

“When we place our dependence in God, we are unencumbered, and we have no worry. In fact, we may even be reckless, insofar as our part in the production is concerned. This confidence, this sureness of action, is both contagious and an aid to the perfect action. The rest is in the hands of God – and this is the same God, gentlemen, who has won all His battles up to now” (Vince Lombardi, at www.vincelombardi.com/quotes.html).

This being Super Bowl Sunday, I thought it appropriate to reflect on the above quote from the legend for whom the Super Bowl trophy is named, the late, great Vince Lombardi. The eldest son of Italian immigrants, Lombardi’s Catholic faith would play a central role in all of his endeavors, not least of which was his role in winning five NFL championships, including the first two Super Bowls.

For all its glitz and glamor, football is, at the end of the day, just a game, but the principles required to win at football are the very same principles that are required to succeed in life, and vice versa, as Vince Lombardi well knew. At the very center of Mr. Lombardi’s plan for success in football and in life was an absolute dependence on God.

This dependence on God does not excuse us from the need to carefully plan for success by developing our gifts and disposing them to address the needs before us in a way most effective for achieving our mission, whether that be winning a football game or saving souls. Rather, our dependence on God frees us from the futility of relying on our own efforts to achieve our own ends. When we view our lives within the larger plan of God, we begin to see the big picture. We become less concerned with what we want and more concerned with what God wants. We begin to care less about what others think and more about what God thinks. We focus not on success as the world sees it, but as God sees it. And that is a very liberating, and fruitful, experience.

Perhaps another quote from Mr. Lombardi says it best: “There are three things that are important to every man in this locker room. His God, his family, and the Green Bay Packers. In that order.” I am no Green Bay Packer fan, though I have nothing against them. But whatever your team, Mr. Lombardi’s priorities are spot on. Enjoy the game this weekend, but don’t forget, amidst all the glitz and glamor, what really matters, nor to thank Mr. Lombardi for his faithful witness to us all.