

**God of the Games:  
Towards a Theology of Competition**

**Yvonne S. Smith  
Assoc. Professor, Management  
Biola University  
yvonne.smith@biola.edu**

**Sharon G. Johnson  
Professor, Management  
Cedarville University  
johns@cedarville.edu**

**Erik M. Hiller  
Student, Accounting, Torrey Honors  
Biola University  
Erik.hiller@biola.edu**

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**Abstract**  
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Competition is so engrained in western lives and social systems that even Christians take it for granted. We unthinkingly use competitive processes in our classrooms, even in our churches. But is this appropriate? Is the God of love also the God of the games? Or does God hate competition and want Christians to avoid it?

As we will demonstrate in this paper, the answers are surprisingly complex and often are colored by a person's worldview. We begin by searching the Scriptures to discover what they say about competition. Since much of the Scriptural evidence is implicit, we supplement these findings with discussion from three key church fathers: Augustine, Calvin, and Jonathan Edwards. Our ultimate purpose is to work towards a theology, a truth system, of competition. We end with some practical implications for Christian academics.

## **God of the Games: Towards a Theology of Competition**

Competition is so engrained in western lives and social systems that even Christians take it for granted. Note, for example, the competitive assumptions underlying merit promotion systems, little league sports, AWANA, or our familiar system of grading. Competition is everywhere and just as fish don't notice water, we seldom notice it. We assume that everyone knows what is meant by competition and that, while competition might raise some concerns, it is an obvious feature of the landscape. We often unthinkingly use competitive processes in our classrooms, even in our churches.

But is this a good thing? Is the Lord God Almighty also the lord of the games? Is the God of love the God of competition? Or does our God hate competition and want us to avoid it? We are Christians and to have unquestioned assumptions about such a controversial phenomena is, at best, inappropriate. Even a brief consideration of competition brings up questions about pride, judgment, rivalry, and idolatry. We know that these things are not becoming for a Christian, but what are we to do as business professors and students in a competitive society?

Several years ago, several members of CBFA started to explore this construct. Small questions launched this exploration: "If Jesus was in a race, would he race to win," and "is a competitive strategic simulation the best way to teach Christian business students?" In a recent paper, Johnson and G. Smith (2002) discussed their endeavor to find consensus about competition – a surprisingly difficult task. They read economic analyses where competition was justified, glorified and crucified. They read sociological treatises where competition was given an almost mystical ability to make people better, or was considered the source of most of society's ills – many of the authors providing what they believed to be conclusive evidence for their positions. They had conversations where mentioning reservations about competition was

greeted as if they sought to undermine what made America great, and conversations where mentioning the rewards of competition was greeted as if they sought to defend the worst excesses of American imperialism (Johnson & G. Smith, 2002).

One thing seems certain – very few human beings are really neutral about the topic of competition. But is God neutral? What is His opinion about the construct? What are the spiritual foundations of competition? Should Christians engage in the arenas of competition? How did our parents in the Faith view competition?

We set ourselves to respond to these questions and again the journey was surprisingly complex. Few researchers speak directly to the spiritual foundations of competition. We searched databases in business, sociology, psychology, and theology and found almost nothing written on the issue. Business people assume competition, sociologists deplore it, sports psychologists adore it, and theologians ignore it.

The purpose of this paper, the second in a series, is to work within this gap. Our intent is to search the Scriptures, discover what they say about competition, and supplement these findings with discussion from the Christian church fathers. Our ultimate purpose is to work towards a theology, a truth system, of competition.

In the following pages, we will do the following:

- Summarize our previous research in this stream
- Discuss the Scriptural meaning of competition and some of the implications.
- Discuss what key church fathers had to say about competition and how this affected Christian thinking.
- End with some practical applications of this discussion for Christian academics.

It is important to clarify what this paper does not do. This paper is not meant to be a definitive theological discussion of competition, nor do we seek to reach conclusions about the “best” perspective in the matter. We will present tentative propositions, but our exploration over the last several years has demonstrated that the topic is far too complicated for authoritative pronouncements.

Also, this paper does not seek to compare and contrast the virtues of cooperation versus competition. While some of the material we discuss touches on that theme, this paper seeks to clarify different views on competition rather than contrast it with cooperation. Cooperation is a worthy subject - it simply is not the objective of this paper.

Finally, this paper is not about conflict. Conflict involves parties in battle or strife with each other. It includes feelings of contention, discord, and anger (American College Dictionary). Competition can become conflict, but our focus here is on the former construct, not the latter.

## **A SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH**

As already noted, this paper is the second in a series of papers discussing the integration of faith and competition. The first paper (Johnson & G. Smith, 2002) developed a definition of competition, gave an overview of the different thoughts about the construct in various academic fields and ended with a model of contemporary Christian views about competition. We summarize that foundational work here.

### **A Definition of Competition**

Competition is a complex construct, defined in different ways in different academic fields. For example, an economist thinks of competition as a market in which firms, products,

and people can enter and exit freely (Griffiths, 1984). In this perspective competition is impersonal, a mechanism for adjudicating choices. Some Christians, concerned about justice, find this problematic.

On the other hand, a psychologist or sociologist would view competition as a complex relationship between people, set within rules, to gain or keep some scarce and valuable thing (Buskist & Morgan, 1988). In this perspective, competition is an active choice and will have an effect on those involved. Studies have concluded that competition can develop individual talents and encourage people to work harder and excel more (Wiersma, 1985). It can also increase aggression and foster a tendency for self-concern (Schock, 1987). When choosing to compete Christians need to be aware of both the positive and the negative possibilities.

However, the various definitions reflect common themes. Johnson (2003) summarizes those themes as follows. Competition requires:

- (1) the presence of some limited goal or a market end result that is
- (2) valued and sought by two or more people or social entities (groups, firms, nations)
- (3) who engage in implicit and/or explicit rivalry
- (4) within some set of constraints or boundaries (perhaps rules, perhaps natural geographic territory, perhaps time).

This is the definition that we will use for the remainder of this paper.

### **Contemporary Christian Views of Competition**

Not only do academics differ about competition, Christians do too. Johnson and G. Smith (2003) summarized four contemporary Christian views in a model based on two dimensions: the perspective that competition is positive or negative, and the choice whether to

ignore/challenge or embrace competition. That model is reproduced in Appendix A. These dimensions create four states which together capture the majority of Christian perspectives on competition. Briefly summarized, the states are as follows:

**State 1: Christ resists competition.** Christians who take this perspective assume that God condemns competition as an evil entrapping the Christian. Competitive desires and Christ-likeness are inherently opposed and therefore irreconcilable. Christians who advocate competition do so as a pretense to sanctify their desire for worldly pleasure and success. The role of the Christian is to avoid the corruption of competition; therefore Christians are either to remain separate from it, or actively challenge it (Johnson & G. Smith, 2004).

