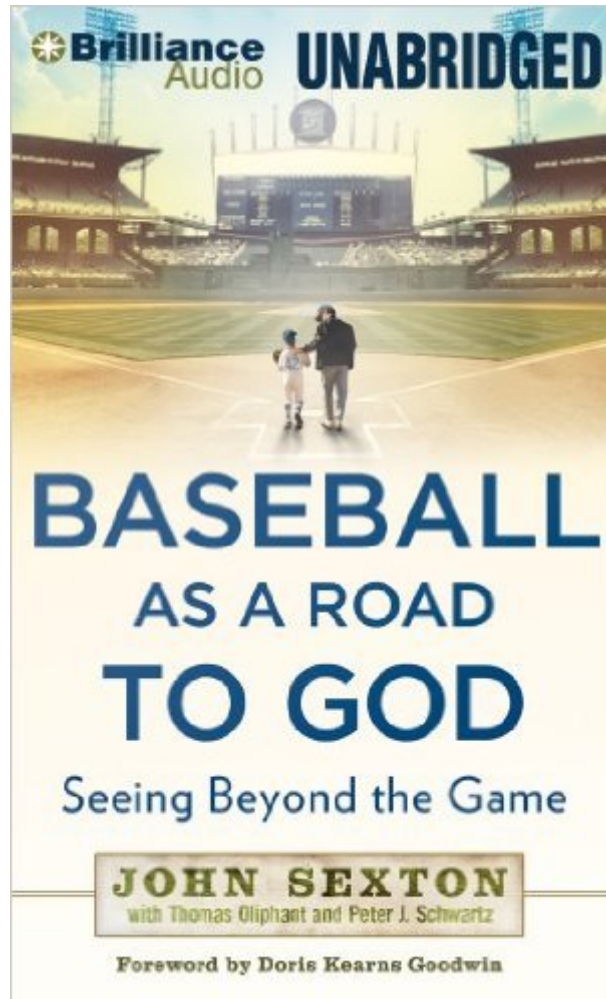


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# Baseball As A Road To God: Seeing Beyond The Game



## Synopsis

A love letter to America's most beloved sport and an exploration of the deeper dimensions it reveals. For more than a decade, New York University president John Sexton has used baseball to illustrate the elements of a spiritual life in a wildly popular course at NYU. Using great works of baseball literature as well as the actual game's fantastic moments, its legendary characters, and its routine rituals—from the long-sought triumph of the 1955 Brooklyn Dodgers to the heroic achievements of players like the saintly Christy Mathewson and the sinful Ty Cobb to the loving intimacy of a game of catch between a father and son—Sexton teaches that through the game we can touch the spiritual dimensions of life. *Baseball as a Road to God* is about the elements of our lives that lie beyond what can be captured in words alone—ineffable truths that we know by experience rather than by logic or analysis. Applying the inquiry usually reserved for the study of religion to the secular activity of baseball, Sexton reveals a surprising amount of common ground between the game and what we all recognize as religion: sacred places and times, faith and doubt, blessings and curses, and more. In thought-provoking, beautifully rendered prose, *Baseball as a Road to God* elegantly demonstrates that baseball is more than a game or even a national pastime: It can be a road to a deeper and more meaningful life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Besides attending 15-20 ballgames every year for the past 40+ years and watching at least one game--and sometimes two or three--virtually every day during the season, I also typically read at least a dozen baseball books per year, sometimes more. This is my favorite baseball book for this

year, and, indeed, probably for the recent past. Be forewarned, however. It's not a light read. While the author writes beautifully, at times his writing style is a bit too academic for most readers. It's a book to be read in small doses, and savored. The author, who is the president of NYU and who teaches a course on the subject of baseball as a road to God, writes about both baseball and religion. Many of the elements associated with baseball, faith, doubt, conversion, and miracles, just to name a few, are also elements associated with the religious experience. This book, which presents many of these common elements in innings, as in a 9-inning ballgame, explains how baseball evokes the essence of religion. Nonetheless, the author admits that, for many people, baseball is not only not THE road to God, it's not even A road to God. If you're a numbers cruncher type of baseball fan, you may not enjoy this book, which speaks more towards a loftier view of baseball, the meaning of the game. But if, you're a baseball fan, like me, who loves to see the beauty and majesty of the game, someone who loves to see the big picture, you'll probably love this book. If you love to read about baseball, you'll probably love the appendix, which provides a long list of books and articles assigned for the author's NYU course over the years. Lots of baseball books to add to the wishlist. I have a few minor gripes with this book. Sometimes, the book is a bit too academic for me.

The author John Sexton is not only the president of New York University (NYU), but he also still teaches a full schedule which is almost unheard of. "More" importantly... he has an absolute lifelong love affair with baseball... as many of us do. Like the author, I was a kid in New York who grew up loving the Brooklyn Dodgers... though for both of us "loving" would not be a strong enough description. After a forward by another Brooklyn Dodger loving child from that exact time frame, Doris Kearns Goodwin, sets the stage for the premise of this book... the reader is transported back in time to the most beautiful... magical... exalted day... in the history of the Brooklyn Dodgers... October 4, 1955... the day in infamy when it was no longer "WAIT-TILL-NEXT-YEAR" for Brooklyn's beloved "Bums" and their fans. The author shares a personal, humorous story of how he and his friend "Dougie" "knelt and prayed with all the intensity we could muster, grasping between us in dynamic tension each end of a twelve-inch crucifix we had removed from the wall." When young Johnny Podres got the last Yankee batter out and the unattainable "NEXT-YEAR" was the here and now... Dougie let go of the crucifix to throw his arms up in victory... "the laws of physics drove the head of Christ into the author's mouth chipping his front tooth"... And thus starts the author's literary quest to link in every way imaginable... baseball and religion. Though the baseball stories throughout time... are lovingly shared by the author... and any old-time fan like me... will applaud the

telling...but a believable broad brush bridge between the two is never effectively made in this reader's opinion. Baseball miracles that range everywhere from the 1914 "miracle" Braves...

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