MercEmail A Weekly Devotional by Steve Higginbotham

Does God Pull For The Buffalo Bills?
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This past weekend, Stevie Johnson, wide-receiver for the Buffalo Bills, dropped a perfectly thrown game-winning pass in overtime against the Pittsburgh Steelers. Because of the dropped pass, the Steelers were given new life and ended up winning the ballgame. Stevie Johnson was distraught because of his costly mistake. So following the game, Stevie tweeted the following message:

"I PRAISE YOU 24/7!!!!!! AND THIS HOW YOU DO ME!!!!! YOU EXPECT ME TO LEARN FROM THIS??? HOW???!!! ILL NEVER FORGET THIS!! EVER!!! THX THO..."

As you can imagine, this foolish accusation against God has taken a lot of hits by sports and religious commentators. Stevie made himself an easy mark. But, lest I commit a "personal foul" by "piling on," let me take this article another direction. In the midst of receiving correction from thousands of people, Kurt Warner, former quarterback for the Rams, the Giants, and the Cardinals did a little tweeting himself. He tweeted to Stevie and said:

"I asked same thing when released in STL & benched 3 times, But then God did his thing... Be ready! Enjoy watching you play!"

Wow! Isn't that amazing? Of all the things that have been said or written following Stevie's tweet, I wonder how many of them were as kind and understanding as Warner's? Warner didn't defend Stevie's statement. It was indefensible. He didn't try to legitimize it. There was nothing legitimate about it. But he did let Stevie know he could identify with the pain and hurt he was feeling, he validated his skills in spite of his costly error, and he gave him hope for the future.

Stevie Johnson spoke rashly and foolishly in his despair, and has since reflected on what he said and retracted it. I'm glad to hear that; he needed to. But I'm also glad for Kurt Warner's response to Stevie Johnson. Personally, I want to develop my ability to empathize with, affirm, and gently correct the mistakes I see in others. What about you?