

### Not Any Saint Conveys Arrogant Rudeness (NASCAR) by [John T Polk II](#)

All Scriptures and comments are based on the **New King James Version**, unless otherwise noted.

When Family Baptist Church Pastor Joe Nelms gave the pre-race invocation before the Nationwide NASCAR Race at the Nashville Speedway Saturday, July 23, 2011, he followed the example of the "Ricky Bobby" character (played by Will Ferrell) in the movie Talledega Nights, rather than Jesus Christ.

His prayer is in bold type, along with my remarks in the brackets, is as follows:

**Heavenly father, we thank you tonight for all your blessings.**

[So far, so good! However, the rest of the prayer indicates these opening words may show the hypocrisy Jesus quoted Isaiah as decrying:

*Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men' (Matthew 15:7-9).*

An opening line of a prayer is not sufficient if the rest of the prayer is not according to God's will (**1 John 5:14-15**)!]

**You said 'in all things give thanks.' So we want to thank you tonight for these mighty machines that you've brought before us. Thank you for the Dodges and the Toyotas. Thank you for the Fords and most of all thank you for Roush and Yates partnering to give us the power we see before us tonight. Thank you for GM Performance Technology and the R07 engines. Thank you for Sonoco racing fuel and Goodyear tires that bring performance and power to the track.**

[In the Bible, the prayers of the godly saints are filled with praise for God's achievements, more than the work of humans. Rather than a list of God's virtues and deeds, Nelms seems to be reading from the decals of a car or a speedway wall! Does Nelms think that every activity has been put together by God? Would Nelms have thanked God for the wickedness of men before the Flood in Noah's day (**Genesis 6:5**)? Or rebellious Nimrod building cities (**Genesis 10:8-14**)? Or the construction of the city and tower of Babel (**Genesis 11:1-9**)? Is it not in Nelms to recognize that there may be some activities put together for the glory of men and not God? When Jesus described a Pharisee's prayer, it was filled with the Pharisee's works, not humility before God (**Luke 18:9-14**). All of God's works are "**righteous,**" but not all of man's works are (**Jeremiah 22:13-19**).]

**Lord I want to thank you for my smokin' hot wife tonight, Lisa. My two children, Eli and Emma, or as we like to call them — the little E's.**

[This is almost verbatim from "Ricky Bobby" and not Jesus! Jesus' description of the marriage relationship is to respect the "one flesh" a male and female become, not to tout that carnality in front of others (**Matthew 19:4-6**)! Even when the Apostle Paul is describing the "**heated passion**" to be expressed in marriage, it is with the respect of the husband's and wife's "**affection**" for each other (**1 Corinthians 7:3-6**). Nelms' reference to his wife calls attention of the wrong kind to her, if she is a godly woman (**1 Peter 3:1-6**).]

**Lord I pray you'll bless the drivers as usual tonight. May they put on a performance worthy of this great track.**

["As usual?" Does this mean the "usual" number of accidents? Deaths? Disappointments? What is Nelms attributing to God? In a prayer such as this one has been, this becomes an "off-handed" serving of the ball into God's court to "take it from here." Nothing Nelms has prayed previously turns this event over to God, why now when it is to begin? ]

**in Jesus' name, Boogity boogity boogity. Amen.**

[And here, Nelms' gives tribute to Darrell Waltrip and "Ricky Bobby" rather than learning from Jesus, who taught His disciples to end prayer with acknowledgement of God's authority: "**For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen**" (**Matthew 6:13**), and not an appeal to human excitement. Some may think the last words of the National Anthem are "Play ball!" Nelms has taught people that the last words of a prayer are "Start Your Engines!" It is in context for Darrell Waltrip to say "boogity, boogity, boogity" as a race announcer, but not a proper attitude to convey in closing a prayer to Almighty God!]

Afterwards, Nelms was interviewed on Sirius Satellite Radio's "Tradin' Paint," and reportedly said:

*I wanted to get somebody's attention, so that's been our desire every time we've been up there, to try to make an impact on the fans and give them something they'll remember, and maybe they'll go home on a Friday night or a Saturday night and say, 'Maybe I ought to get up and go to church in the morning.'*

[Nelms' stated goal is to "get somebody's attention" and "to try to make an impact on the fans," but unfortunately for him, that's the definition of "**hypocrisy**" as given by Jesus Christ: "**And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward**" (**Matthew 6:5**). Joe "Ricky Bobby" Nelms' prayer went no further than the Nashville Speedway that Saturday night, and if he got the fan's attention he sought, he has received his reward! Prayers done for "effect" on an audience and/ or prayers of repetition are "vain" and meaningless acts of worship (**Matthew 6:5-8**). No one who attends church because of such a profane prayer will be attending for the purpose of glorifying God, but of being entertained by men! Worship is for offering

**"spiritual sacrifices"** ( **1 Peter 2:4-5**) pleasing to God, not for the excitement and satisfaction of men ( **1 Thessalonians 2:1-6**).]

If Joe Nelms represents the disrespectful level to which one must stoop to be a Baptist, or a Pastor of a worldly church, or popular with NASCAR fans, then I will have no part of any of it! I have decided to stand with Moses in the place of the burning bush ( **Exodus 3:1-6**) or Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane ( **Luke 22:39-46**; **Hebrews 5:7-9**), and deeply respect every moment I approach God in prayer.

**Who else is on the Lord's side?**

--- **By John T Polk II**

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