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# BIBLE TALK

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This week the question is: **What is wrong with American sports?**

In 1972 an article entitled, “*Five Reasons Why The Roman Empire Fell,*” was published in the journal *Old Paths Advocate*. The five reasons listed for the fall of the empire are as follows:

- 1) *Rapid increase of divorce, with the undermining of the sanctity of the home, which is the basis of society.*
- 2) *Higher and higher taxes; and spending of public money for bread and celebration.*
- 3) *The mad craze for pleasure; sports becoming every year more exciting and more brutal.*
- 4) *The building of gigantic armaments, when the real enemy was within; the decadence of the people.*
- 5) *The decay of religion; faith fading into mere form. Losing touch with life, and becoming impotent to guide.*

I believe this list was derived and compiled from Edward Gibbon’s six volume work, [The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire](#).

What interests me in this list is point #3: *The mad craze for pleasure; sports becoming every year more exciting and more brutal.*

The problem with American sports is twofold:

**FIRST: There is the problem that some sports are becoming more and more brutal.**

Rome was famous for its sports, but as time passed, the sports became more and more vicious and brutal. Soon people would gather in the Roman coliseum to watch people fed to the lions as sport. The apostle Paul alluded to this in:

## **2 Timothy 4:17**

<sup>17</sup> But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. **Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.**

What do we see happening in America? We see sports becoming more and more vicious and brutal. Why? Because that's what the public wants. Americans love to watch *WWF Championship Wrestling* where someone is beaten mercilessly. Now the going craze is *UFC* ("*Ultimate Fighting Championship*") and *MMA* ("*Mixed-Martial-Arts*"). Here crowds gather to watch two men fight until someone is badly hurt or knocked unconscious.

What do such sports do for Americans? It causes them to want more. Like dogs who taste blood, sports fans are not satisfied until they see more and more – more blood and more violence.

Is there any wonder why the number one concern among high school students is safety and protection from being assaulted at school?

## **SECOND: There is the mad craze for sports and entertainment.**

Some sports are not vicious or violent, but there is an ever increasing thirst for sports and entertainment which is distracting Americans from more worthwhile things.

- How many children read books today rather than play sports or play video games?
- How many families eat meals together and have discussions around a table rather than sitting in front of a television set watching sports or other programming.
- How many families no longer assemble for worship on the Lord's Day because they are busy with sporting events and other entertainment?

I lived in Hampton, GA a few years ago – not far from the Atlanta Motor Speedway. The big races were always held on Sundays. As my family and I would leave Hampton on our way to church, there was no traffic – because we were leaving – we were departing from Hampton and the Motor Speedway. Yet, coming into Hampton were 150,000 NASCAR fans. The line of traffic was backed up over seven miles.

Have you ever seen that many people interested in going to church to worship God the Father, Jesus the Son of God and the Holy Spirit of God?

- 150,000 people were willing to travel for miles and miles,
- Wait in a horrible traffic jam,
- Pay an outrageous price for a ticket to get into the race,
- Sit in the cold and wind for three or four hours,
- Just to watch cars ride around in a big circle.

Yet ... ask those same people to come to church and see what will happen. Most of these people will complain:

- *"All the church wants is your money."*
- *"It's inconvenient."*
- *"The preacher preaches too long."*
- *"It's boring."*
- *"It's too hot or too cold."*

What's wrong with American sports? When sports become more important than worshipping God and when sports are put ahead of service to God, then sports and movies and television and video games have become too important.

### **Matthew 6:33**

<sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Seeking God first means God must come before any sport or entertainment events.

### **Romans 8:5-8**

<sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

<sup>6</sup> For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

<sup>7</sup> Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

<sup>8</sup> So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

When people would rather go to a NASCAR race, a baseball game, or a football game rather than attend a worship service to God, those people are *"carnally minded."*

If men and women hope to one day go to heaven and spend eternity with God, they are going to have to set their priorities straight. Heaven and spiritual things are going to have to become more important than sports and entertainment.

### **Hebrews 10:25**

<sup>25</sup> not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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