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# That They all May Be One

John 17:21



Chapter Seven

## Entertainment & Recreation

Clarence W. Fell

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### Entertainment and Recreation

In our effort to restore New Testament Christianity we must address the question of entertainment and recreation. The practice of churches providing entertainment and recreation has become so common that few people stop to consider if it is a work that God approves. In fact, many people insist that their church provide recreation or else they will go find a church that does. As a result of this modern mindset, many religious groups have gotten themselves caught up in a costly race to see who can provide the best entertainment and recreation programs.

In stark contrast, we stand at the other end of the spectrum. We hold up the Bible and nothing more. There are thousands of congregations like us throughout the world. Our success is contrary to everything that the modern religious world understands. We provide no facilities for recreation or entertainment. We have no fellowship hall, no kitchen, and no sports programs. We don't even have a basketball goal out on the parking lot. Our unusual stand puzzles most people. They see modern denominations eagerly using recreational programs to draw people in, and here we stand opposing such things. We are certainly different, to say the least, and in this chapter we will present our reasons for being different. We will explain why we believe the church should focus on being the church and leave recreation in the realm of the home.

### Feeding 5000 People

We oppose recreational programs because Jesus opposed such things. On one occasion, Jesus fed 5000 people and on another He fed 4000 people, but Jesus never used food to lure people in to hear His preaching. He provided food, not as enticement, but rather as an act of benevolence. Concerning the 5000, Mark records that the people, *"...have nothing to eat"* (Mark 6:36). In the case of the 4000 Jesus states,

*"I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away*

*hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar*" (Mark 8:2,3). The people had followed Jesus for three days, but He had not yet given them anything to eat. Their situation was serious, and so Jesus acted to rescue them from a dire situation. Jesus did not perform these miracles to lure people in to hear His preaching or to entertain them. He did these miracles to save the people from physical danger. These two miracles are not comparable to the modern recreational programs so popular today.

The day after Jesus had fed the 5000, the people sought Him, but He rejected them (John 6:26,27). He rejected them because they were interested in material things, not spiritual things. When Jesus was through speaking to them, most of the people turned away to follow Him no more (John 6:66), but Jesus did not go chasing after them. He did not attempt to draw them back by giving them a treat. He could have easily lured them back, but He refused. He refused to resort to a program of food and miracles even if it meant that they would stop following Him. If they were not interested in spiritual matters, then He would press on until He found people who were spiritually minded.

Jesus had a mission. He knew His mission and would not be sidetracked from His mission by the shallow material desires of men. Modern religious groups, on the other hand, frequently do the opposite. They aggressively chase after people using food, entertainment, and recreation to lure people in. When they practice such things, they are not following in the steps of Jesus.

Our goal is to imitate Jesus. We want to restore New Testament Christianity and truly follow Jesus. This means that we must also follow His example of refusing to use gimmicks. We are seeking people who are spiritually minded. We refuse to be sidetracked from this mission by shallow material desires.

"Yes, but," someone objects, "doesn't recreation help a church achieve its mission?" No. Jesus did not think so. He could have easily increased His following by giving the people what they wanted, but He refused. He did not come to give man what man wanted, but rather to provide what man needed.

## I Corinthians 11:17-34

We oppose recreational programs because the apostle Paul opposed such things. The Christians at Corinth claimed to be observing the Lord's Supper, but they had turned the Lord's Supper into something undesirable. They had turned it into an opportunity to fill their bellies and have a party. Paul gave them instructions to correct this problem.

Paul restored the Lord's Supper to its rightful place by reminding the Corinthians of the great honor and respect due the Lord's supper. He warned them that if they did not show proper respect for the Lord's Supper that they would be in danger of judgment.

After restoring the Lord's Supper to its proper place, Paul then takes the recreational element out of their worship service and places it in the realm of the home. Paul states, "*But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home*" (I Cor. 11:34). It's really just that simple. We could not ask for a clearer statement about where recreational activities belong. Therefore, we don't have recreational programs as a work of the church. We do not have a multi-purpose room, or a family life center, or a gymnasium, because it is not the work of the church to provide such things. Our practice is unusual when compared to most modern groups, but our practice is clearly in harmony with Paul's teaching.

