

~Job Completion vs. True Unity~

To better explain the two thought processes, I will use some of my own experiences in riding saddle bronc horses. The Lord has taught me a lot about operating through job completion vs. true unity in my bronc riding throughout the years. I will start by giving a brief history before I get into what I have learned up to date.

I started riding saddle broncs my freshman year in high school. I got on 3 horses at the district rodeos and qualified for state. After my freshman year, I knew I was going to be a saddle bronc rider. By my sophomore year, riding broncs was beginning to click and become lots of fun. I won state and ended up sixth at nationals. Riding broncs came very easily for me and I could see myself making a career out of it.

However, my junior year I began to get sick and my bronc riding skills began to go down hill. Whenever my body would receive a little adrenalin instead of getting excited I would become tired and weak. The mitochondria in my muscles which usually supply strength became shriveled up, causing my muscles to ache like when a person has the flu. Just the thought of riding broncs would make me tired and weak. I would usually sleep right up until the time I had to get on a bucking horse. In high school, not many kids actually rode their horses, so if a person rode a horse, they usually would place pretty high and receive points for the year-end awards. At the state finals it was the same thing. If a person rode all 3 horses at state they were usually guaranteed a trip to the National High School Finals.

Before I would get on a bronc, I would always be tired and weak, and often dizzy. When I would try to kick loose and spur the horse so I could receive more points, I had trouble keeping my balance. Due to the sickness, I hardly ever practiced and except for a hometown rodeo, I never went to any other rodeos besides high school rodeos. I got in a habit of just getting the horses covered my junior and senior year instead of trying to better my spur ride and become a better rider. I would get my horses covered, but picked up many bad habits in the process. I made it to nationals my junior and senior years, and received a scholarship to Walla Walla Community College to ride saddle bronc horses. At nationals my senior year, I tried to loosen up to spur the horses I had drawn, but got bucked off both my horses.

I didn't figure it was safe for me to ride anymore due to the fact that I would get dizzy and didn't have any strength before getting on bucking horses. I told the coach at Walla Walla I could no longer rodeo and decided to hang up riding saddle bronc horses for a while. For the next 2 years I did not get on any bucking horses and the Lord began to speak to me telling me His plans for my future.

One time at a Bible study, I was praying during our time of praise and worship, and the Lord gave me a vision in which I was making a perfect saddle bronc ride, with Jesus riding behind me. I then saw myself back behind the chutes talking to people about the Lord with a Bible in my hand. I asked the Lord if He wanted me to start riding broncs again and He said He did and gave me a scripture.

He gave me Ezekiel 2:3-5, **"He said: "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a**

rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their fathers have been in revolt against me to this very day. The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.' And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious house—they will know that a prophet has been among them.”

When the Lord had given me the vision and the scripture, I questioned Him wondering what I would say and if I was the right man for the job. The Lord immediately gave me Exodus 4:11-12, **“The LORD said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”**

After the Lord gave me the second scripture, I figured the first one was not a mistake and the Lord must have known what He was doing. It sounded good to me and I was excited to be an instrument of God. A few months went by and I had an opportunity to go to Kentucky to work on some race horse farms. I decided to pray about it, and as I was praying I saw Jesus and myself walking down a paved walkway in the middle of a paddock in Kentucky. As we were walking, the Lord was pointing out into the pasture at what I thought were clumps of grass. However, as we walked further the clumps of grass became people that the Lord wanted me to talk to. I took this as a sign that the Lord wanted me to go to Kentucky.

While I was in Kentucky, the Lord continued to minister to me and I had the opportunity to visit with some people about the Lord. It was a very good time. One time as I was praying in Kentucky, I saw Amaia (my wife) and myself walking to Montana with Jesus in between us. We were both holding onto Jesus' hand, and walked from Idaho to Montana and opened a book. Once we opened the book, flames started coming out of the book and people started gathering around the flames dancing. The place on the map we walked to in Montana looked like it could have been Bozeman, Montana. I had applied to Montana State University in high school, and the rodeo coach agreed to pay for my books and tuition to ride saddle bronc horses for them. Even though this was a better offer and a university, I turned it down to go to Walla Walla Community College because all my drinking buddies were going there. I called the MSU rodeo coach, after not being on a saddle bronc horse for 2 years, and the coach offered me the same deal; books and tuition.