**State 2: Christ reforms competition.** Christians with this perspective assume that God views competition as neutral or positive, though it can have evil effects. That is, competition is not in itself evil but many of the practices of competition “such as cheating, a win-at-any-cost mentality, and seeking to exploit others” are (Johnson & G. Smith, 2002). Christ comes to competition as transformer and Christians seek to reclaim competition for His glory. Scripture offers a variety of insights on how to do this.

**State 3: Christ and competition in partnership.** Christians who argue this perspective feel that God has created competition to be good, that it drives excellence in both personal and community development. Thus, Christianity and competition are mutually supportive - competition helps us grow spiritually, physically, socially and economically. It allows us to experience God’s delight. The existence of competition in the world is a testimony to God’s common grace for His kingdom and Scripture is used to apply God’s principles to it (Johnson & G. Smith, 2002).

**State 4: Christ and competition in paradox.** This perspective focuses on the tensions that Christians experience in competitive situations. In this view, the role of the Christian is to engage in the paradoxical call to be “in,” but not “of,” competition – to participate in competition when called to, but to understand that this may bring conflict as the demands of the contest raise issues about loyalties to God in ways that are not easy to resolve. The Bible does not specifically embrace competition nor does it condemn it outright, however it does repeatedly caution Christians about competition. Indeed, competition is an uneasy condition that needs to be subordinated to God’s priorities and principles. To the degree that competition provides a platform for a Christian’s witness, it may prove to be helpful (Johnson & G. Smith, 2002).

#### **TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF COMPETITION: BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES**

We have already noted that no one seems to be neutral on the topic of competition; the model above demonstrates the dramatic differences that sincere Christians have about this construct. However, it was our observation that, while there are valid spiritual arguments for most of the perspectives in the model, much of the Scriptural support for the viewpoints tended to be of the “proof text” variety – that is, the purpose of the Scripture used appeared to simply support a position already taken. For example, a writer who emphasized the negative nature of competition would focus on justice, peace, and harmony in the Scripture, and a writer who emphasized the positive nature of competition would discuss Paul’s sports metaphors or the property rights portions of the Law.

However, one motivation for this paper was to find what the Bible said about competition with as small a bias as possible. Therefore we began our research with a Scriptural exegesis, using standard Bible study helps. In addition, since we were examining a subject that is obviously controversial among Christians, we felt it would be helpful to discover how Christians

evaluated competition throughout church history. It was beyond the scope of this paper to trace competition through two millennia of church history so we chose, instead, to examine three representative theological thinkers: Augustine who influenced the early centuries of the church, Calvin who was a Reformation theologian and who some call the father of capitalism, and Jonathan Edwards and his fellow Puritans. In this section we will examine Scripture and in the next section, we will outline the thinking of our parents in the Faith.

### **Research Techniques**

Much of the difficulty in discussing how God looks at competition arises because Scripture seldom speaks directly to it. The Bible assumes competition exists, but rarely discusses it overtly. This, of course, permits a variety of Christian perspectives on the subject.

In order to find out as much as we could, we began by searching a Bible and commentary database<sup>1</sup> using a variety of words that have to do with competition: “competition,” “compete,” “strive (as in a contest or in court),” “plead (as in pleading a case),” “contend,” “game,” and “contest.” When we found different Hebrew or Greek words for these English words, we searched them all. There were eight translations and paraphrases of the Bible in the database, four commentaries, four Bible dictionaries, Naves, Vines, Strongs, Youngs, and selected works of Martin Luther, John Owen, John Calvin, John Wesley, John Bunyan, and Andrew Murray. We checked them all as well as consulting the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia on these subjects.

### **Competition in the Bible**

From our study of the Scripture, the concordances, the commentaries, and the dictionaries, we reached three major conclusions about what Scripture says in reference to

competition: 1) Competition is neither moral nor immoral but a neutral force that can be turned to good or evil; 2) Human beings need to be careful about the goals of competition; and 3) Human beings need to be careful about attitudes or motivations when competing. We will examine each of these conclusions in turn.

***Conclusion 1: Scripture sees competition as neutral.*** The Bible does not seem to specify the moral nature of competition—that is, whether competition is good or evil, positive or negative, moral or immoral. Rather, Scripture seems to assume that competition is part of the human condition, inherent in the nature of things, and neutral.

There is no question that the Bible assumes competition is inherent in the human condition. The Biblical writers give many examples of people competing, from the wrestling contest between Jacob and the angel (Gen. 32) to Paul's illustration of the Christian life as a wrestling match (I Cor. 9). However, while many passages in Scripture encourage and command love, co-operation, harmony, and peace we could not find a moral value, good or bad, for the act of competing. That is, rivalry itself does not appear to be an ethical issue.

Some writers argue that the Edenic state was one of complete cooperation, and that the competitive rivalry entered the world when Adam and Eve fell (Griffiths, 1984). If that is so, competition would be a product of sin and inherently immoral; the Christian should avoid or seek to reduce it. However, we did not find Scripture to be clear on this point. There certainly was harmony between Adam, Eve, the earth, animals, and God in Eden and that harmony was broken when Adam and Eve disobeyed God (Gen. 3). Furthermore, the first recorded act of rivalry is the story of Cane and Able which culminated in murder (Gen. 4:4-13). However, as we read the story, God was interested in the nature of the offerings the brothers presented, not their apparent competition, and no commentary we could find implied otherwise. The writer of

Hebrews, commenting about this incident, said that Abel made his offering through faith, and that was why God accepted it (Heb. 11:4). The rivalry apparently did not create evil in the situation; evil came from the motives and attitudes of the participants.

Obviously, wrong or selfish motivations for competition resulted from the Fall, but we could find no Scriptural basis for thinking that competition, *per se* could not have been present in Eden. Adam and Eve may well have raced each other, played dunking games in the water, or vied to see who tended more trees that day. From our search of Scripture, we reached the opinion that competition existed both before and after the fall. However, the Fall corrupted the human races' competitive motives, attitudes, and goals.

On the other hand, neither did we find in Scripture that competition is a virtue or that it creates virtue. There are many examples of God desiring his people to be peaceful together. For example, the Biblical image of the church as one body (I Cor 12) discourages rivalry in role and spiritual gifts between church members, and specifically forbids pride and putting another Christian down.

Those who suggest that competition is a gift from God frequently tie their exegesis to the capitalistic economic system (Tiemestra, 1993) or to sports. The argument is that that Paul's metaphors comparing the Christian life to running a race for a prize or to a wrestling contest<sup>ii</sup> show that competition can create or enhance the blessings of God.

Economic competition can be a force for good. In a competitive market many buyers and sellers trade similar products and the price of goods is market driven. This creates a system where goods can be produced and sold at low prices, firms are provided incentive to produce products that buyers want, and encourages product and process innovation (Boersema, 1999).

