever talk about what they have accomplished. But there must be a full and significant expression of praise to God along with it. This is not something to be done for show; God says in Amos 5:21 that he hates that too. He alone truly knows the difference. He knows if it comes from a heart that understands what John the Baptist meant when he said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from Heaven." But before others, we must be satisfied with our good deeds being private, or else exalt God far more than the accomplishment. God will not share his glory with another. And he hates it when we try.

I'll close with something written by Isaac Watts over 300

years ago that we desperately need to meditate on today:

*Now for the loss I bear his name
What was my gain I count my loss
My former pride I call my shame
And nail my glory to His cross*

*The best obedience of my hands
Dares not appear before Thy throne;
But faith can answer Thy demands,
By pleading what my Lord has done.*

*No more my God
I boast no more*

Fool's Gold: Are the Golden State Warriors the Most Overrated Team of All Time?

The 2016-2017 Golden State Warriors are champions of the basketball world once again. This is their second title in three years, having defeated LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers both times. They went 16-1 in the playoffs which is the highest post season winning percentage in the history of the NBA. By every conceivable measure they appear to be a great team.

Unless you ask other NBA players.

Charles Barkely, Scottie Pippen, Rasheed Wallace, Robert Horry, Julius Irving, and Magic Johnson have all had less-than-kind things to say about this Warriors' team. All of them have publicly questioned their greatness, insinuating that they are the product of a watered down, less talented and more easily exploited league.

We here at Rambling Ever On decided to take a closer look into this controversy. What is it about this Warriors' team that causes all of these former (and current) players to withhold praise, or worse, to openly doubt? We have done our best to get a good sampling of reaction from various NBA players who have played in different eras.

We started our investigation with the players from the 80's and 90's, since they seemed to be the most vocal in their criticism. Craig Ehlo, a former Cleveland Cavalier from the 80's and 90's, noted "I have no doubt we'd take them. 5 games at most. We didn't win the championship but the league was tougher back then. And with the new rules Mark Price would hit 22 threes a game, minimum. Between me, Wilkins and Price, we'd have the Splash Triplets. Curry would ride the bench in the 90's NBA."

Patrick Ewing, Hall of Fame center for the New York Knicks bristled when asked if the current Warriors are better than the 1996 Chicago Bulls. "Man, we played those Bulls' teams! They were great. Best ever. And we played them close. These pretty boys from Oakland would be crying on the court if they had to play me, Mason and Oakley. We sweep them or they would give up. Whichever comes first."

It appears there is a level of skepticism about the Warriors. We dug deeper.

Michael Olowokandi, the number one pick in the 1998 draft has also recently spoken out. "I'm confident the 99 Clippers would

take these Warriors. I know I only averaged 8 points per game for my career, but the league was tougher back then. Draymond Green wouldn't be able to touch me. I'd go for 30 every night."

The skepticism and verbal attacks are not reserved for players from the 80's and 90's. NBA players from every decade are stepping up and taking their shots at Durant, Curry and the Warriors. Fred Carter, the leading scorer on the 1973 Sixers had some choice words.[1.The 1973 Sixers went 9-73 – the worst record in NBA history.] "Back when I played, there were only 17 teams in the league. There are 30 teams today. Obviously that has watered down the league. And we didn't have any of those European players. Those guys should just stick to soccer." Carter continued, "We didn't have the three point shot in my day either. It didn't exist. If it had been around, I am confident that at least half of my team could have shot it at least as well as Stephen Curry. Probably better."

Fred "Curly" Neal of the Harlem Globetrotters added his own perspective. "Those guys are fancy. They dribble, they drive, they shoot from anywhere on the court. But we did all those things and we did them better. We looked better as well, you know what I'm saying? Don't give me that 16-1! The Globetrotters won 8,829 games in a row!"

Surely, we thought to ourselves, that at the very least, the current players would have a healthy respect for a team that has won 207 regular season games and two NBA championships in the past three seasons. So, we approached LeBron James, arguably the great player of his generation, to get his thoughts. James was thoughtful and political with his response, yet with enough negativity it was clear the questions about the Warriors extends beyond the older generations. "Well, they were a great team. No doubt. But they played in an era that honestly didn't have a lot of great teams. And their style of play worked for them in that era but would not be as effective against the great teams of other

eras.” We asked James if his Cavaliers team would beat the Kevin Durant led Warriors in a seven game series. LeBron smiled, “Absolutely. Our team could defend the perimeter which would have contained Curry and Thompson. We would have neutralized Durant completely. Our teamwork and passing would have made it impossible for their defense to key on any one player. And defensively, we played a physical and aggressive style that would have knocked them off their game. We would have won that series in 5, maybe 6 games.”

