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Viewpoints

Observing events in our modern world from the viewpoint of our ascended Savior.

Trashed by a Trace - August 18, 2016

If Olympic dreams are arrested by metabolites, what about our sins?

[Online Version & Archive](#)

Soon the Rio Olympics come to an end. And while the names of most of the medal winners will fade from our memories, each medal-winner's pee will be kept under lock and key in a laboratory.

Urine is used for drug testing. Some intermediate-type tests are conducted after the event's completion, during the Olympics. But then the urine is preserved for ten years.

“[This] gives scientists more time to identify new drugs, then develop new tests to identify them. Also, scientists can develop more sensitive tests for metabolites — residue — of known drugs that are found in urine. And, if a test for a certain drug wasn't completed at the Olympics, it can be done in a retest years later.”

An athlete may have been using performance enhancing substances which initial tests miss. But a retest of the sample, at a later time, using more thorough methods, or with newly discovered methods, may reveal doping. This, in fact, is what happened to a number of athletes prior to the start of the Rio Olympics, when samples from the 2012 Olympics were retested with newer, better protocols. Of note are members of the Russian team whose Olympic dreams were arrested by these “latest positive tests.”

“Russia's track and field athletes have already been suspended since November due to suspicions of a systematic doping program, and the latest positive tests are a further blow to the country's hopes of sending a full team to the Rio Olympics.”

As it turned out, thirty percent of Russia's team ended up banned from the Rio Olympics. And of those athletes allowed to compete? Fans vehemently booed them.

A [historical review](#) of Russia's decades-old, state-directed doping program reminds us that wheels of justice may grind slow, but they grind fine. After the Sochi Winter Games in 2014, “whistleblowers exposed the elaborate pea and thimble tricks*, the doping and switched samples that propped up Russia's medal tally. [With these latest positive tests preceding the Rio Olympics] Russia's athletes are now devastated and the country's sporting establishment discredited.”

Have you been a victim, and the perpetrator's lies are so polished, he seems to be almost bragging about his ability to get away with it? Or has someone hurt you and escaped any consequence, so that he seems to gloat in how his doped-up ways have outrun justice? Then please know that there's someone greater than scientists who preserve urine in search of

some metabolites. You have someone who's all-knowing and all-powerful, the Lord Almighty, who retains a full record of every sin, promising sinners that there's hell to pay.

If you think it's sweet justice for doping Russians to be trashed by a trace, you ought to see the punishment that comes from the One who declares, **"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked; a man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction"** (Galatians 6:7-8).

But, wait a minute. Maybe you're thinking: "But I'm no saint, and invariably I've cheated someone. I'm not proud of it, and in fact, I regret it. And sometimes I worry that there might be 'trace metabolites' of my sin that will someday be exposed and devastate me. And now I realize that God has more than trace metabolites-- he witnessed and recorded my whole sin!"

If your regret is true—meaning that you confess it to God without excuses or blame-shifting—and it's twinned by the recognition that you need God's mercy because you have no other hope... then I have good news for you! The God who sent his Son to the cross to pay for the sins of the world declares through his prophet: **"As high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us"** (Psalm 103:11-12).

Olympic dreams can be trashed by a trace. Gold medals can be removed by a residue. But by removing your sin, God gives you a peace that this world cannot take away. Further, this peace enables you to seek to restore (to the best of your ability) whatever or whomever you hurt. In fact, this peace of Christ enables you to handle any and every earthly consequence that may result from seeking to restore whatever or whomever you hurt.

Because at the cross Christ removed your sin so that not even a minute trace of metabolites remains, **"the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus"** (Philippians 4:7). ✚

Source Material (Links may become inactive over time.)

* A gambling game using three shells and a pea, that is used almost always as a confidence trick to perpetrate fraud (Wikipedia).

[How it works: a look at the retests of Olympic drug samples](#) @ AP.org

[Eight Russian Olympians Come Up Dirty in 2012 Re-tests](#) @ Newsweek.com

[2016 Summer Olympics: 30 percent of Russian team banned for doping](#) @ Sllive.com

[Rio 2016: What Russia's doping scandal owes to the Soviet Union](#) @ ABC.net.au

[Russians Booed at Olympics](#) @ CNN.com

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Blessings to you and your loved ones, Pastor Mike Nitz