These are good things. Furthermore, a competitive market encourages freedom of information which allows the Gospel to be spread more easily (Novak, 1993)

Nevertheless, when God designed an economy for the Israelites, it was only minimally based on competition (Boersema, 1999). Elements of capitalism were there – respect for personal property is one example.<sup>iii</sup> However, while Scripture does recognize private ownership of property it does not mandate it. As Chewning reminds us, “One cannot automatically extrapolate from the property arrangements of an agrarian and tribal culture the specifics that should be applied to a complex modern arrangement” (Chewning, 1989:61). Furthermore, throughout Scripture God emphasizes that He, not the invisible hand of the market, is the owner of all things (Ps. 24:1) and in charge of economic life (e.g. James 4:13-18).

We also did not find convincing the argument that Biblical use of sports metaphors to describe the Christian life equals God’s blessing on competition. Paul used many metaphors: the human body, marriage, a soldier’s armor. Christ also used many metaphors: farmers sowing seed, businessmen buying land, women baking bread. The fact that Paul talks about soldiers or Christ about farmers does not imply that God is partial to the military or agricultural sectors of society.

We commend those Christians who have a vocation in sports and who feel that God has blessed that vocation (e.g. McDuffe, 2004). Sports are, by definition, competitive; dealing skillfully with competition is necessary for success in that field. However, we argue that God does not bless the competition *per se*, but rather blesses the person for following Him faithfully in the arena to which God has called him.

The point here is that though competition can be a positive motivation towards excellence, or a value in an economic system that encourages freedom, there is no evidence in

Scripture that it is, in itself, good. On the other hand, competition can foster selfishness, conflict, pride, and other things that are ungodly, but we could find no evidence in Scripture that it is, in itself, evil. Rather, competition seems to be neutral, a part of the human condition that can be turned towards either good or evil.

***Conclusion 2: Human beings need to be careful about the goals of competition.***

Competition, by definition, requires a goal and some goals can be inappropriate for a Christian to pursue. For example, if a child of God competes in order to crush an opponent or to enhance his or her own status, this vindictiveness or pride is a violation of God's commands. Christians must be careful to monitor their spirit when competing.

In addition, though Scripture sees competition as neutral there is one goal that humans should not compete for under any circumstances. This is the goal of setting themselves up as rivals to God and attempting to compete with Him. God reserves the right to be pre-eminent in all things. He also reserves the right to glorify the person that He chooses to glorify. Lastly, He asks that His people see Him as the ultimate goal. We will discuss each of these points in more detail.

God reserves to Himself the right to be preeminent. This is emphasized in the first of the commandments given to Moses, "You shall have no other Gods before Me" (Ex. 1:3). This theme resonates through Scripture. "I am a jealous God," declares Yahweh. "I will not share your affection with any other god!" (Gen. 20: 4). God is so serious about this that when Lucifer sets himself up as a rival, the Lord throws him out of heaven (Is. 14:12-15). When the Israelites whore after other gods, God sends them into exile.

God also reserves the right to glorify whom He chooses. Christ clearly said that His followers should not compete to become important. "Anyone who wants to be the first," says

Jesus, “must take last place and be the servant of everyone else” (Mk 9:24). Speaking to the heart of this passage, Matthew Henry comments:

“Aiming at the monopoly of honor and respect, has been in all ages the bane of the church, and the shame of its members and ministers... We must leave it to God to choose, employ, and honor his own instruments as he pleaseth...” (Henry, 1991).

John the Baptist understood this plainly. “God in heaven appoints each person’s work,” he said. “[Jesus] must become greater and greater and I must become less and less” (John 3: 27,30).

Paul uses the metaphor of the potter and clay to show that God has the right to dispose of a Christian without argument from the “clay” (Rom. 9:21). Likewise the Holy Spirit dispenses gifts to Christians as He chooses (Heb 2:4). The choice is His, not ours.

God desires to be the ultimate goal. He asks his people to make Him the ultimate goal in life and the saints have responded. “Who do I have in Heaven but you?” asks David. “I desire you more than anything on earth” (Ps. 73:25). Moses “esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt” (Heb. 11:26). “Those things which were advantage to me, I esteemed loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord,” declares Paul (Phil. 3:7,8). As William Law points out, a true Christian is one who “considers and serves God in everything and who makes all of his life an act of devotion by doing everything in the name of God and under such rules as are conformable to His glory” (Law, 1728/1955:17). Competition under rules that conform to God’s glory is competition to the glory of God.

***Conclusion 3: When competing, human beings need to be careful about personal attitudes and motivations.*** Another area where competition can be misused is in the human attitudinal and motivational process. “What causes quarrels and fights among you?” asks James, “you want...you are jealous...you want it for your own pleasure” (James 4:1-6). The sin nature can use competition to strengthen many harmful character traits. Among other things,

competition can promote aggression, improper rivalry, conflict, cheating and discrimination (Griffiths, 1984).

Therefore, when a Christian engages in competition he or she must be careful not to violate Scriptural admonitions. Below, we briefly outline some of the spiritual tensions that can be present in different parts of the competitive process. For ease of discussion, we have framed these tensions around the definition of competition.

*Competition requires:*

*1. the presence of some limited goal or a market end result*

In order for a Christian to be balanced in his or her competitive endeavors, the goal of the competition must be spiritually healthy. This has already been discussed in Conclusion 2.

*2. valued and sought by two or more people or social entities (groups, firms, nations)*

Competition is between people – as is cooperation, love, and harmony. Competition is not an individual construct but a communal one. As such, it falls under Scriptural admonitions on community and sensitivity towards fellow believers (Rom.15, I Cor. 8). For example, Paul's use of Greek sporting events to illustrate the Christian life would have been controversial in some churches. Orthodox Jews saw gymnasium events as evil, partly because the contestants competed nude, and partly because the games were dedicated to Greek or Roman gods. On the other hand, Hellenized Jews freely joined in the activities of the gymnasium either as spectators or participants (Nelson, 1986). Paul needed to be careful not to offend when he used such metaphors. He was sensitive to which sporting events he chose (for example racing and wrestling were part of the Hebrew as well as the Greek culture) and which churches he wrote such metaphors to. Likewise, we must be sensitive to those believers who genuinely believe that

competition is bad, or who are not convinced it is not bad, and find ways to accommodate them in our churches and classrooms.

3. *who engage in implicit and/or explicit rivalry*

Rivalry is a part of competition. In fact many of the games and sports mentioned in the Bible, such as wrestling and archery, were used to prepare young men for the extreme rivalry of warfare (Henry, 1991). The tribe of Benjamin, for example, made archery their competitive advantage in warfare (I Chron. 8:40). Jonathan, of the tribe of Benjamin, was skilled enough with the bow to put a war arrow exactly where he wanted to put it (I Sam. 20: 18-23).

Riddle games in the ancient world had less overt rivalry (Nelson, 1986). However, Sampson, for example, used a riddle game to deal with the Philistines who questioned his right to marry into their community (Jud. 14:12-14).

