

Running a “G” Rated Race

“What’s the big deal,” my brother Heath asked. “We’ll pack a tent and throw a few hot-dogs in the cooler. It’s just us fellows. We’ll be fine.”

He was probably right. What did our wives know? This very nation was settled by men just like us, willing to ride off half cocked, with only a pack of weenies in their saddlebags. Just because it was Thursday of race week and we still hadn’t shored up tickets and a place to stay was no call to be going soft. How big of a deal could a little ole’ NASCAR race in some tiny town called Talladega be anyway?

We left that Saturday before daybreak, and stopped at a local truck-stop to load up on ice for the two coolers of food our wives had packed. Oddly, there was a wait at the check-out line. When I finally laid my money on the counter the lady said, “You must be going to Talladega?”

My head cocked sideways, “How’d you know that?”

She just smiled, “Honey, people been coming through here all week.”

At that point we were 229 miles for Talladega! Maybe this *was* some sort of ‘Big Deal’.

When I got back to the truck Heath’s little boy Noah had already fallen back asleep. He looked so innocent. Something triggered me to say, “Maybe we should’ve seen that new movie ‘Talladega Nights’ so we’d know what to expect.”

Heath just waved me off. “Nah, we’ll see it all first hand tonight. Besides, I heard the movie’s got some cussing in it. You know we don’t watch that stuff around my house.”

“Yeah, I’m sorry,” I admitted, “I don’t know what I was thinking.”

On the way down I noticed almost every car was decorated with some sort of racing memorabilia. While still several miles from the track helicopters began to buzz overhead. The farm land on both sides of the road was littered with thousands campers, tents, and buses.

We pressed on and boldly made our way right up to the racetrack itself, where they had advertised a little bitty “first come first serve” free section of camping. An attendant waved us to a stop. Heath asked cheerfully. “You got anything left?”

The guy just sort of winced at our gall. “You’re welcome to look,” he said nodding towards at least five other cars leaving unsuccessfully.

“Okay,” Heath chirped cheerfully and drove on. One group coming out looked like they had already broken into their pack of weenies.

After seeing the first row of these poor sardines in that little camp I thought, “We haven’t got a prayer.” Being the faith warrior that I am, I whispered anyway, “Lord, if we could just find a place to park so we could sleep in the truck?” About that time a little side road caught my eye. It seemed to go nowhere, so of course I bade Heath to try it. Low and behold, on the back side of a row, almost under the awning of a big bus, was a nice little miracle spot! We had our weenies roasting in no time.

The atmosphere in Talladega was most festive, especially after sunset. That’s when a lot of strange things began to happen. People began to line the small roads and a lot of hooting and hollering commenced. People riding in the back of large trucks began parading through the campsites, apparently seeking to collect some kind of plastic beads. All I can say is thank goodness God had led us to that little spot tucked away behind that big bus where we could eat our weenies in peace. Our eyes didn’t have to behold any of the shenanigans going on, and little Noah got to enjoy a wonderfully “G” rated Talladega night. Heath and I both breathed a sigh of relief.

But anyway- I say all this just to brag on how well the Lord took care of us. Obviously the power of Jesus’ prayer for His disciples is still working today. (*I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.* **John 17:15 KJV**)

We enjoyed perfect weather, wonderful tickets, safe passage, and safe haven, all despite our total ineptness and inability to provide any of these things for ourselves. The Lord even hooked us up with a local Church group holding a wonderful little Sunday morning service out beside the track. What an honor it was to be a part of the little wad of worshippers amongst the other ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY THOUSAND people in little Talladega that day!

Our favorite cars spun out, and we didn’t collect any plastic beads, but I guarantee we left with a deeper appreciation of our wonderful God, and a joy that only comes from seeing His hand at work in your situation. It’s amazing what God can do with a pack of weenies.

-Guy Sheffield 10-19-06