

Between God and Me

It is hard to find anyone who doesn't admire and respect Peyton Manning. Although people may want an opposing team to win, there is a genuine respect for Peyton. On the surface, he earns that respect from his work ethic. That preparation is obvious by the way he often changes the play at the line of scrimmage, based on the coverage of the defense. Peyton has done his homework, and translates that knowledge into success on the field.



You don't hear him bad-mouth teammates or opponents, even after a loss. His comments are always complimentary to the opposing team and he focuses on what he needs to do to improve as a player.

The results of his skills speak for themselves, including 26 regular season and 13 playoff career records. He played 18 years and is the winningest quarterback in the history of the league. He has thrown the most career touchdown passes in both a single season and for his career. He was a 2005 winner of the Walter Payton Man of the Year Award, which recognizes community service. In what might be his final game, the Super Bowl victory over the Panthers, he masked his diminished arm strength with a game plan that featured other people.

Off the field his Payback Foundation helps disadvantaged children in Louisiana, Tennessee and Indiana, three areas he has called home.

If you look more deeply into his life you realize he has his priorities in the right order: faith, family, friends and then football. The top ranking of faith might surprise some people. You don't see him pointing to the heavens after a touchdown. He doesn't kneel down in the end zone after a score, simulating a time of prayer. His philosophy is to let his actions show his faith.

Peyton made these comments in his book: "Christians also make mistakes, just as non-Christians do. My faith doesn't make me perfect, it makes me forgiven, and provides me the assurance I looked for half my life ago. I think God answered our prayers with Cooper, and that was a test of our faith. But I also think I've been blessed—having so little go wrong in my life, and being given so much. I pray every night, sometimes long prayers about a lot of things and a lot of people, but I don't talk about it or brag about it because that's between God and me, and I'm no better than anybody else in God's sight. But I consider myself fortunate to be able to go to Him for guidance, and I hope (and pray) I don't do too many things that displease Him before I get to Heaven myself. I believe, too, that life is much better and freer when you're committed to God in that way. I find being with others whose faith is the same has made me stronger."

No human being should be idolized, as Jesus Christ is the only perfect one. We all have faults, but being a Christian, we are forgiven. Peyton Manning is a good example of a person who tries to live his faith every day. At the age of 12 he accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. If people want to look to someone trying to live according to Jesus' example, Peyton Manning does as well as most.

So, how about you? Do people see your faith through the way you go about your day? Do you resist the temptation to blame others when things go wrong? Do you refrain from bad-mouthing others, stepping on others, thinking that makes you look better yourself? Do you make a concerted effort at work to use your God-given skills

to do the best job possible? Is faith #1 on your priority list, followed by family, and ranking your career down the list? Are you obedient to Jesus' teachings?

People of faith have choices to make on how they express their faith. For some, like Peyton Manning, it is a personal relationship with God, and living according to Christian values – just between you and God, but then living the right values. Others may be more verbal. Regardless of how demonstrative you are, show your faith by the way you live your life. How about you? How is it with you and God?

Scripture: *In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).*

Prayer: Lord. We pray our light will shine through the way we live our lives. We pray others can see that faith makes a difference in our lives. And all the glory goes to you, Lord. Amen.