Many of the attitudes surrounding human rivalry are morally suspect. According to Schock (1987:14),

“Studies have concluded that competition nurtures ‘me-ism’ and a...tendency toward self-concern. If you and I are striving for the same prize, I don’t expect you to act generously in my behalf. ...Research [also] has confirmed that unfriendly acts between participants increase during competition. ... Research indicates that sports are frequently a stimulant to, rather than a repressor of, aggressive feelings. Even watching some sporting events can increase a person’s aggression.”

Therefore, when competing, the Christian must consistently check his or her attitude by the standard of the Scripture—which is *agape* love for the other. It is arguably possible to compete with an attitude of *agape*, but it is not always done.

4. *within some set of constraints or boundaries (perhaps rules, perhaps natural geographic territory, perhaps time).*

Christians might be free to engage in competition, but they must do so within the rules – whether man or God makes the rules. For a man to be crowned in a contest, says Paul “he must

strive lawfully” (II Tim. 2:5). The rules of the game or endeavor must be followed; it is not appropriate for a Christian to win by cheating or by seeking to circumvent the rules (Henry, 1991). Spurgeon comments that economic exchange is good as long as it is based on the just and right principles set by God. However, he says, the tendency is to concentrate on selfish principles, to monopolize, to crush out rivalry. The cause is covetousness. Covetousness is a great evil, he says, violating the command that we are to be free from the love of money and content with the things we have (Heb 13:5) (Spurgeon, 1885).

For reasons of personal integrity, the competitor must keep to the rules of the contest. However, a Christian has a larger mandate; he or she must also keep within the character that God expects of one of His children.

### **TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF COMPETITION: CHURCH FATHERS**

In addition to searching the Scripture we felt that it would be useful to examine the thinking of key theologians on the subject of competition. We chose to look at the writings of three influential Christians: Augustine, Calvin, and Jonathan Edwards and his Puritan brethren. Augustine (354-430) wrote extensive apologetics and exegesis culminating with the seminal *City of God*. He was trained in Greek philosophy and his skillful defense of the Gospel influenced Church counsels, and theologians into the Middle Ages (Dyson, 1998). Possibly no individual other than Paul and Martin Luther has had such far-reaching effects on Christ’s church.

John Calvin (1509-1564) was the second most important figure in the Protestant reformation after Martin Luther, and arguably had even greater influence than Luther in creating the thought patterns that have dominated Western culture (Knudson, 1982). Trained in Renaissance humanism, he was the first person to attempted to model a large social organization

(Geneva) entirely on Biblical principles. His *Institutes of the Christian Church* remains influential to our day.

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) is widely regarded as the most original American philosophical theologian and thinker. His work focuses around two main themes, the absolute sovereignty of God, and the beauty of God's holiness (Wainwright, 1980). Along with Edwards, we will consider Puritan views on competition. The Puritans lived in a time of great economic change, as do we. Their goal was to do everything to the glory of God so they developed, among other things, an extensive theology of business (Packer, 1990).

**Augustine: “Rightly-ordered relationships.”**

Augustine (354-430) is widely considered to be one of the greatest Christian theologians. Originally trained in Greek philosophy, he became the Bishop of Hippo in 395 A.D. and remained in that influential position for 34 years. One of Augustine's well-known arguments is that Christianity is not an external religion of rules and rituals, but rather a matter of the Spirit and the heart. However, those who believe in Christ will obey Him (O'Donnell, 2004).

Today, *Confessions* is probably Augustine's best known work, but the towering, multi-volume *City of God* is, arguably, his most influential. In *City of God* Augustine compared the earthly city of sinful, fallen men with the city of God inhabited by righteous beings and ruled by God. The work, which includes Augustine's association of political power with all that is destructive in man, the idea of man's utter dependence upon divine grace, and the idea that a commonwealth must be united by a common worship of the true God (Dyson, 1998), influenced theologians and political thinkers well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In his writings, Augustine did not speak directly about economic competition. He was certainly familiar with his contemporary mercantile economy whose participants distributed goods along the Roman trade routes (Hooker, 1996a). However he felt that the role of the Christian was to accept current political/economic regimes and find God's purpose within them, regardless of one's own desires.<sup>iv</sup>

There is material, though, that provides clues to Augustine's views on personal competition. One such clue is Augustine's definition of peace. Augustine took Plato's idea of peace as rightly-ordered relationships and extended it into the Christian world.<sup>v</sup>

"The peace of an irrational soul lies in the rightly ordered disposition of the appetites; the peace of the rational soul lies in the rightly ordered relationship of cognition and action...peace between mortal man and God is an ordered obedience, in faith, under an eternal law; and peace between men is an ordered agreement of mind and mind.

The peace of a household is an ordered concord, with respect to command and obedience, of those who dwell together; the peace of a city is an ordered concord, with respect to command and obedience, of the citizens; and the peace of the Heavenly City is a perfectly ordered and perfectly harmonious fellowship in the enjoyment of God, and of one another in God.

The peace of all things lies in the tranquility of order, and order is the disposition of equal and unequal things in such a way as to give to each its proper place."

The universal law that all parts of nature seek peace is always true for Augustine, but he says that some individuals pervert this law through sin and try to find peace through unrighteous means. For example, Augustine contends that the source of competition among humans is the desire for peace on our own terms – e.g. if we are in control we have peace. We gain control by overcoming those who oppose us. Augustine uses the example of a robber who finds peace with those he bands together with in order to rob his victims and who finds peace at home by using force over the members of his household.<sup>vi</sup> Therefore, competition can become a means through which evil people attempt to gain and keep control.

Augustine also suggests that “the lust for mastery”<sup>vii</sup> is a wrong reason for competition. The princes in the earthly city, he says, “are as much mastered by the lust for mastery as the nations which they subdue are by them; in the Heavenly, all serve one another in charity.”<sup>viii</sup> The earthly city is divided against itself “in lawsuits, wars and strife” and in those activities men seek lower goods, rather than the ultimate good of peace in God.<sup>ix</sup> This is a strong indictment of competition. When humans pursue earthly good and earthly goods through rivalry—even the just rivalry of the court system—Augustine suggests that misery will increase and peace will be extinguished.<sup>x</sup> In contrast, Christians who pursue the things of heaven will not be involved in the rivalry that consumes so many of the ungodly in the search for more property, wealth, power or prestige.<sup>xi</sup>

Interestingly, there is at least one example that may counter the claim that Augustine categorically rejects competition for the righteous individual. This is the general tenor of his writings which is one of debate with his opponents – in an effort, no doubt, to find the truth. Throughout the *City of God*, Augustine is continuously quoting or summarizing his opponents arguments and making counter-arguments. This activity is certainly competitive, though not structured with a winner and loser as are formal debates. But if this type of competition is good for the Christian scholar, presumably because its end is glorifying to God, might not other types of competition wherein the actors are seeking to glorify God be acceptable? We have no way of knowing whether Augustine would think so. However, on balance, Augustine clearly sees a prideful, contentious, or disputatious spirit in competition as evil, and also categorically condemns any attempt to usurp the glory or the position of God.