I finished 4 years of riding saddle bronc horses for MSU. Riding saddle broncs paid for my Bachelor of Science degree and most of my Masters degree at MSU. The Lord has taught me an awful lot about life and starting colts through riding saddle broncs the past several years.

It all boils down to what our focus is: job completion or true unity. When I started riding broncs again after being sick, I had a lot to work through. I had not ridden for 2 years, and the previous 2 years I had ridden sick, developing many bad habits. It took me 4 years to get back on the same track I felt like I was starting on my sophomore year in high school. I would have to say riding broncs is one of my favorite things to do. However, I have had to try to overcome many of Satan's strongholds. It doesn't matter what it is, once we have failed in any area of our life, Satan will be right there to remind us of our failures.

Every time I would get on a bronc, I would think about all of the horses that I had ridden tired and weak, and I had an imperfect ride pictured in my mind, consciously or subconsciously. This in turn caused me to not make a good ride. When I started riding again at MSU, it took me another couple of years to try to break all the bad habits and get my head straight again. The Lord showed me one time when I was praying, that I was like Mel Gibson in the movie “Maverick.” He wakes up on the back of a horse in the middle of a desert with a noose tied around his neck and snakes all around the horse’s feet. This was me in my bronc riding. The snakes were all of the negative things I would be thinking about before getting on a horse. I pictured all of the bad rides in my mind, instead of thinking about Christ and making a perfect bronc ride. I was doomed for failure before I even opened the chute gate. As much as I tried, I could not get all the rides of imperfection out of my mind. They continued to haunt me.

As I was praying, I saw a big wave come through and wash away all the snakes and the noose around my neck. I then saw myself riding in a lush green garden making a perfect bronc ride. This symbolized riding in the flesh and riding in the Spirit. When I am riding in the flesh Satan can get to me and keep my focus on the past and all my failures. However, through the power of the Holy Spirit, God can wash away all of our imperfections of the past and we can start over in perfection. When we are focused on job completion (riding broncs) Satan can have a stronghold on us. However, if we become filled with the Holy Spirit and the power of Christ is living through us (true unity) Satan cannot tell us lies.

The Lord brought these visions to life the summer between receiving my BS degree and starting my Masters degree. I entered up and went to 7 pro rodeos. The Lord showed me the power of riding in true unity versus focusing on job completion. The focus of the summer was to be a light for Christ. I did not worry about riding horses, but to love on God and anybody I came in contact with. I won \$3,500 in 7 rodeos, but the most amazing thing of that summer by far was the power of riding in true unity/perfection in Christ vs. worrying about job completion.

I rodeoed with a couple of kids from Nevada that had a camper, and before I got on every bronc, I would get in the camper, read my Bible and become filled with the Holy Spirit. One time as I was praying, the Lord told me, “**Satan has asked to sift you as wheat**” (Luke 22:31). This kind of scared me a little bit, so I asked, “Will you be there Lord?” The Lord replied, “**I will never leave you nor forsake you**” (Joshua 1:5). I then asked, “Will he hurt me Lord?” and the Lord replied, “**The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped**” (Psalm 28:7). After hearing this, I thought good enough for me, let’s get it on.

I went to the rodeo in Logan, UT and remained filled with the Holy Spirit, talking to people and trying to show the love of Christ. When I got on my bronc, he stalled in the chute, and they hotshotted him to get him to leave. When they buzzed him out, he reared up and came over on top of me, hitting my head on the back of the chute. I did not end up under the horse and was only a little dazed from hitting my head. I received a re-ride and the next horse I got on was awesome. He came out bucking, just like a bronc rider wants a horse to buck. He bogged his old head to the ground and was kicking at the roof. I was trying to set my feet really hard and spur the horse in the neck to ensure I had a high point spur ride. However, I spurred over my bronc rein and got bucked off.