## Rejecting Paul

We oppose recreational programs because we dare not reverse the teaching of Paul. Many religious groups reject Paul's teaching. They argue that "*eat at home*" does not mean "*eat at home.*" They claim that "*eat at home*" means "*don't eat during the worship service.*" This self-serving interpretation is disappointing, but not surprising. The Bible is frequently twisted to suit modern desires. For example, the Bible directly says that homosexuality is wrong, but professed Christians ignore this teaching (I Cor. 6:9,10). The Bible directly says that a woman is not to be in authority over a man, but professed Christians ignore this teaching (I Tim. 2:12). The Bible directly says that baptism is a part of God's plan of salvation, but professed Christians ignore this teaching, too (I Peter 3:21). So, it is no surprise when people ignore Paul's teaching about recreation. It is sad, but many who profess to follow the Bible, ignore it when they don't like what it teaches.

We refuse to reverse Paul's teaching. We refuse to add recreation to

the work of the church. We do not want a religion that merely makes us feel good in this life. We want a religion that truly leads to eternal life.

## A Misappropriation of Funds

We oppose recreational programs because such expenditures are a misappropriation of funds. The concept of authority involved here is simple. A congregation has been authorized to assemble for worship, to teach the Word, and practice limited benevolence, but God has not authorized recreation as a work for churches to pursue. When people use the Lord's money in ways that He has not authorized, it is a misappropriation of funds. In other words, they are stealing from God. If such a thing were done in any other organization it would be recognized as illegal and punished according to the laws of our land. Tragically, many people will learn too late in the court of God that they are guilty of stealing from God.

### I Timothy 5:8,16

We oppose recreational programs because they wrongfully burden congregations. Paul wrote, *"But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. ... If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows."* (I Timothy 5:8,16). If spending the church's money on benevolence is discouraged, then how can we accept recreational expenses?

The responsibility for benevolence rests primarily upon the home. The reason God arranged it this way was to keep congregations from being burdened. God was not trying to free up money for recreational programs. He had more serious matters in mind.

The modern practice of providing recreation as a work of the church is out of step with Paul's teaching. Paul forbade burdening churches with most benevolence expenses, but modern man turns around and saddles churches with tens and hundreds of thousands of dollars in recreational spending. How can we believe that God approves of these

financial burdens when Paul said to keep the church free of financial burdens? If spending the Lord's money on benevolence is discouraged, then how can we believe He is pleased with recreational expenses?

## Adding to the Bible

We oppose recreational programs because they add something to the work of the church not found in the Bible. Recreation is not new. Back in the apostles' day there were a variety of sports and other activities that they could have sponsored, but they did not. We never read in the Bible where God authorized congregations to sponsor entertainment and recreation. We never read of the apostles organizing a sporting event for Jesus. We never read about congregations forming local teams and then competing with one another in a church league. Certainly Christians in the first century enjoyed sports and even participated in sports. No doubt, their children enjoyed a variety of games just as much as our children do today, but such things were left in the realm of the home.

## Bigger and Bigger and Bigger

Another reason we oppose recreational programs is because they lead to more and more abuse. If people become a part of a congregation because of the recreational programs, then to keep those people, bigger and better programs will be needed. Also, for a church to keep attracting new people, it must consistently offer the bigger and better programs. A church in Texas has built on a McDonalds restaurant for the convenience of its members.

Modern religious groups are quickly learning about this trap. It hasn't been very many years since the common entertainment and recreation program was little more than a set of horseshoe pits, a basketball goal, and games on the lawn. These activities were often followed by refreshments in a simple basement where a few tables and chairs were set up. That was the beginning of the competition to be bigger and better, and it is far from over. Some groups are slowly dwindling away because they did not keep up with the competition. Tragically, priceless

souls will be lost along the way.

## An Ineffective Effort

Another reason we oppose recreational programs because they are an irresponsible use of resources. Sowing the seed through recreational programs is not an effective tool. As evidence, consider the moral decline of our society. While modern religion has focused more and more on recreation, our society has grown worse and worse. If recreation is such an effective tool for sowing the seed and transforming lives then why the continual decline? With the amount of money and time spent on recreation today, our country should be brimming with morality and character, but just the opposite is the case. Our society is seeing moral lows that previous generations could scarcely imagine. Our prisons are bursting at the seams with more criminals than we ever anticipated. Obviously, recreation is not the answer. Recreation is not a great evangelistic tool. While people play games in the name of Jesus, the real work of Christianity remains undone. Recreational programs do not send soldiers out to fight the good fight. These programs are actually more of a hiding strategy. People hide within the walls of their religious compounds, pretending to fighting the good fight while they play basketball for Jesus. Satan must be absolutely delighted.