**John Calvin: “Using the World as God Intends.”**

A generation separated Martin Luther (1483-1546) and John Calvin (1509-1564) but Calvin's influence on post-Reformation thinking is, arguably, as strong as Luther's. Jean Calvinus was raised by Catholic parents but came under the influence of the "new learning" when he studied law at the University of Paris. He was particularly influenced by Zwingli's literal reading of Scripture – anything not explicitly and literally in the scripture was to be rejected, anything explicitly and literally there was to be followed (Hooker, 1996b). He wrote the first edition of his massive work on Protestant doctrine, *The Institute of the Christian Church* (1536, final edition 1559), while in exile in Strasbourg but was invited back to Geneva in 1540 where he and those who thought like him organized the government so that the clergy were involved in municipal decisions, particularly discipline. This involvement was not always successful (Hooker, 1996b), nevertheless Geneva became the most important Protestant center of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Calvin took significant theological positions that can be applied towards a discussion of competition. He is probably best known for his views on God's sovereignty and the predestination of man; this doctrine significantly influenced his understanding of history. He saw history as a dynamic, teleological state that will culminate in Christ's second coming (Holwerda, 1976). By extension, God is intimately involved in every event of history, orchestrating each detail according to His own glorious desire. As a result, the gospel is relevant in all areas of life including the structures of society and the economic realities of everyday life.

Calvin argued that Christians must not be so "insolent" as to reject the advantage of government of the people, but should be thankful for and involved in their own government.<sup>xii</sup> This would also be true of economic systems. Christians live in the economic world where God has called them; they are to reflect God's glory there. For example, in our time countless

Christians work in competitive economic systems, some of which are very corrupt. Calvin would argue that, given God's sovereignty, an individual might find herself called to a corrupt industry in order to provide an example of an honest businessperson conducting herself according to Scriptural standards. This might involve competitive behavior; nevertheless that competition would honor God. Holwerda (1976: 119) notes:

“Calvin uses biblical imagery of Christian life as a pilgrimage toward the heavenly kingdom. It is a pilgrimage in which one must use the world as God intends. So Calvin does not advocate a rejection of the present life as such...only a rejection of what is evil.”

The Christian is to use the social and economic systems in the way God intends. Christian love for others unfolds in day-to-day life economic situations. For example, in his commentary on the Gospels, Calvin points out:

“Christ says that those are *happy*, who are not only prepared to endure their own afflictions, but to take a share in the afflictions of others, — who assist the wretched, — who willingly take part with those who are in distress.”<sup>xiii</sup>

Christians, Calvin would argue, have obligations to those who have lost in the competitive economic game, or have become distressed by it. Christians have no right to deride “losers,” or to take advantage of an advantageous competitive position to oppress others.

In addition, Calvin would completely disagree with the idea that it is acceptable to use competition for personal gain. In *The Institutes*<sup>xiv</sup> he discusses human efforts to attain worldly sustenance and luxury.

“He who makes it his rule to use this world as if he used it not, not only cuts off all gluttony in regard to meat and drink, and all effeminacy, ambition, pride, excessive shows and austerity, in regard to his table, his house, and his clothes, but removes every care and affection which might withdraw or hinder him from aspiring to the heavenly life, and cultivating the interest of his soul.”

Calvin does not condemn the act of competition, but he does condemn using competition for personal ends and having inappropriate motives and attitudes in competitive situations –

ambition, pride, or excessive displays in victory. Calvin states, “there is no other remedy than to pluck up by the roots those most noxious pests, self-love and love of victory.”<sup>xv</sup>

Many people, including Christians, become obsessed with competitive situations in sports or games and these “noxious pests, self-love and love of victory” are often the culprits behind the obsession. Calvin asks that these individuals turn their energy toward what God calls important—the state of our soul and love towards others. For, he says,

“no member has its function for itself, or applies it for its own private use, but transfers it to its fellow-members; nor does it derive any other advantage from it than that which it receives in common with the whole body. Thus, whatever the pious man can do, he is bound to do for his brethren, not consulting his own interest in any other way than by striving earnestly for the common edification of the Church.”<sup>xvi</sup>

For Calvin, the individual’s edification is secure only when the church has been edified. We should all work together for the common good; no member should be lacking while another finds personal prosperity. Here are anti-competition elements directed at relationships in the Church. Even so, there is no wholesale condemnation of personal competition, only the requirement that what is done between Christians should be done for collective advantage. Calvin would certainly agree that we should not pit one Christian university against another in trying to steal students, but he would likely see nothing wrong with the music department putting on a Christian music band contest—as long as the purpose was to glorify God in worship and community.

Calvin also understands that God does not approve the use of deceit in competition. “Christ does not at all agree with carnal reason, when he pronounces those to be *happy*, who take no delight in cunning, but converse sincerely with men, and express nothing, by word or look, which they do not feel in their heart.”<sup>xvii</sup> Competition can be a convenient excuse for deceit. However, Scripture says that blessing comes to those who are “pure in heart” not those who win a competition.

In summary, Calvin felt that human cultural activity, carried on in obedience to God's law, was an expression of His will as it related to the coming of the new heavens and earth (Knudson, 1982). We can extend this to argue that economic competition flowing from human activity has a place in God's plan and the Christian can freely participate in it, though being careful to use it to love the neighbor. In individual competition, the Christian is to edify the other person first and be free from pride, vindictiveness and the love of victory. These are traps the unwitting individual will fall into, says Calvin, unless he or she heeds God's highest calling for the individual—to live a holy life, humbly, and with charity for all.

### **Jonathan Edwards and the Puritans: “The Beauty of Virtue”**

The British industrial revolution (@1550-1750) transformed society. Commerce changed from a community affair, participated in by individuals who had known each other most of their lives, to an international, impersonal, and complex, system driven by the “invisible hand” of the market (A. Smith, 1776). These drastic changes stretched the fabric of society to the limit, and the challenge to Christian morality was immense – not unlike the changes occurring in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (V. Smith, 1997). During this time, the dissenters from the Anglican Church were forbidden to participate in government, university teaching, preaching, or law. Thus Puritans (as dissenters became called) were forced to move to commerce to make a living. Being a practical people who actively attempted to integrate their saving faith in Jesus Christ with every part of life, they had a great deal to say about the ethics of commerce (Packer, 1990).

The Puritan preacher Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) is widely regarded as one of the greatest thinkers that America has ever produced. His extensive writings demonstrate his original thoughts on classic Christian themes such as the freedom of the will, original sin, and the

knowledge of one's own salvation. It is difficult to find any explicit pronouncements on competition in his works, but a few themes allow us to make inferences on the subject. We will also briefly discuss some of the common Puritan views on the subject.