Getting bucked off is something that really eats on me. Even when I was sick, I hardly ever got bucked off. I grew up riding colts and working on ranches, and whenever a person gets bucked off, they can expect to be made fun of. Getting bucked off is something a cowboy does not like to do. It's kind of a "Catch-22." If there is somebody around to catch your horse that is good, but you know you will be made fun of. If there isn't anyone around, you will not be made fun of, but you may have to walk a long way to get your horse. Cowboys do not like getting bucked off, and this has been a problem in my bronc riding.

When I was sick I would often "safety-up" to get the horse ridden instead of making an 80-point spur ride or get bucked off trying. I hate getting bucked off, and this is an area where Satan is able to get into my head and do some damage. Whenever I get bucked off, Satan immediately starts telling me stuff like: "You suck," "You must not be a very good bronc rider, to get bucked off," "Look at all these people that just watched you get bucked off, they think you suck too." For a long time after I was sick I was scared to get on broncs. Not from getting hurt, but from failure. Whenever I would get bucked off, it would immediately confirm my biggest fear, that I was *a failure*, that I was not a very good bronc rider. I was worried about what everyone else thought, and as soon as I would get bucked off, I was sure that everyone thought I was a lousy bronc rider. I would tell myself that and eventually I would have myself convinced.

It took me a long time to realize that sometimes even good bronc riders get bucked off. It doesn't mean that you are a bad bronc rider, you just had a bad day. So when I spurred over my rein at the rodeo and got bucked off, this was a place that Satan could do some real damage. However, the Lord had already warned me, so it had no effect on me. I went back behind the chutes and did not let Satan's lies have any effect on me.

During the bull riding they set off some fireworks, and I remember watching a particular firework go off not far from the chutes. There was one spark that came away from the rest, shot clear up in the air and veered off straight behind the chutes. I continued to watch it, and it fell down to the stripping chutes, not 10 to 15 feet from where I was standing and exploded. It did not hurt anyone, only startled everyone, and got everyone's attention. The Lord then told me, "**Works of fire.**" The Holy Spirit is a consuming fire, "**For the LORD your God is a consuming fire**" (Deuteronomy 4:24), and the Lord was showing me that He wanted to unleash His Holy Spirit behind the bucking chutes. I finished off the summer and the Lord continued to speak to me. I had a blast.

My focus had shifted from job completion to becoming one with Christ (perfect unity). Once a person has found this place, he no longer has to fear the lies of Satan, because the Lord can speak truth to you and warn you of the future, just as the Lord did with me in Logan, UT.

I started back in college in the fall of 2006, and for some reason it did not take long to forget what I had learned during the summer. For the third year in a row I started the spring season winning the saddle bronc riding in one of the toughest regions in the NIRA, the Big Sky region. My focus shifted to job completion, trying to stay in the lead, instead of true unity with Christ. For the third year in a row, it all fell apart at the last rodeo of the season and I barely ended up qualifying for Nationals.

My sophomore year I missed going to Nationals by 6 points. If I would have placed one place higher at any rodeo throughout the year, I would have qualified. My junior year I did almost the same thing, finishing in the fourth spot. I had a horrible last rodeo, and if I would have placed one place higher on my last horse I would have qualified. The team however, qualified in the top two for the region, and because I had been on the team the entire year, I got to go to Nationals. I had pretty good luck at Nationals making it to the short go, but got bucked off a trashy horse in the short go.

