

# Loyal To His Charge

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Already it has begun: the boys of summer are returning to the warm weather sites and renewing old friendships. Although it is still snowing here in Colorado, Arizona and Florida are warm and inviting sites for getting ready for the season to come. Hockey may have called off its season, but baseball is once again looming on the horizon, offering hope for every baseball fan. I grew up playing baseball, and I spent every summer as a child rooting for the Cleveland Indians. (Let me tell you, during the sixties, that was not an easy task). I must admit that baseball is my favorite sport to follow. I have my favorite teams (Cleveland Indians, Colorado Rockies, and whoever is playing the New York Yankees) and teams to root against (New York Yankees, Los Angeles Dodgers, and the New York Yankees).

Growing up, I spent a lot of time reading biographies about some of the great players in baseball history, which gave me a greater appreciation of how the game was played before I was old enough to follow it. I know that I am sounding like an old guy, but it seems that there was more passion for the game back in the days of Mickey Mantle, Joe DiMaggio, and Babe Ruth (yes, I know, they are all Yankees) than there is today. I guess with the huge salaries being paid players today, it seems more like a business than a passion.

One of my favorite baseball books was Ted Williams' autobiography, "My Turn at the Bat." I know that Ted could be a rude player and played with a huge chip on his shoulder, but he was a man who lived to play baseball. He would say that all he wanted in life was to have people say of him, "There goes Ted Williams, the best hitter in baseball." For Ted, life easily could be divided into two categories: batting and preparing for the next at-bat. In his autobiography, Ted spoke of preparing his bats, swinging them, imagining his next at-bat and, during a game, carefully watching the opposing pitcher and how the other batters were approaching him. All of this was borne out of his passion to be the best hitter in baseball. It is no surprise that he was the last man to bat .400 for an entire season.

What does all of this have to do with us? As God calls us to our individual ministries and begins to place passion in our hearts to make these ministries happen, there will be many frustrations to overcome. Ministries never happen as quickly as we would like them to, and we may become impatient, wondering if God really has called us or if this church is listening to God's voice as it should. It is in our frustration that we need to understand that, when God calls us to a ministry, our first task is to begin preparing for the task at hand.

Remember David. Samuel anoints him to be king of Israel, and then his father sends him back into the fields to herd sheep. It must have been very frustrating for David to watch sheep be sheep with the oil of kings still in his hair. But, when he speaks to Saul about taking on Goliath, David demonstrates that during his time of not being king, he was preparing himself for the day when he would be. He was learning how to trust God, how to be loyal to his charge, learning how to see God

at work in both the little and big things of life.

Preparing for our at-bats is as important as the at-bats themselves. Ted Williams recognized this, David learned this and, if we are to be successful in our passions with God, we need to understand this as well.