One of Edwards' most extensive ethical treatments is titled *The Nature of True Virtue*.

This work contains one of Edward's important themes, the beauty of virtue. He explains:

“True virtue most essentially consists in benevolence to being in general. Or perhaps, to speak more accurately, it is that consent, propensity and union of heart to being in general, which is immediately exercised in a general good will...Beauty does not consist in discord and dissent, but in consent and agreement.”<sup>xviii</sup>

Edwards explains “benevolence to being in general” as a general good will to others. This is an attitude of the heart that is beautiful. That is, when an individual is acting in virtue, his or her soul exhibits moral beauty. Edwards notes that this “beauty” is agreeable and peaceful. Each individual participates in the great “universal system of existence” that God created, and when one being peacefully coexists with the rest of “being,” beauty appears.<sup>xix</sup>

This does not mean that this ethic is against competition, for Edwards is isolating the mind and attitude of the Christian's heart toward others. It is possible to compete while acting in virtue and peaceful coexistence (when playing table games, for example) but the Christian must be careful not to move out of peace, even during competition.

Another important theme for Jonathan Edwards was the proper aim of the human affections. His book *On Religious Affections* discusses the issue, often on an empirical level based on the American Great Awakening and Edwards' desire to determine how some could appear to find salvation only to revert to old habits and attitudes. There is much to say about this work, but we will only focus on a small part of his thesis: that “those affections that are truly holy, are primarily founded on the loveliness of the moral excellency of divine things.”<sup>xx</sup> That is, the Christian's affections are the sentiments of the mind, and become visible through our will

or actions. Edwards states that “a true saint, when in the enjoyment of true discoveries of the sweet glory of God and Christ, has his mind too much captivated and engaged by what he views without himself, to stand at that time to view himself, and his own attainments.”<sup>xxi</sup> In competitive terms, this means that rather than being distracted by the thrill of competition or the pride of victory, the Christian would aim his or her affections at the proper goal, the “moral excellency of divine things.”

Edwards does not condemn competition but he sets a high standard for the Christian. Humans commit sin when they are not looking to God for guidance, and finding pleasure in his beauty. Therefore, the conduct of the competitive individual and the state of his or her heart must always align with moral standards of purity, charity, and honesty; the heart must remain focused on what is really important.

Other Puritan authors who spoke more directly to commercial competition would agree. Broadly speaking, Puritans faced unregulated markets; neither the government nor the market itself could be relied upon to regulate prices or protect consumers. Markets were easily dominated by monopolies or oligopolies; there was no external check on unethical behavior (Scott-Morton, 2001). This left personal, internal moral control as the only option for buyers or sellers.

Into this competitive free-for-all, the Puritans brought a burning desire to do business to the glory of God. Many preachers, such as Richard Baxter, John Cotton, and Cotton Mather used the Scripture to detail proper business behavior for Christians.

If, as the Puritans taught, the purpose of Christians competing in commerce was first to glorify God and second to serve their neighbors, behavior like fraud, taking advantage of the ignorance of a buyer, or selling and buying without concern for the well-being of the other

person was prohibited (V. Smith, 1997). For example, in Boston a trial was brought against a businessman who was accused of overpricing his products, and “John Cotton used the trial to lay down some business principles in a public lecture on economics. Cotton denounced as false the following premises:

That a man might sell as dear [expensively] as he can, and buy as cheap as he can.... That he may sell as he bought, though he paid too dear, etc., and though the commodity be fallen, etc. That as a man may take advantage of his own skill or ability, so he may of another’s ignorance or necessity” (cited in Rykan, 1986).

Edwards detailed specific business dealings in a sermon on theft. He says that theft is usurpation and:

“they usurp that which belongs to their neighbor...when men break their promises, because they find them to be inconvenient, and they cannot fulfill them without difficulty and trouble; or merely because they have altered their minds since they promised.”<sup>xxii</sup>

Like Christ, the Puritan preachers went beyond the letter of the law to the spirit of it. Cutting corners might make things a little easier for the businessman, but it defrauded his neighbor.

People could conjure up a thousand excuses for unethical behavior in competition; the servant of God should not do so.

It is integral to competition that there be a set of rules and in Edwards day, as in ours, the Common Law outlined the rules of commercial competition. However, like Calvin, Edwards pointed to God’s law as the ultimate regulator of morality.

“The best laws may be abused and perverted to purposes contrary to the general design of laws, which is to maintain the rights and secure the properties of mankind. Human laws have a regard due to them, but always in subordination to the higher laws of God and nature. Therefore when it so happens, that we have an advantage by the law, to gain what the laws of moral honesty allow not, it is an oppression and violence to take the advantage.”<sup>xxiii</sup>

As to goals, the Puritans agreed with Calvin that the goal of competition was not self but the glory of God and love for the neighbor. Calvin, following Luther, argued that there was no

division between sacred and secular work but rather all honest work was sacred and holy to God. God assigned people to their task; this made each Christian a steward personally responsible to Him. In addition, work was a means by which a Christian showed love to his or her neighbor (Ryken, 1986).

Therefore, in the context of economic competition, the Christian was to be Biblically ethical and faithful to his or her task, whatever that task was. If the reward was financial success, then God was choosing to bless the worker's effort in that way. On the other hand, God could choose not to financially bless a Christian's effort – the choice was His. Regardless, it was proper for the Christian to put forth the effort to do good work. That person's work would benefit the community and glorify God because the goods and services that come out of this work will be of good quality and will reflect well on God's people – and that would create the beauty of virtue.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS: THE CHRISTIAN BUSINESS ACADEMIC**

On the front cover of the book, *The Competitive Paradigm*, a blindfolded juggler dances on a tightrope that is secured only on one end – the remainder of the rope is suspended in mid-air. The author (Roseneau, 2003: xiii) reflects on this picture in her forward:

“... it symbolizes the extent to which the competition paradigm involves a similar precarious balancing act ... I argue that [like the juggler depicted in the picture] the competition paradigm may appear to be a success but that in the long term it fails us all.”

As demonstrated above, competition is a value-laden ideology; one's view of God and others determines that ideology. One purpose in writing this paper was simply to bring that issue into the open. As inquiring business academics it must be our aim to raise questions about the unquestioned, to analyze the assumed – in short, to poke the juggler and to put him off-balance

rather than to sit and watch in unquestioned awe. We hope this paper will provide enough Scriptural and theological background that others can utilize it to think about this issue. We would welcome dialogue.

The second purpose in writing this paper was to force ourselves to come to some conclusions about competition. It is a failing of academics to forever gather information and never reach a close. Therefore we have taken our courage in our hands, gone against our inclinations, and set down some tentative conclusions. These are not definitive or exhaustive, they are simply the beginnings of a personal truth system on this matter. Some of these conclusions are theological, some are pedagogical. We again invite comment or critique from our colleagues.