So my senior year you would think I would have learned to focus on true unity vs. job completion. Nope, I enjoy banging my head against a wall doing the same thing over and over. Missoula is always the last rodeo and is a double header. I went into the last rodeo winning the region and was focused on winning the region and the saddle that went along with it. I figured after the first 2 years I pretty well had it coming. I thought it was my last year and it was time for the Lord to do a little blessing. After all, I kept a pretty good attitude the last 2 years. This was my time to shine. (I wasn't quite that arrogant about it. However, I did believe that my senior year would be my year.)

The arena was a standing lake and was a good foot under mud and water. I drew a tiny little colt for my first horse of the last rodeo of the year, and he did come out bucking. He came out and blew in two, jumping and kicking, sucking back. I am not trying to embellish the story, but he did even do a little sun fishing (I have the picture to prove it). The horse set up, leaped into the air, and kicked off to the side. While the horse was hanging in the air, I reached up and stuck the horse as hard as I could with my spurs in the neck, listening to the people whooping and hollering behind the chutes.

I just remember thinking "Victory, here we come!" The next jump the horse set back on his hindquarters, leaped forward, and drove his head between his legs, launching me over the horse's head and into the lake of mud and water. It was bad enough that I had been winning the region for the third year in a row and came up short. It was bad enough that for the past 2 years it came down to this particular rodeo. It was also bad enough to be making a good ride and then get "sucker punched" by a wiry little colt, which looked like he had just been pulled off his mother. I also hate getting bucked off, and got bucked off the last horse of the season. But to top it all off, when I did get bucked off, my head was driven into a lake of mud and water and I was covered from head to toe with mud.

As soon as I hit the mud, I bounced up and started to lose control. I wanted to go back behind the chutes and hit something really hard. When I became sick in high school, I developed a temper that kind of scared me. I didn't just get mad, I would lose control. One of the side effects of the Epstein Bar Virus is a bad temper, and boy, did I have one. I would go from being tired and sluggish, to an out of control maniac. I would feel something come over me, and I would honestly lose total control of my thought processes. I just wanted to tear something to pieces. Looking back, I know this came from Satan, and I can see how he could drive people to do something they never thought they could do.

My temper was often out of control in football my junior year. I wanted to play linebacker, but I had to play corner, a position I hated. Corner takes a little finesse. You have to wait for the

person to catch the ball before you can hit them. I had a problem with that concept. I led the league in tackles, sacks and had double the next guy in pass interferences. I liked to hit. As soon as I would get called for pass interference, I would honestly lose control. No one would really get mad at me; they would just try to calm me down and try to keep me from losing control.

I felt like The Hulk. I would try to keep control, but something would take over in my body and I would transform into a mad man. Most of the time when I would get called for pass interference, the following play would be a corner blitz. I do not know where I went during these times, but a mad man would take over. I never snapped on a person outside of football, but would often lose control while working. An example would be the simple task of setting a brace post. I would be working and if something wouldn't go right, I would lose control and start beating the post until I had nothing left. I would fall to the ground exhausted and sometimes it would take 15 minutes until I had enough strength to get back up (Yeah, pretty stupid).

I had a bad and stupid temper that the Lord has had to help me overcome. I notice that the less time I spend with the Lord, the more tired I become, and the quicker I lose my temper. The more time I spend with the Lord, the more strength and patience I receive.

After getting bucked off, I felt one of these temper tantrums start to billow up. I had the urge to throw and kick anything I came in contact with. However, I kept my composure. I took a deep breath and had the Lord give me some perspective. I then sucked it up and helped the competition that would end up beating me. Helping the competition felt good. This is what being a light for Christ is all about. Besides, maybe if enough light shined through, it would help dry out some of the mud I was caked with.

Once the rodeo was over, I had officially come in third place, *again*. I could only laugh and think, "Well, I guess I am just going to have to win Nationals." Before I could leave I had to go to the awards ceremony to receive my third place award, and of course, be a good sport and let my light shine; blah, blah, blah. Well, when they announced the bronc riding champion, who do you think they announced? None other than yours truly. I was the 2007 Big Sky Region Saddle Bronc Riding Champion. I went up and got my picture taken holding my newly engraved champion trophy saddle. I thought surely they had made a mistake, but who knows, we serve a mighty God. Maybe even through all this the Lord had found a way to bless me.

