



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

If you don't stay in tune with your culture, your vocabulary can run off and leave you. While you have your head in the sand, definitions can escape you... and when you come up for conversation, the meaning you intended may no longer be conveyed to the person hearing your words.

Example: just ten years ago, if you'd said "web," to someone, they might have looked for a spider. Today, no one would use "web" in that manner without hanging "spider" on the front-end. I mean, come on: anyone knows that "web" has only one dominant meaning. *Right?*

Here's another word that has morphed: tracking. Turn the clock to pre-combustion engine days, and "tracking" would have involved men guns, animals with hair... and a life-ending event that would either put food on the table or furs on your back. Check back about 75 years ago: tracking would have involved Eliot Ness and Al Capone. No longer food on the table at stake; instead, it was life behind bars that hung in the balance. *Tracking has sure changed...*

Today, tracking doesn't involve bison or bad guys. In the 21st Century, tracking has far more to do with identifying something of value to oneself, and then finding a way to calculate and tabulate its presence or proliferation.



Last night, the New England Patriots were tracking yards and minutes through the Fourth Quarter of the game that would be an inflection point on their otherwise perfect season. Today, pollsters are tracking the presumed behavior of American voters in 24 states scheduled to make their opinions known on what we've come to call "Super Tuesday," tomorrow (*how many "Supers" can our country handle in a 72 hour period?*). Tracking is all about figuring out what's valuable to you, and then finding a way to measure its highs and lows... not just to know its status, but to influence and affect its progression.

If football teams track points and yards and minutes, and political campaign teams track voter turnout and demographics and delegate counts, what are Christians supposed to track? *What is it that will show up on the final tally where we're going, where it really counts?*

Here's an amazing factoid that is deeply embedded in the New Testament's description of the Christian faith: the thing that's being tracked by God is the **works** performed by all humans, both saved and lost. God doesn't track the Dow Jones Industrial Average; He's not keeping tabs on the Federal Reserve and their latest interest rate decisions; He didn't gather the data for retail sales during Christmas '07 to get the pulse of the American Economy. Santa Claus is rumored to be watching: *"He sees you when you're sleeping; he knows when you're awake. He knows if you've been bad or good, so be good for goodness' sake..."* That's bogus re: Santa, but it's completely biblical re: God.

Listen to this string of tracking insights from the writings of the New Testament: *"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do... So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad... Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully." (Ephesians 2:10; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10; 2 John 1:8)*

In business, we often say - or, hear - that what you measure (track) gets attention, and what you don't measure (track) gets left off the day's agenda. That's the way we're wired. Who did that wiring, anyway?

I was "accused" by someone recently of overemphasizing "works." Listen, with lost people, I join with the Gospel chorus to sing the deficiency of works: for the person outside of Jesus Christ, works can only condemn. Only God's grace, administered through faith, can save anyone (see Ephesians 2:8-9). But - get this - for Christians, works are the primary thing being tracked by God! In fact - according to the Bible - it's the **only thing** he'll bring up from my life for discussion during my end-of-life evaluation!

So, what are you tracking today? Suggestion: *make God's metrics your measure, and excel in works!*

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