### **Conclusion 1: We must understand that competition is irreducibly complex.**

Consider the following:

- Competition is simultaneously a noun (a state of affairs), a verb (a state of activity), an adjective (describing a state of being) and an adverb (describing a state of doing).
- It is individual (a biking enthusiast seeking to better her own best time over a given distance), interpersonal (two wrestlers probing each others' strengths and vulnerabilities), institutional (universities vying for the best US News and World Reports rankings) and international (nations seeking to land the Summer Olympics in their major cities).
- It can involve both a contest between two teams and cooperation among members of each team.
- It can encourage or discourage, build bridges or barriers, create greater respect for rules and trust or foster a "winning at all cost" cynicism. It can spur achievement and anxiety, leading to growth or destruction.

Our challenge is not so much to resolve these tensions as to raise them. God is the lord of the complex, as well as the simple. Our aim should be to encourage our fellow

believers to embrace the delicious ambiguity of competition as an opportunity to explore clashes and paradoxes and to examine both old perspectives and new hypotheses.

Wherever we go in this issue, God is there before us.

**Conclusion 2: We must acknowledge that competition is a part of a value system.**

Views of competition are not held in isolation but are part of a larger value system. Our values are shaped by our own broader worldview and, in turn, shape that worldview. The way our ancestors in the faith approached competition developed from their larger worldview system and the ways they saw God and His people. Our theology of competition must arise from the same source. Table 1 below illustrates the cause and effect relationship between competition and the Christian’s worldview. The table outlines the seven questions that a worldview raises (Sire, 2004); in “competitive implications,” we suggest possible connections of this subject to competition.

**Table 1**

| <b>World View Question</b>  | <b>Competition Implications</b>   |
|---|---|
| What is the prime reality – what is really real                       | In what sense is God the “God of the games?” Is he an active participant, or a silent observer?   |
| What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us? | Is competition a process woven into the very nature of creation, or is it a condition arising from the Fall? Is competition a gift from God to achieve things for His creation – or does it grieve Him as an aberration in His creation? Is the rightness or appropriateness or even naturalness of competition a function of the level of our reference – that is, are there qualitative and even redemptive differences between individual, interpersonal, institutional and international competition? Is competition a cause of conflict or a result of conflict? |
| What is a human being?  | Are human beings naturally competitive, or cooperative, or both? Is competitiveness a part of the image of God that humans bear – or is it part of our fallen nature? Is competitiveness a sign of the competency of humans or a sign of corruption?  |
| What happens to a person at death?                                    | Will we be judged on whether we choose to cooperate or compete? Will we be judged on how actively we competed, or how fairly – or whether   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | we were able to shed our competitiveness entirely? Will there be competition in heaven in a redeemed form?   |
| Why is it possible to know anything at all? | How can we ever know what competition really is and what God's perspective is on it? If the Bible does not provide a definitive definition of competition nor a clear position on its value or vanity, what does this mean? Is the Bible's relative silence on the matter important or instructive in how Christians frame the issues about competition? |
| How do we know what is right or wrong?      | What does it mean to be God honoring in our competition. Is the fact that competition produces winners and losers problematic? If competition produces both beneficial and bad results, how do we know the correct balance and tradeoff?   |
| What is the meaning of human history        | Is human history the tragic story of competitive battles or the triumphant story of competitive victories?   |

**Conclusion 3: We must consider the pedagogical effect of classroom competition.**

As Christian academics, we attempt to apply our worldview in our classrooms. Collegiate business classrooms are often explicitly competitive. Some classes utilize simulations where teams competition for market share, sales growth and return on investment. Some classes encourage students to engage in debates, seeking to offer the most persuasive arguments. Even in the absence of purposed competitive techniques, students sometimes feel that their test and paper grades are part of a competitive contest for highest or lowest positions. Often the pedagogical assumption is either that competition reflects the real world that business students will encounter, that it spurs students to better performance, or that it adds “fun” to the classroom.

However, while a full exploration of the relative positive and negative pedagogical impacts of competition are beyond the scope of this paper,<sup>xxiv</sup> we can note some issues that, at least, ought to encourage teachers to more closely examine the

degree to which competitive pedagogies might harm, as well as help, classroom learning:

- A variety of studies in educational settings have concluded that competition appears to hinder the learning process. Roseneau (2003:47) cites several studies which argue that competition increases suspicion, personal insecurity, selfishness, excessive individualism, aggression, envy, and exploitation.
- Some authors<sup>xxv</sup> have suggested that important gender differences in competition lead to unequal and perhaps unfair impacts in the classroom. For example, DeBoer (2004: 25) states “Males value autonomy, latitude and winning. Females value attachment, intimacy and interdependence.” To the degree that competitive pedagogies foster male-preferred behaviors, these pedagogies may disadvantage females.

There are both positive and negative impacts of competition in pedagogy and we must consider both when making practical syllabus and assignment decisions. Table 2 below draws in part from Rich and Devitis’ survey work in *Competition in Education* (1992) and offers countervailing arguments for the positive effects of competition (drawn from the book), and the negative effects (developed by the authors of this paper).

**Table 2**

| <b>Potential Positive Effects of Competition<sup>xxvi</sup></b>                                  | <b>Potential Negative Effects of Competition</b>   |
|--|--|
| Competition promotes the full use of one’s abilities   | Competition lowers the internal motivation to improve – and makes improvement secondary to the reward such improvement seeks.  |
| Competition dispels apathy and stagnation by incentivising striving for goals and desired prizes | Competition spurs an aggressive desire to “win at all costs” – the ends are seen as justifying the means. In addition, competition dispirits and de-motivates those that lose. |
| Competition stimulates interest in achievement by providing a competitive                        | Competitions lead us to treat others as merely opponents and obstacles – an obsession with   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| target (other competitors) to focus our energies.   | triumphing over others lowers our compassion and sympathy toward them.  |
| Competition leads to striving for higher standards.   | Competition leads to a focus on easily measured and simplistic standards of performance ignoring recognition of qualitative, character-rooted virtues.  |
| Competition allocates rewards based on “objective” meritorious performance.   | Competition over shadows and/or ignores other reward allocation bases such as need, degree of self-improvement, percentage of capability utilized and intentions.   |
| Competition promotes learning as individuals seek to increase the knowledge/skill that underwrites their ability to compete successfully. | Competition discourages learning for the sake of learning and reduces all education to the merely instrumental.   |
| Competition incentivises group cooperation by accentuating the individual benefits of effective teamwork and shared expertise.            | Competition dis-incentives group cooperation by accentuating selfish focus on one’s own welfare and especially leads to devaluation of those less able to contribute to competitive success.  |
| Competition encourages innovation in ...business by providing rewards to those who make...innovations.                                    | Competition discourages thoughtful, careful and significant innovation in science, education and business by focusing attention on easily commercializable scientific advances, by encouraging short-lived educational fads and by stimulating business innovation that prizes style over substance and corporate gain over consumer benefit. |

**Conclusion 4: We must resist the too easy dichotomy between competition and cooperation.**

The Christian with influence over others must be careful to live in a way that encourages spiritual and intellectual growth for all. This includes resisting the temptation to reduce complex subjects to simple answers. One of the simple answers is to reject competition and embrace cooperation or do the opposite. However, this does not serve the subject or the classroom well. What, then, are alternatives?