There you have it. The Golden State Warriors, who set the NBA record for the most regular season wins in a single season AND over a three year span, winners of two NBA championships, are just not very good. In fact, ask any player, past or present, besides Dell Curry and Mychal Thompson, and they would tell you that pretty much any team that has ever played in the NBA could beat these guys. Even some great college teams could probably give them a good run for their money. In fact, there have been rumors that members of the 1995 College of Charleston Cougars are saying they believe their team could also defeat the Warriors in a 7 game series, but none of them could be reached for comment.

[Learning to Love at Chuck E. Cheese's](#)

I wrote the majority of this post eight years ago. I used to have a personal blog where I would review movies and albums, talk about sports, and rant about bad drivers. You know...the basics. Occasionally, I would delve into something a bit more “important.” When I wrote this, I had recently been to a birthday party for a fully grown human man at Chuck E.

Cheese's. Yes, you read that correctly. A grown up – an adult – chose to have their birthday party at Chuck E. Cheese's. Eight years later and I am still having problems fully processing that fact, which only reinforces in my mind the need to revisit this post. As you will see below, there is a streak of judgmental superiority running through me that needs confronting on a nearly daily basis.

I hate Chuck E. Cheese's. Hate is not a strong enough word. I loathe it in totality. It is a loud, unpleasant, wasteful, soul sucking place that is devoid of anything remotely approaching decent, let alone good. It attracts the loudest, most unpleasant, most wasteful, soulless people in the world. They come in throngs, like Uruk Hai on their way to Helm's Deep. (Nerdy Lord of the Rings reference for the uninitiated.) The patrons coalesce to form a massive, grotesque new organism that heats up the room and fouls the air with its presence. It is a destination I would not wish upon my worst enemy.

Yet I am worse. I am proud. I am arrogant. I am full of disdain. I do not love like I should. Jesus said to love our neighbors as we love ourselves, and if I believe that to be true then I am not measuring up. No. Scratch that. I am face first, firmly on the ground. I haven't even started the process of measuring up. I've known for some time that I am not a people person and I joke about it regularly. "I don't like people" has escaped my lips many times. It's all said in jest, of course, but deep down a part of me knows that it is true. Pathetically true. I am a Pharisee. I am convinced of my own worth and abilities and I am blind to the valuable human life right next to me. To my eyes, that Chuck E. Cheese's patron doesn't look like much on the outside, but inside, God created that annoying person playing Skee Ball in His image. That person is eternally valuable to God. He loves them enough that He died for them. And I look at them like they are beneath me – a waste of my time and energy!

If I am going to learn how to truly love my neighbor, then

more visits to Chuck E. Cheese's* are in order. If I can love people there, I can love them anywhere.

*Perhaps your Chuck E. Cheese's is CiCi's Pizza. Or Ryan's Steakhouse. Or McDonald's. Or Walmart. You get the point. It could be anywhere.

Five War Movies to Honor the Fallen

No one on the REO staff has served in the military. We have never had to risk our lives in service of our country. Yet, we recognize the bravery, courage, and sacrifice that so many of our citizens have displayed throughout the history of our nation. We recognize and we admire those men and women who have fought and died to protect those of us on the home front. There is little that we can do to honor that ultimate sacrifice. Our words amount to so very little in the end. Even so, we will forever be grateful.

So that we do not forget, the REO staff has selected a handful of movies to commemorate this Memorial Day. These films range in style and focus; some telling the story of a few soldiers, while others tell the story of many. Some were made decades ago and some are much more recent. All of them capture the nobility and sacrifice of the soldiers that fought and died so we can have freedom. Take some time this weekend to remember those who have given their all so that we can be free.

The Longest Day – by Benjamin Plunkett



[The Longest Day](#) recounts the hours immediately preceding and then every single hour on the day of the Invasion of Normandy. I have loved *The Longest Day* ever since I was a kid. However, it has not always been my favorite. I do not deny that I have had a long illicit love affair with war movies in general. It has not been until the last ten years or so that this has taken first place among the library of war movies that I love. There are a number of reasons it is a war movie to be deeply appreciated. Two are tops in my mind:

1) **A huge international cast of some of the most famous actors of all time.** Some of the most recognizable actors of yore appear in this movie, all-time greats like John Wayne, Robert Mitchum, Richard Burton, Sean Connery, Henry Fonda, and Rod Steiger. While that is a very impressive lineup, it is only a sampling of the amazing cast from the U.S., Germany, France, and the U.K. This means that multiple languages are spoken throughout the course of the film, which, of course, means plenty of subtitles.

2) **The meticulous attention to historical detail.** The examples of this in the film are legion. And many of the scenes are said to have been among the most complicated scenes to shoot in movie history. To do this multiple directors and units collaborated on the project to make it painstakingly accurate. Two that are particularly impressive: The paratroopers dropping in Mere Eglise and the assault on Ouistreham (which was supposedly the most complicated shoot in the whole thing).

This blurb barely scratches the surface of this great war

movie. Its place as a historic educational tool is massive. D-Day was one of the greatest and proudest days in the history of mankind. This is one of the best ways to learn about that very historic event.