Nope, they had made a mistake. I was still in third place. However, it felt good to be humiliated and humbled a little further. I guess I had not quite had enough mud thrown in my face for the day. Oh well, I figured I was just being tested and that I would get them at Nationals. I mean who cares about being the Regional Champion when you could be the National Champion. So I had it in my mind that I would just stand on faith that I was going to win Nationals.

So did I end up winning Nationals? Well, let me tell you the story. The first horse I got on was supposed to have some ducks and dives, but ended up being straight down the pen, a nice horse. I got tapped off and was thinking, "This is fun. This will be a good horse to start off on." I was looking under my rein, watching my feet reach up and spur him in the neck, just as relaxed as could be, another day at the office. The horse was following the pickup man and for some

reason I looked to see how close the fence was. Right then the horse threw his head up, sucked back underneath me and threw me to the ground. I made a great 7-second spur ride.

Needless to say, this did not quite line up with my plans of winning the National Finals. I tried to keep a good attitude, but was kind of discouraged and was a brat to Amaia. Before getting on my second horse, I thought, "I need to spend some time with the Lord." I needed to get filled with the Holy Spirit like I did last summer. I laid down behind the chutes on my bronc bag and began to pray. The Holy Spirit began to come and the Lord began to speak to me. I remembered what He had told me about having the noose around my neck and worrying about stuff, instead of focusing on being one with Him. He told me I need to be filled with love. **"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs" (1 Corinthians 13:4-5).** As I went through the list, I started to see where I had fallen short in so many ways.

I asked the Lord for forgiveness, and as I got up and prepared to get on my bronc, the Lord showed me that I was like Peter when he stepped out of the boat and tried to walk to Jesus. **"'Lord, if it's you,' Peter replied, 'tell me to come to you on the water.' 'Come,' he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. 'You of little faith,' he said, 'why did you doubt?'" (Matthew 14:28-31).** Peter steps out onto the lake on faith and begins to walk on the water. However, when he sees the wind and the waves crashing down, he begins to lose faith and starts to sink. The Lord showed me that's how I am with my bronc riding. I try to step out on faith that I am healed and that I no longer have anything holding me back. I start out ok looking only to Christ, but as I get out in the water my focus shifts to the mighty waves and I start to sink. I begin to think about imperfect rides I made in the past and trying to prevent them from happening again. I begin to shift from being united with Christ to worrying about job completion, and I begin to sink.

I felt awesome before getting on my second bronc. I was no longer thinking about the poor rides I had made in the past, and was focusing on glorifying God and spurring this horse harder than I had ever spurred a horse before. All I thought about was setting my feet and making a perfect spur ride. I got on my horse, called for the gate, and spurred the horse for all I was worth. The horse bucked in a tight circle to the right. I was trying to set my feet as hard as I could and was making a good ride. At 7 seconds I hung my right spur for a split second and the horse sucked back to the left sending me flying right on my head. I had gotten bucked off another horse! As soon as I pulled my head out of the dirt, I imagined Peter and I said, "Lord, you make it hard to step out on faith, because when I do I get pounded by the waves." I was a little frustrated, but bounced back knowing that the Lord had a plan and through all this He was teaching me. The last horse did not go well either. I was thinking too much about the previous 2 horses and got bucked off right out of the chute.

Once I got home from the Nationals the Lord began to speak to me. He showed me many things and why things had to happen the way they did at Nationals. When I returned home, the Lord showed me in a vision a cow that had been drinking from a dirty watering hole in the

middle of the dessert that was full of mud and manure. The cow was very skinny and sickly looking. He then showed me another cow drinking from a spring shooting out of the side of the mountain that ran off the rocks. The water was crystal clear and watered a lush green valley. He showed me that the 2 cows were me. I had not been spending enough time drinking of the Holy Spirit (spring) and had been spending too much time in the world (muddy watering hole).

