

Making Sure

BY JOEL STEPHEN WILLIAMS

Several men from the church in Robinson, Texas, where I was preaching went to the local ball fields one afternoon to play softball. The only field that was available for us to use was a little league field. Because it was so small, we made a rule that if you hit the ball over the fence, you were out. One of the men who was playing with us had played minor league and major league baseball when he was young. He apparently did not hear our conversations about hitting the ball over the fence. He stepped up to the plate, took one swing and sent the ball sailing ten or more feet over the fence.

As he jogged past first base, the first baseman said: "Why are you running around the bases? You're out." "Yeah, right," he replied. As he passed our second baseman and our shortstop, the same conversation was repeated. He did not believe them either. At third base, not only did our team's player tell him he was out, his own third base coach told him. The guys in his dugout on the third base line were telling him he was out. Only then did he begin to believe it.

Finally he walked up to home plate where I was playing catcher. He asked me, "What's this about me being out?" After I explained the rule to him, he finally conceded that he was out. As he turned to go to his team's dugout, though, I

noticed that he reached out with his left foot and gently touched the corner of home plate just to make sure. When you are playing softball with a bunch of Christians who like to tease and have fun, you always need to make sure.

Not only is "making sure" a good practice in a softball game, but also it is a wise practice in life. If we need to make sure in a softball game, how much more so should we make sure in the game of life with its eternal implications of heaven and hell. We should not

take the grace and forgiveness of God for granted. As the apostle Paul wrote: "Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means!" (Romans 6:1-2). God's grace was never meant to diminish human effort to be obedient and righteous. The apostle Peter also encouraged us to make sure: "Brothers and sisters, be all the more eager to confirm your call and election, for if you do this, you will never stumble" (2 Peter 1:10).