The Thin Red Line – by Phill Lytle

“This great evil, where’s it come from? How’d it steal into the world? What seed, what root did it grow from? Who’s doing this? Who’s killing us, robbing us of life and light, mocking us with the sight of what we might’ve



known? Does our ruin benefit the earth, does it help the grass to grow, the sun to shine? Is this darkness in you, too? Have you passed through this night?” – Private Edward P. Train in [The Thin Red Line](#)

Meditative. Poetic. Profoundly spiritual: Qualities rarely used to describe a war film, but they serve as the perfect descriptors for Terrence Malick’s World War II masterpiece. There will be many who will walk away from this film bored or disengaged, but for those fortunate enough to understand the unique cinematic language, the film contains unexpected and unrelenting rewards. Malick uses narration, inner dialogue, and sublime visuals to move beyond the words and actions of the soldiers who fought and died. He allows their spirits to speak to the horror, the passion, and the humanity of war. *The*

Thin Red Line transcends the usual movie treatment, presenting instead an exploration of our deepest questions and longings viewed through the prism of combat and war.

Saving Private Ryan – by Mark Sass



Very few movies truly redefine a genre. [*Saving Private Ryan*](#) was one such film. At the very least it revolutionized audio/visual techniques, style, and tone for war sequences in film. Prior to *Saving Private Ryan* no war movie had ever looked so real on screen. The film made a commitment to communicating the horrors of war like no other. At times the movie was visceral to a degree that was difficult to watch. However, the realism of the film encompassed much more than only violence. Audiences didn't merely watch the film; they experienced it. Several scenes stood out in this regard, but none so like the 22 minute sequence on Omaha Beach in Normandy on D-Day. Unlike many other war movies nothing was glamorized, toned down, or embellished in this film. To this day many regard the Omaha Beach scene as the most realistic depiction of war ever put on film. Audiences got the smallest taste of the true nature of war from the film. And that was very different from how other movies portrayed it. For this reason it's difficult to say this was an enjoyable movie. No, it's better said the movie was one to appreciate and respect. *Saving Private Ryan* told a story that was worth telling. The plot masterfully jumped between the events of WWII and present day in a way that captivated the viewer. Familiar emotions for the genre such as courage, heroism, and sacrifice permeated the film. Led by Tom Hanks, the entire cast delivered top notch performances from beginning to end. The acting, cinematography, editing, music, FX, and everything

in between, all came together to deliver a film of the highest quality which will never be forgotten. *Saving Private Ryan* might be the pinnacle of director Steven Spielberg's long and illustrious career.

Sergeant York – by Gowdy Cannon

When I was a teenager I did not like history. Yeah, I was a doofus. I didn't like black and white movies. I didn't like war movies. So when Mr. Marshall Thompson, my 10th grade American history teacher, showed our class a [movie](#) that was both, and that I loved, he basically did the impossible.



Based on his personal diary and with the demand that Gary Cooper play the lead, Alvin Cullum York let Hollywood give us his story in a truly remarkable and unforgettable way. I bought the VHS and watched it over and over. I would go around randomly saying "Killn's agin the book" and "I'm fer the book" in high school and college. I did my character presentation for Mr. John Carter in U.S. History in college on him. (And to this day I regret not doing Sergeant York's turkey call when classmate and future best friend Joshua Crowe tried to prompt me to during the Q&A time.) I love "Give Me That Old Time Religion" because of this movie. Every time I am driving into Nashville on the interstate and see something off of an exit dedicated to him, I still smile.

A tale of not just war heroics but of a man's personal and riveting journey, notably of the struggles that come with the Christian faith and its convictions, I think most people can enjoy this film. Even the knuckleheads who do not normally go for movies of its age and genre. I am thankful to it for teaching me how good those types of movies can be.

Band of Brothers – by Phill Lytle



Though not a film, no list of this type would be complete without including the HBO adaptation of Stephen E. Ambrose's [*Band of Brothers*](#). First released in 2001, *Band of Brothers* is a ten-part epic mini-series that follows the formation, training, and World War II experiences of "Easy Company", part of the Parachute Infantry Regiment of the Army's 101st Airborne Division. Due to its longer run time, *Band of Brothers* is able to do something that no film can: it can tell a long, sweeping, fully immersive story that features dozens of main characters, locations, and battles. The viewer is able to spend time with these brave men. We are able to get to know them, understand their strengths and weaknesses. See them perform heroically time after time.

Produced by Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg, every detail is handled with care and respect. These were real men that are portrayed on screen by an assortment of incredibly gifted and committed actors. There are interviews with the actual soldiers before and after episodes, which adds another layer of authenticity and power for the series. For my money, there is no greater picture of the war than *Band of Brothers*.

Why I Stopped Hating LeBron James

I remember the Summer of 2010 quite well.