Midura and Glover (1999) write that:

“Competition can be fun and healthy if we, as parents and teachers, instruct kids how to cooperate within the confines of a team ... competition can lead to many positive rewards. Yet, if we simply instruct [students] to win, praise the winners, and pressure the losers to improve their performance, the children connect self-worth to winning and losing – competition can become very destructive.”

They then suggest three possible modes of competition: (a) the military model where the competitive opponent is seen as the enemy; (b) the reward model where the competitive opponent is seen as a target; and (c) the partnership model where the competitive opponent is seen as comrade, ally or encourager to excellence (Midura & Glover, 1999). Thinking through these different modes could be useful for the Christian endeavoring to find a satisfactory way to use the benefits of competition in the classroom and in life.

There are other nuanced approaches to competition. For example, some distinguish between other-referenced competition, where the competitor is striving to prove him or herself to be superior over another, and task-oriented competition where the competitor is competing to do well at something without seeking to best another person. In the second mode, the competitor becomes a surrogate teammate encouraging our best (Richard, Foni, Tani, Tassi, Tornado, Schneider, 2002). This is similar to distinguishing between interpersonal competition where the purpose is to beat others and goal competition where the competitors seek excellence for its own sake. Obviously, some of these approaches lend themselves better to loving the other person than others.

Thus, in practice the distinction between competition and cooperation may not be clear at all; these two states may be complementary rather than conflicting, allowing all parties to the competition to emerge as winners.

We leave this short examination of the Scriptural and theological roots of competition with renewed optimism. Competition is embedded in our society and economic system, but there are ways for the Christian to serve God greatly even in those circumstances. We need to be cautious about our attitudes when we engage in competition, but we need not fear it.

Competition is servant rather than master. Our God is the God of the games after all. The God of love is indeed the lord of competition.

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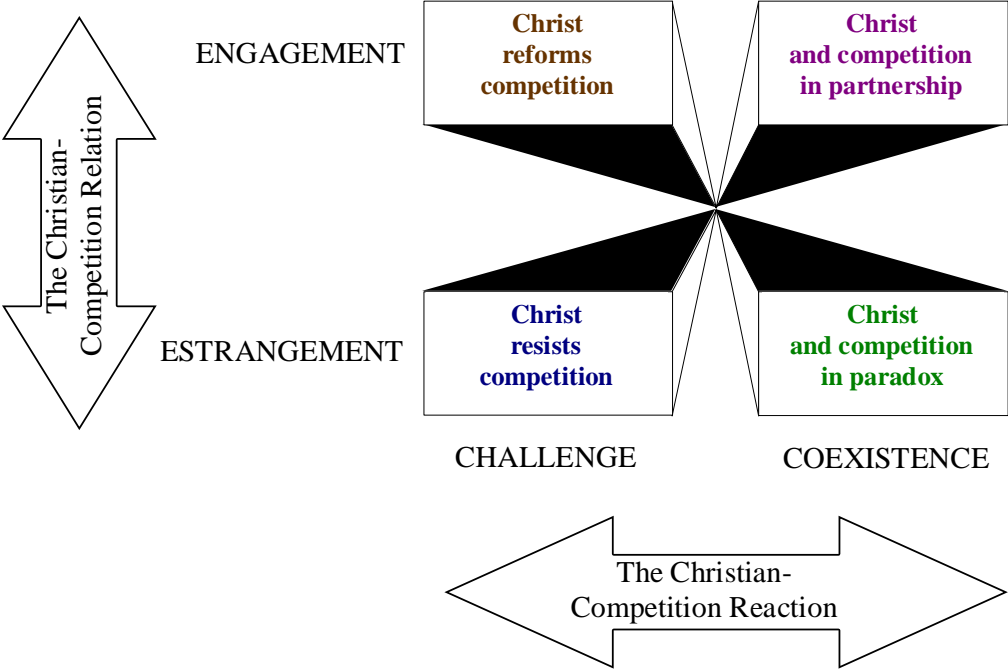
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**Appendix A**



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- <sup>i</sup> PC Study Bible Version 4.2
- <sup>ii</sup> For example I Cor. 9:24-27; Hebrews 12
- <sup>iii</sup> Note, for example, the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment
- <sup>iv</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, book 5
- <sup>v</sup> Ibid, book 19, Ch 13
- <sup>vi</sup> Ibid
- <sup>vii</sup> Ibid, Book 14, Ch 28:632
- <sup>viii</sup> Ibid
- <sup>ix</sup> Ibid, Book 15, Ch 4: 638.
- <sup>x</sup> Ibid
- <sup>xi</sup> Augustine, *Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount*, Ch.1.3
- <sup>xii</sup> Calvin, John, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book IV, Ch 20: 652
- <sup>xiii</sup> Calvin, John, *Commentary on Matthew, Mark, Luke Vol. I*, Ch 5:7
- <sup>xiv</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, Book 3, Ch 10.4
- <sup>xv</sup> Ibid, Ch 7.4
- <sup>xvi</sup> Ibid, Ch 7.5
- <sup>xvii</sup> Ibid, Ch 5.8
- <sup>xviii</sup> Edwards, Jonathan, *Nature of True Virtue*, Ch 1
- <sup>xix</sup> Ibid
- <sup>xx</sup> Edwards, *on Religious affections*, p 179.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Ibid
- <sup>xxii</sup> Edwards, Jonathan, *Sermon on Dishonesty or the Sin of Theft and Injustice*
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Ibid, Section 2.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> The authors of this paper are engaged in an on-going examination of student attitudes toward competition from both a pedagogical and a Christian perspective.
- <sup>xxv</sup> For example, Kathleen J. DeBoer in *Gender and Competition: How Men and Women Approach Work and Play Differently* (Coaches Choice, California, 2004); Mariah Burton Nelson, *Embracing Victory: Life Lessons in Competition and Compassion – New Choices for Women* (William Morrow and Company, New York, 1998); Laura Tracy, *The Secret Between US: Competition Among Women* (Little, Brown, Boston, 1991); Pauline Roseneau, *The Competition Paradigm* (Rowan and Littlefield, Publishers, Oxford, 2003), Chapter 3; Leora Tanenbaum, *Catfight: Woman and Competition* (Seven Stories Press, New York, 2002); Anne Campbell, "Female Competition: Causes, Constraints, Content and Context," *The Journal of Sex Research* (Vol. 41, No. 1, February, 2004, pp. 16-26).
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Drawn in part from Rich and Devitis, pp. 9-11