

The Dangers of Sports

In the history of Israel, as recorded in the Maccabees, we have a clear record of the specific evil deeds of the fallen people (1 Mac 1:11-16; 2 Mac 4:12-20). Among these evils, the introduction of sports to our people is clearly exposed. A very sad story it is.

In our modern times we may not see clearly the evil in things such as sports. For us, it may seem like just a form of exercise. But there is more at work than the eye can see...

You will know a tree by its fruit, our Master said. What is the fruit of sports in our lives, or in the lives of the people of the nations? Among all the major world problems that perplex the minds of men today, the newspapers are devoting more and more space to SPORTS. Why? Some brothers have fallen away, having first given in to buying a newspaper, just to read the sports page. Why is there that pull?

The pitch of passion at a sports event is ever increasing. In Europe there are warning signs at rest stops on the highways saying that buses which are carrying sports fans coming to and from games are not allowed to stop. Why? Because the fans are often so impassioned and violent that there have been major fights and even murders, not to mention the destruction of property right on the highway. Why?

In the quote from the book of Maccabees it was THE PRIESTHOOD who became completely defiled by sports (2 Mac 4:14). Though they may have been late for everything else, "at the stroke of the gong, they would hurry to the games. They neglected the sacrifices, ceased to show any interest in serving the altar..." This is because the priests had found something else to take up the place in their heart which is reserved for Him. This is a HIGH PLACE.

High Place — something you look forward to, you wait for eagerly. You get excited about it, spend all your time talking about it, telling stories about it. You devote

yourself to it, get good feelings when you think and talk about it, wait with anticipation, dreaming about and planning the next game. But it is not our Father, not His word, not our Master Yahshua.

The gatherings grow silent. Only a few people share, not 1 Pet 4:11, the very utterance of God. The Breaking of Bread is quiet, dead silence. A few new disciples have long, dry thank offerings.

No prophets are speaking. We do not hear the very word of God. You feel uncomfortable, and uneasy at the Breaking of Bread, and at the sacrifices. Someone should speak — no one does. No one has vision.

At least we look forward to the basketball game at noon. You can give yourself there. You feel good for a while. But there is such strife. Everyone is tearing his neighbor down.

You know something is not right, but everyone else is doing it. Even your leaders encourage you to join in... they even COMMAND the saints to play — pagan revelry.

The prophets need to speak, to control the people, to give them vision, direction, encourage them, spur them on to a life of obedience, giving up their own lives to love their brothers.

There is no law against basketball, soccer, or whatever. The prophets (plural) need to speak to give whatever direction and stimulate the people. The prophets (plural) need to lead everything — the sacrifices, the Breaking of Bread, everything. The prophets (plural) run the Edah. Then everyone is released to share what he has in his heart. Everyone brings what he has and we all get fed. We have the strength and vision to go on. Praise and glory, obedience go to our Master Yahshua.

Then we do not give our strength to other things, vain things, idols that sap our strength and cause our first love to grow cold (Rev 2:4). People in the Ephesian church kept speaking after this happened, but it was not (1 Pet 4:11) the very utterance of God. They were in the flesh. Our Father was not adding to their number (Acts 2:47). They

could not communicate Yahshua's overcoming life (2 Tim 3:5), His spirit. They clung to a form of godliness, but denied its power. Their numbers did increase, but in the flesh. These fallen churches, like Rome, because Christianity today... [from the notes of Qashab]

Ex 32:6 — “to play”. Sounds familiar doesn't it? After the morning sacrifice they rose up to play. The word *play* means to indulge in revelry. The word *revel* means “take pleasure in”, as Isa 58:13 says. It is clamorous activity without a purpose and does not lead to or pertain to godliness. But godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Tim 6:6).

Ex 32:6 — They rose up to play (6711) — to sport, to laugh, be entertained, to jest, to make sport, mock. The word *sports* is derived from the word *play* (revel in, be engrossed, absorbed, attention occupied wholly, pre-occupied). Ex 32:6 — “Sat down, rose up... Sat down and rose up...” represents a religious fantasy, a religious practice, as sports (the word *play* — rose up to play = the empathy of the fans who sit down, rise up, engrossed in every movement of the players.

Let ALL you do — no matter what it is — ALL be done for the glory of God, whether eating or drinking, be done for the kingdom of God, engrossed in the word of God — evangelism, prophesy.

The tribe of Levi was chosen to represent all Israel (Ex 19:5-6; 32:6,26-29) as the priesthood because they repented from playing (Dt 4:15,25,27,29-31; 6:7; Mal 4:6).

1 Jn 5:21 — Keep yourself free from idols. This is a word to the whole Body. But **PROPHETS MUST EXHORT**. False prophets encourage them to play sports. False leaders lead the saints into sin by playing. Tyrannical leaders command the saints to play against their wills and consciences.

So, consider carefully what you are doing, as you introduce your little child to the thrill of a competitive sport. It has certainly been the downfall of many who could not wisely judge themselves. Certainly some find it all so boring and prefer more

intellectual stimulation. But for others, it will get into their blood and eventually take possession of them.

In the same way that some people can take one drink of alcoholic beverages and be disgusted by the taste, another will become an addict. So, some may argue, "Well, it is good to drink a little from time to time." But others who have seen first-hand the anguish of alcoholism would disagree. Addiction to sports is similar.

The last words of the apostle John to us in 1 Jn 5:21 are "guard yourselves from idols." Idolatry is subtle.