Especially July. My church puts on a huge basketball camp every summer and a church from another state always comes to help us with it, normally the Rejoice Church in Owasso, OK. I remember being at the church one day working and then several of their adult workers gathering around the church soundbooth computer with me to watch "The Decision."

I remember my reaction to it: anger, confusion, repulsion. It was the same kind of reaction I'd have to a TV show that killed off my favorite character. I honestly didn't care that LeBron left Cleveland. I wanted him in Chicago but not choosing us didn't really draw the ire. No, I was mad because LeBron chose to play with Dwayne Wade, four years removed from a Finals MVP and Chris Bosh, a perennial all-star.

Then, it got worse. I was housesitting for a lady at church and happened upon the Miami Heat pep rally celebrating *before the season had even started*, complete with the new Big 3 all in full uniform and LeBron predicting they'd win championship after championship.

I was disgusted. When the regular season finally started three months later, I was in full "I hate LeBron" mode (not real hate, but what I call "sports hate" – just a fun way to say I don't like them). I know I will never hate an athlete as much as I hate Tom Brady but he was becoming a sort-of NBA version.

So when Miami made the Finals every year from 2011 to 2014 I watched every second as though my life depended on it. I

cheered Dallas' victory and gloated like a child to anyone who would listen. I blamed Harden and the refs for the 2012 Miami win. I thought they were finished again in 2013 in Game 6 until that unforgettable last minute. But at least I got to enjoy immensely the Spurs getting revenge in dominating fashion the next year.

One thing was sure though: Every year he was in Miami, I wanted LeBron to go down like I wanted Shooter McGavin in *Happy Gilmore* to go down.

But what he did after the 2014 season undid it all. He came back. And more importantly he gave his reasons, beautifully written, for coming home to Ohio. I was blown away. By it all. [By how thoughtful and honest the essay was](#). By the humility to forgive Dan Gilbert for all that he said after LeBron left. By the willingness to go back to an awful basketball franchise and try to win it all for the people. By the love for his home outside of basketball. By owning up to "The Decision" so we all could move on from it. Even by the inspirational Nike commercial he did with the city of Cleveland to give them an unforgettable way to celebrate his return. It was all admirable.

It was all so opposite of 2010. As many journalists have written, there is no reason to hold on to those two nights in July any longer. He cannot undo them. All he can do is move forward. And that is exactly what he's done, with incredible life maturity. It reminds me of the way Jack and Sawyer changed on the TV show *Lost*, except it wasn't scripted. It was raw and genuine.

So watching him pull Cleveland from Basketball Hell these last three years has not bothered me at all. It was the circumstances I hated in Miami, far more than the man. I was disappointed that Cleveland won it all last year, but solely

because of Mike Lytle's [article](#) on Golden State being better than the 96 Bulls. (Hey, what can I say? I'm a bigger fan of REO than any NBA result.) But a small part of me cheered that Cleveland finally won something. It was absolutely perfect that LeBron—being born in Akron, drafted by his hometown team, having forsaken them and then having returned with contriteness and realness you rarely see in professional athletes—was the one to lead them. If you juxtapose LeBron's ["Together" Nike video](#) with the result of Game 7 from last year's NBA Final, it feels like a superhero movie became real life.

I have opinions on LeBron as an athlete as far as his legacy but those comments can wait for another article (or you can just look at my Twitter feed). But no matter how much I argue for or against him, none of it comes from the same extreme hatred I have for athletes like Tom Brady. What LeBron did three years ago is too special to me. It was significant way beyond sports. And as a human, more than a sports fan, I loved it. I'll never be a LeBron fan, but I'm not a hater either. I feel like he has earned that much.

[The Rough Draft of Solace](#)

In an effort to be completely transparent, this is going to be messy. I have attempted to write this article three or four times over the last few weeks and it has been a fight to get it to come together. My thoughts are scattered and confused. The end result will probably feel like a rough draft at times and I am going to have to be okay with that because no amount

of effort on my part will fix certain deficiencies. One additional disclaimer before we get to the meat of the matter at hand: I'm going to be blunt. I want to be true and honest and real. I don't want to hide behind platitudes and clichés. I'll do my best.

Right now, this very moment, there are many people who are hurting. They are experiencing profound physical, emotional, or spiritual pain. Or some combination of all of them. I have friends who are dealing with frightening medical diagnoses. I have friends who are watching their marriages collapse. I have friends who have lost someone dear to them. I hate it. It's overwhelming in the most complete sense of that word. I hear these things and I have no words of comfort or wisdom to offer. I am struck mute by my lack of power. In a practical manner of speaking, there is almost nothing I can do to help any of these people.

I've watched friends deal with so much garbage, so much pain, that it makes me angry and causes my faith in a good God to take a hit. Deep down, I know those feelings are stupid so I do my best to move past them and not allow that seed of doubt to take root in my life. But if I feel this way, safely observing it all from the outside, how much more pain, doubt, and anger do the people living their own personal hell feel? I have no idea. And I really have no right to speculate or assume to know. I can do my best to understand and empathize, but that's mostly empty rhetoric. Understanding is a long way down the road from experiencing, and I have never experienced pain and loss like so many have.