He began to show me the importance of true unity instead of job completion. All spring I had been focused on job completion, winning the region, winning the nation. My focus had been riding broncs instead of solely loving God and trying to be a light for Christ.

The summer I did so well in the PRCA I was not focused on what other people thought, but only on serving the Lord. The Lord showed me that riding broncs was my ministry and that was my focus. I went to the rodeos and was not concerned about winning money and selfish ambitions, but being a light for Christ. The Lord in turn took care of me tremendously blessing me with \$3,500 in 3 weeks. He was supporting my ministry. During the week I would try to prepare for the weekend like a pastor would for church. I was starting colts and thought about God all day and read my Bible whenever I got a chance. I listened to Christian tapes when I was in the car and my whole life was consumed with God.

However, when I started going to the college rodeos my focus began to change. I became busy, and I did not make time daily to spend with the Lord. Riding broncs went from being my ministry to being my job. I had the expectations of the team and team supporters and I did not want to let them down. I went from being totally consumed with God to drifting back into the world. I went from having no weight on my shoulders in the PRCA to carrying the weight of everyone's expectations. I went from true unity to job completion.

I needed to get bucked off all my horses at the National Finals. The Lord needed to teach me something: riding broncs was going to be part of my ministry. When the Lord had told me to start riding broncs again, the only broncs I had gotten on were at college rodeos. Every summer I would say I was going to ride broncs, but would get too busy working and not go to any rodeos. By the time I was 24, the most rodeos I had ever been to during the summer was 8, followed by 5 rodeos and then maybe 1 or 2.

However, after the College Finals, I had to ask myself some questions. I had been bucked off 3 horses and was finished with college rodeos. Do I hang it up and let Satan convince me that I am bad bronc rider and there is no point of going? Or do I stand on the promises from God and get serious about riding broncs? I have decided to stand on God's promises. I am going to get serious about riding broncs and try to enter as many rodeos as God allows me. God always has a plan and He always has your best interests in mind. If I had not gotten bucked off all my horses at Nationals, I might not have been motivated to start rodeoing hard. I am having a lot more fun rodeoing at the professional level than I ever did at the college or amateur level, and this is where my ministry is, which makes it all the more fun.

Through all this the Lord has taught me the importance of true unity instead of job completion. Any time we take our focus off of God and start thinking about completing a job, Satan can come in telling us lies and deceiving us. It doesn't matter whether it is in sports or in

any area of our life. 2 Kings gives us a great example of true unity vs. job completion, **“When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. ‘Oh, my lord, what shall we do?’ the servant asked. ‘Don't be afraid,’ the prophet answered. ‘Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.’ And Elisha prayed, ‘O LORD, open his eyes so he may see.’ Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha” (2 Kings 6:15-17).**

The servant was focused on job completion. They were terribly out-numbered and were certain to be slaughtered. However, Elisha the prophet had true unity with Christ. He had a different perspective on the same situation. Because God had opened his eyes to see into the heavenly realms, he could see that God was in total control and had a massive army behind Elisha.

Through true unity comes communication. When I would take time to get filled with the Holy Spirit and wash away all the worries and cares of the world before getting on a bronc, this is when the Lord would speak to me. He told me to start riding broncs again and told me what college to go to. After I had started riding, He showed me that I need to become filled with the Holy Spirit and He will wash away all the lies that Satan tells me. He warned me in Logan, UT that Satan was going to try to deceive me. God helped me to see into the future, so I was not surprised at what the future would bring. He also showed me that I need to love and not get caught up in worldly things, otherwise like Peter, Satan can deceive me when I step out into the water.

Through all these things, God took off the covering of what I could not see with my natural eyes and helped me to see what the Lord was supernaturally working in my life in the past, present, and future. Through true unity and being perfectly united with Christ, He is able to communicate with us and direct us into perfection, traveling on the perfect path that He has set before us. The same thing happens with our horses.