

Excuses: Sports

I Timothy 4:7 “But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.”

8 “For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”

Hebrews 10:25 “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

I was saved at a Family Bible Camp when I was 14. During this time, I was also in a youth soccer league playing the position of defensive fullback. About the time I trusted Christ as my Savior, one of our coaches came to me and informed me of what other coaches were saying about my abilities. They all agreed that I needed to join an All-Star team traveling the country. My coach believed I would “go places” with my skills. Like most youth sports today, we played games on church nights: Sunday and the midweek service. Before salvation, this wasn't a big deal. But now, my mom and I realized from reading the Bible that we needed to put God first and “not forsake” the church services.

Sports can be good exercise and a relaxing pastime if kept in proper perspective. Our text, I Timothy 4:8, stated that “bodily exercise profiteth little”. “Little” is not much, but it is still productive. However, some believers allow sports to have preeminence in their life. And this idolatry is not holy.

One way families stumble with sports is allowing your kids' games and practices to cause you to miss church. Remember, “bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things”. You the parent need to make sure that your kids exercise themselves rather unto godliness. **And godliness is not missing church or prayer or Bible reading or church activities.** Actually, our second text, Hebrews 10:25 makes it clear that whenever the saved assemble themselves together (church services, church revivals, church activities), they are not to forsake this coming together. In other words, don't miss or skip church for any reason. On top of that, God emphasized that as “ye see the day approaching” (the last days, the end of the world, Christ's soon return) you are to be assembling with believers “so much the more”, not the less. **Sports activities have become an idol in many Christian homes that cause the parents and kids to attend their church less, not more.** Do not allow the wicked one during these wicked days to entertain your family to spiritual death!

Another way families trip themselves up concerning sports is skipping church to watch the big televised games. I was shocked recently to hear from another Christian family excitedly state that they were purposely skipping the Sunday evening church service to watch the Super Bowl. Some believers are becoming bold and brash in their disobedience to God's commands these days. Friend, no amount of fun,

excitement, or entertainment can ever replace what God can give you!

James 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights...”

If it isn't from God lining up perfectly with God's Word, then it isn't a good gift and it isn't a perfect gift. Yes, skipping church and watching the game can be a sinful pleasure for a season (Heb. 11:25). But one day in eternity, you'll learn that your Heavenly Father rewards faithful obedience with the “pleasures evermore” that are on His “right hand” (Ps. 16:11). So, dear parent, when sports become more important than obeying God and going to church, you have an idol in your family. Remove that idol of sports in all its forms from your family.