So why am I even writing this article? There are a few reasons, and none of them very flattering. First, I am not good with people. I am an introvert, awkward and uncomfortable around most people. When confronted with a damaged or hurting person, my typical reaction is avoidance or the most superficial interaction possible. And honestly, it's not because I don't care. It's because I have no idea what

to say or how to act in those situations. I prefer to communicate my feelings, thoughts, and emotions in written form. Which brings me to my second reason. If you want a glimpse inside my head, I'll make it as simple as I can: My hope in writing this is that something I say here will be a help to those that are suffering. Yet even here, I ask myself why would anything I write help anyone that is experiencing life-altering pain and sorrow? I've landed on something that might answer that question. My words are impotent. My words will help no one. But if my words reflect the words of God, then they will not return void. If my words can offer even a flicker of light that points to the Great Light, then that has to be enough. It's the only reason to do this.

While I have not experienced loss like many others, my life has not been without pain and sadness. I am beyond grateful that when my family went through its most difficult time, the loss of my sister-in-law to cancer, my friends did not offer us empty platitudes and clichés. They showed up. They cried with us. They hugged us. They laughed with us as we remembered the beautiful soul we had lost. Those things meant the world as we dealt with the pain and confusion and bone-wearying grief. I want to do that now, but I know it is impractical at best. Most people have horror stories of well-intentioned people offering empty words of comfort during times of mourning. I hope this will not be another horror story for some. Yet, if you are looking despair in the face, if your grief is so strong that you just can't cry anymore, if healing and restoration feel a million miles away, just maybe these words will help even a little.

Jesus shares your grief and weeps with you. I've always been intrigued by the events surrounding the death of Lazarus in the book of John. The sickness, the delay in travel, the death, the graveside scene, and then the triumphant and impossible resurrection. It is a fascinating vignette, one of

deep truth and a few tantalizing questions. While I have heard it taught in a variety of ways, nothing has been more uncertain to me than the simple passage found in John 11:35. "Jesus wept." Did he weep because of the questions and lack of faith of Lazarus's sisters? Did he weep because he was bothered by the crowd and their weeping, however genuine? Scripture does say he was troubled by it. Or, did he weep because his friend had died? Perhaps he wept because he was moved to mourn with Mary and Martha. I choose to believe that it was all those things, yet deeper and more profound. I believe that Jesus wept because the very idea of death was so abhorrent to him. As my brother said in his beautiful article, [*Grief, Hope and Theology That Matters:*](#)

"Even more vivid is the account of Lazarus' resurrection in John 11. When confronted with the death of his own loved one, Jesus weeps alongside his family. Jesus fully participates in the grief. By verse 38, Jesus is so enraged in his grief that he does what every grieving person wishes he could do—a miracle. It is in this account that Jesus reminds his followers that He is the resurrection and the life. He is the conqueror of death. Jesus not only hates death; He hates it even more than we do."

Jesus fully participates in our grief. What an amazing and comforting thought!

At the end of *The Silver Chair*, the fourth book in C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*, after we witness the funeral of an aged King Caspian, we watch the protagonists of the story, Eustace and Jill, cry over the body of Caspian as it lays in a stream. They weep at the death of this great King and friend. The great lion Aslan weeps with them, and his grief and tears go beyond anything they feel, "each tear more precious than the Earth would be if it was a single solid diamond." And then, in an act of participatory grief, Aslan asks the children to take a thorn and plunge it deep

into his paw. The blood then drips into the stream with Caspian's body and not only gives him new life but restores him to the vigor and likeness of his youth. Aslan felt the grief and loss more profoundly than the children, but then does something that we all wish we could do – he conquers death. That is the promise we can cling to in times of sorrow. Our Lord grieves with us. He hates the things that make us grieve more than we do and longs for the day when He will fully restore His creation to its rightful and intended glory.

Jesus bears your burdens and pain. The first time I read *The Lord of the Rings*, during my freshman year in college, I cried when Sam and Frodo, the two brave hobbits who had journeyed far to destroy the ring of power, reach the very doorstep of Mount Doom, the only place the ring could be destroyed, and Frodo is finally overwhelmed with exhaustion. His quest has left him a shell; broken and empty. He falls to the ground, unable to take another step; the weight of the ring, both physical and spiritual, is pulling him down, forcing him to give up. That is when Sam, Frodo's gardener and best friend, resolves to help. He realizes he cannot carry the ring; it is not his burden to bear. The ring was entrusted to Frodo to carry and to destroy. Sam knows this and in his simple and unassuming wisdom, he chooses to do something even better. An act of such profound love and friendship, there is little in the world of literature that is its equal. Samwise Gamagee, though his body has been decimated after mile upon mile of travel, looks at his friend and cries out, "Come, Mr. Frodo! I can't carry it for you, but I can carry you."

Sam does for Frodo that which Frodo cannot do for himself. How much greater is that imbalance in our relationship with God? There are innumerable times in our lives when we find ourselves paralyzed with grief, fear, or pain. In those times, we go through the motions, yet our lives are merely a pantomime. Our steps are leaden and without aim. Our souls are frozen in time, unable to feel or move or trust again. It is

in those times that we have the promises of God to cling to:

- Psalm 55:22 – “Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you.”
- 2 Corinthians 12:9 – “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.”
- Psalm 37:24 – “Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the LORD holds them by the hand.”

Moving beyond the written promises of Scripture, we have the very life of Jesus as a promise. He meets us exactly where we need Him. When His disciples were terrified and confused after His death, not only does He comfort them with words of peace and His presence, a few days later, he meets them on the shore of the sea and cooks them a meal. He feeds them – something so tactile and so familiar. It is just one more beautiful picture of selflessness and tender love for His disciples to cling to when they face persecution and death in the years to come. Our Lord will bear our burdens, sustain us, and He will hold us up by His hand and by His grace. As believers, we are called to do the same. Galatians 6:2 tells us to “Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.” When someone you love is hurting and bearing a burden that is too heavy, remember the words and actions of Jesus. If we are indeed His hands and feet, we can carry our wounded friends even if we cannot carry their wounds.

Finally, **Jesus rejoices over you**. I want the words of Scripture to do most of the talking for this point. In one of the most beautiful passages in the Old Testament, we find these words of hope and encouragement: “For the LORD your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs.” The creator of the universe takes delight in you with gladness. The savior of the world rejoices over you with joyful songs.

Or, as the New American Standard Bible puts it, “He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.” What verbal expression can be more demonstrative and powerful than a shout of joy? Our God is so filled with love for you, that He shouts for joy. What a thought! In your time of deep pain and loneliness, it might be hard to feel this. It might be hard to hold on to this truth, but know, in the deepest part of your soul, that it is Truth. Our mighty Savior longs to calm your fears with His love. Even now, He is delighting in you. Even now, He is joyfully shouting and singing over you.

It is my hope that this doesn't just add to the noise. If nothing else, I hope that my words get out of the way and that the truth of Scripture speaks clearly in your life. For those of you that have friends that are hurting, you know what to do. Be with them. Grieve with them. Weep with them. Carry them while they cannot move. Be their champion by singing over them, rejoicing over them, and shouting over them. For those that are hurting, I hope that the people closest to you are fulfilling their roles by being Jesus in your time of need. Just know, Jesus shares your grief and weeps with you, He will gladly bear your burdens, and He rejoices over you with shouts and songs. If you can do nothing else, hold on to that.

Grace and Glory

*For Jehovah God is a sun and a shield:
Jehovah will give grace and glory;
No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.
Psalm 84:11*

Psalm 84:11 is one of the most beautiful, majestic Psalms. Here we find these two words together, in juxtaposition that brings hope, blessing and encouragement to followers of Jesus. The Lord will give grace and glory. The context of this most precious Psalm is one of a pilgrim longing for God's house and being on a journey where he is unable to be there. But he finds God's strength sufficient for his pilgrimage (verses 5-7) and so he journeys on toward Jerusalem. The climactic part, verses 10-12, is his testimony that he would rather spend one day in God's courts than thousands elsewhere. Verse 11 is powerful: the LORD God is a sun and shield, and grants "favor and honor," a more modern way to render "grace and glory." Thus we see that there is an immediate application to the present, as he goes on to say "he does not withhold the good from those who live with integrity." (CSB)

Charles Spurgeon states:

Who else could give either grace or glory? But God is full of grace—His very name is Love—it is His Nature to freely dispense of His goodness to others. As it is according to the nature of the sun to shine, so it is according to the Nature of God to give good things to His creatures. In Him all fullness dwells—all grace and all glory are perpetually resident in Jehovah, the Infinite. What a mercy it is that we, poor empty sinners, have to do with a God of such fullness and of such goodness! If He were shorthanded with His love, what would become of us? If He had but little graciousness, if He had but little glory, then we great sinners must certainly perish. But since the Lord is a bottomless well of love and a topless mountain of grace, we may come to Him, and come freely, without any fear that either His grace or His glory will ever suffer any diminution. Note again that the text says, "Jehovah will give grace and glory." Not only has He these wondrous blessings, but He has them that He may give them freely. If He were to keep them to Himself, He would be none the richer, and when He distributes them, He is none the poorer! The Lord does not sell grace or glory, He does not put

them up to auction to those who can give something in return for them. God is a great Giver and a great Forgiver. He gives grace and glory without money, without price and without any merit in the receiver. The Lord gives—there is nothing freer than a gift and there can be nothing freer than that greatest of all the gifts of God, eternal life! That expression, “eternal life,” sums up these two things—grace and glory. “The Lord will give grace and glory.” It is His glory to give His grace and because of His graciousness, He gives glory! [1. Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit #2502]

Yet, “grace and glory,” surely suggest our future blessing in eternity as well. “‘Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home” (John Newton). I thought of some songs that feature the phrase “grace and glory,” some of which emphasize the here and now, while others the “sweet by and by.”

“Where He Leads Me I Will Follow” – a song of commitment and trust, where the lines of the verses are repeated as “I can hear my Savior calling,” “He’ll go with me through the garden,” “He’ll go with me through the judgment,” and finally “He will give me grace and glory.” The refrain says “Where He leads me I will follow (three times)...He’ll go with me, with me, all the way.” From His initial call to the grace and glory that await, no doubt a reference to Heaven, He will truly go with me all the way. [2. Where He Leads Me: Ernest W. Blandy, 1890]

A group called “Poet Voices” sang a song about a decade or so ago called “Grace and Glory.” Again, borrowing from those beautiful words it states “His love is full of grace and glory that is why I sing.”

Unmerited favor of the Savior falling from His holiness
It is never ending grace extending from His righteousness
To the undeserving, God is serving bountiful supply
His great love’s abounding and surrounding us from sky to

sky.[3. Phil Cross, Bridge Building Music, BMI, Chris White Music, BMI]

Christian songwriter, poet, and comedian Aaron Wilburn wrote a song some years ago in which “grace and glory,” while not the theme or title, still figures prominently in the message. Recently performed by a number of singing groups, it was a favorite of Aaron’s mother: “That Sounds Like Home to Me,” a song about Heaven, in which the refrain thrills the believer’s heart by affirming “the hills will echo with the story as we sing of His grace and glory. Wow! To think that one day we’ll extol His grace and glory throughout the ages.[4. C.A. Wilburn and Edwin Crook, Werner Chappel Music, Inc.]

Finally, there comes to my mind a song I heard only a couple of months ago by a trio I enjoy a great deal. Songwriter Sue C. Smith and collaborators beautiful lyrics, and Karen Peck’s country soprano delivers yet another song of hope “On the Banks of the Promised Land.” My soul is set to soar when I hear the refrain “Hallelujah, what a morning, when I reach for that nail-scarred hand, and I’m led by His grace and His glory, on the banks of the Promised Land.”[5. Sue C. Smith, David Moffit, Jason Dyba]

My conclusions: The Psalm would indicate that grace and glory are for both now and for the future. It’s grace that saves us now, that guides and guards us in this life, that leads us on this earthly pilgrimage, but it is also grace that leads us home, to again quote John Newton.

To glory – what does that mean? The goal, the end of God’s grace working in us is to transport us to glory, as some of the songs I’ve quoted suggest. But we might also say that the grace at work in us brings glory to Him who is worthy of it all – grace to glory. And most definitely grace accomplishes glory – His glory and our enjoyment of it and rapture in it – here on earth temporarily and imperfectly, and permanently and perfectly in Heaven.

These past days have been bittersweet. Services at church have been good, and it is thrilling to see our Hispanic group there, growing in the Lord, and becoming more involved. However, news came of the passing of two friends, both named Tim. Tim Hayes was from Illinois, very active in his church, in missions, and with the Master's Men Disaster Relief Team. I have known him since college days. A massive heart attack. Then, Tim Coats, formerly a Home Missionary in South Dakota, and in recent years a bivocational pastor there in Rapid City. He and Kathy were summer missionaries with us in 1982 in Panama when our kids were very small. Faithful men, good friends. They have now gone from grace to glory, praise the Lord.

The NFL on REO: The Draft

An Exhaustively Researched Hypothesis

The NFL just concluded the 2017 draft. As usual, it was three days full of excitement, drama, and way too many opinions. It also helped confirm in my mind a little hypothesis I have been developing for some time: The NFL is the girl in high school that is socially oblivious, dumb as a box of rocks, kind of a jerk, but is pretty hot. Allow me to elaborate. That girl from high school had no problem getting dates. All the dumb, hormone driven, high school boys could easily overlook her lack of intelligence, her meanness, or her propensity to say or do publicly embarrassing things because...hotness. All those other negative qualities did nothing to lessen her popularity with the guys. That's the NFL. The NFL draft is three days of the NFL showing off, patting themselves on the back, and doing it all in the most bombastic and cringe-worthy manner

possible. And we still watch. Because hotness. The NFL is hot, has been hot for a long time, and will be hot for many more years to come. It will be hot until all the negatives about the sport finally surpass how attractive it is to fans. And believe me, that time is coming.

The NFL is socially oblivious because teams continue to draft players with awful character simply because they are good at football. Of course the Bengals drafted Joe Mixon. Because Mixon is really good at football. Nothing else matters to the league or to many of the teams. They will take any little PR hit in the hopes that players like Mixon can help them win. I'm all for second chances. I really am. As a Christian, second chances are pretty much built into the DNA of my faith, but giving someone like Mixon a "second chance" doesn't have to mean drafting him and paying him million of dollars. It could mean something entirely unrelated to football. Something that might actually help him become a solid, productive member of society.

The NFL is dumber than a box of rocks because it keeps letting Roger Goodell announce the name of each drafted player in the first round. Goodell doesn't do many things well, besides being the owner's dancing monkey, and his inability to correctly pronounce the names of the draft picks is the cherry on top of his curdled sundae. Beyond the fact that he struggles with pronunciation, he has no stage presence, makes the whole thing very awkward, and he gets booed vociferously every time he walks up to the podium. It's bad television and it's a bad look for the NFL. But we still watch. Because hotness.

And for the love, stop with the weird hugging!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqVpmy9hJnw>

Even with all this, and so much more, ratings were up from last year. That's because we are all a bunch of hormone

riddled boys and the NFL looks good in a short skirt. I fear I may have taken this analogy to a very uncomfortable place. Moving on!

Draft Winners and Losers

I think we can all safely say that Chicago giving up what they did to move up one spot to draft a completely unproven QB was a strange decision. I'll go one step further: It was a bad move. I officially declare the Bears as the biggest losers of the 2017 NFL Draft.

From my vantage point, I don't believe there was any one team that clearly won the draft – a lot of teams had solid drafts. If I were a draft expert (I'm not) I would hand out quite a few "A" grades this year. Many teams seemed to be working with actual plans to make their teams better. Novel approach for sure, but it looks like planning and strategy were more popular than usual. A few teams that got better this weekend: San Francisco, Houston, Arizona, and Philadelphia.

Travis Rudolph

I'm sure you heard the story about the Florida State wide receiver, Travis Rudolph, that went to a local school and sat down with a boy who was eating alone. The boy was Bo Paske, who has autism. The story went viral and Bo was able to go to many FSU games and events after that, due to his new friendship with Travis. Look, I don't know Travis but from all appearances, he seems like a great guy. Sitting down and eating with Bo was such a small gesture, but something that clearly spoke to so many people across the country. If a

little act of kindness can have that kind of an impact on people, imagine how much we can do by just being decent and kind.

I've since read that Travis' father was killed in an accident at work – the weekend before the draft. Rudolph did not get selected by any team in the draft this year, but has signed as an undrafted free agent with the New York Giants. I am rooting for him and praying for his family during this time of mourning. I'm sure this has been an incredibly confusing emotional rollercoaster for them.

If he can put up moves like this in the pros, he might just make it.



Titans Talk



I can honestly say that my initial reaction to the Titans taking Corey Davis with the 5th pick of the draft was

confusion and a little bit of frustration. I thought it was a reach. I liked Davis, and have been reading up on his career at Western Michigan for the past few months. I even liked the idea of the Titans drafting him, but 5th overall just seemed way too high. Then, the other two wide receivers with first round talent were taken before the 10th pick and I realized that Jon Robinson knew what he was doing. Perhaps picking Davis caused the run on wide receivers. Perhaps he knew that other teams were going to take a wide receiver early. Whatever the answer, Robinson bet that none of the best receivers were going to be available at 18 (the other first round pick for the Titans) so he had to get his guy at 5. I'll take that. It was definitely a "need" pick, but if Davis is as good as expected, he will help the offense tremendously.

I "bet" last week that Robinson was going to trade at least one of his first round picks. I was wrong. He kept both picks and added a lot of speed and explosiveness to the team. He did trade a lot after that though, which sort of made me right. No? Okay. That doesn't make me right at all. I did say he would take a receiver and a corner back though, so I should get some credit.

After watching and listening to the Nashville Predators in the playoffs, I can't agree more with [this](#) take. The Titans desperately need to develop more traditions at Nissan Stadium. This team is about to be one of the best in the AFC, and it's time the fans took their fanaticism to the next level. There are actually some great ideas listed in the comment section of the linked article on [Music City Miracles](#), ranging from borrowing/stealing a few ideas from the Predators or using the pre-game warm-up chant from the movie, *Remember the Titans*. (Disclaimer: I don't condone all the comments or language used in the above comment section.) The Titans fan-base needs to get serious about this and make Nissan Stadium a place opponents fear and the Titans love. Just imagine 69,143 fans doing this chant in unison on a Sunday afternoon!

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=zrUMn6RS2Uk>

Final Thoughts

That's it for this week. From this point on, until closer to the start of Training Camp, this "column" will be sporadic. There is just not enough NFL news each week during the offseason to justify a weekly article. Things will start to ramp up the closer we get to the season starting. And once the season does start, this will be at minimum a once a week endeavor. I hope you guys enjoy it and will stick around for the ride. Thanks for reading.