## Insulting the Word

We oppose using recreational programs to attract people to Christ because such tactics are an insult to the Word of God and the blood of Christ. Resorting to gimmicks infers that the sacrifice of Christ alone is not appealing enough. Resorting to gimmicks suggests a lack of confidence in the Gospel. Paul said, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation”* (Romans 1:16). If people must first be lured in with the promise of entertainment, and then subtly exposed to the Gospel, then something is wrong. The saving blood of Christ should be our leading message, our middle message, and our ending message. The blood of Christ does not need recreational programs to prop it up. If the only way we can keep people around to hear about the saving blood of Christ is to promise them some sort of recreational treat, then we need to reconsider the example of

Christ in John 6. Perhaps, we need to reconsider where we are casting our pearls (Matt. 7:6). We need to learn how to let materially minded people go their own way. This may seem harsh, but it is consistent with the example of Christ.

## Yes, But...

We realize that many people will reject the preceding arguments. After all, recreation is a significant part of modern religion for many people. Therefore, providers of recreational programs advance a variety of arguments to defend their programs. Let's look into some of these arguments.

## Sowing the Seed with Sports

Perhaps the most popular defense is to argue that recreational programs are evangelistic tools. This line of thought usually claims that if recreational programs can be used to induce someone into hearing the Gospel, then the teaching opportunity justifies the program. Let's look into this argument.

First, people who use recreation to attract an audience are not following in the steps of Jesus (see John 6). He could have kept the crowds with Him for many days by simply giving them the food they desired, but He refused. If He had kept them around longer they might have begun to understand His message and been converted, but Jesus did not see it that way. He refused to use food to keep an audience.

Next, consider the simple fact that recreation is not a teaching method. Claiming that recreation is a prime teaching tool does not prove that it is. If recreation is truly a teaching tool, then the World Series and the Super Bowl are two of the largest teaching events ever. Who would believe such a thing? While a mention of Jesus might be tacked on to a recreational program, the primary focus is still on recreation.

Recreational programs do not carry the Gospel out into our communities. Recreation does not fight the good fight, nor press the battle on to the camp of the enemy. For the most part, recreation is little more than gathering together in the safety of a church facility and hiding



from the evils that lurk about in our communities. Recreation may make people feel like they are doing something for Jesus, but it's not the evangelistic tool that many would like to believe it is.

Finally, we ask, if recreation is primarily a teaching tool, where do we draw the line? What about adding other activities to the work of the church in the name of teaching? Maybe a gardening program, or a course on bass fishing, or a course on auto mechanics. The variety of programs that a church could take up is almost endless. Where will man draw the line and say enough is enough? Unfortunately, man won't draw the line. Man keeps erasing and redrawing the line to accommodate an ever-growing appetite for bigger programs.

We believe that the line should be drawn where Paul drew the line (I Cor. 11:34). We have taken recreation out of the congregation and left it in the realm of the home. We follow Christ's example and use only the pure word of God to attract people. If the Gospel does not have enough appeal for some people, then we won't attempt to sweeten the pot. Rather we will let them go their own way just as Jesus did.

## Ministering to the Whole Man

Some defend modern recreational programs by claiming that they are "ministering" to the whole man. Some will go so far as to claim that it is the duty of a congregation to "minister" to the whole man by providing recreational programs. This might sound noble at first, but it is not in step with the Scriptures.

First, this argument overlooks the fact that Jesus refused to "minister" to the whole man in this recreational manner (John 6).

Second, this argument overlooks the fact that Paul said that such "ministering" belongs in the realm of the home, not the church (I Cor. 11:34). Paul even placed the ministry of benevolence primarily upon the home (I Tim. 5:16).

Third, this argument overlooks the fact that man is not to add to or take away from the Bible (Rev. 22:18,19). Yet, this argument adds a "ministry" to the church that God has not authorized. Just because someone refers to something as a "ministry" does not automatically make it an approved work for the church.

Fourth, the advocates of this argument also add a whole new

meaning to the word “ministry.” The Bible never speaks of the “ministry” of recreation. The mission of the church is primarily spiritual with some limited benevolence, but no where is the church authorized to add a “ministry” of entertainment and recreation to its work.

Fifth, this argument involves a congregation in the sinful practice of misappropriating funds (see page 5).

## It is Just an Another Method

Some people defend modern recreational programs by saying that such programs are just another method for churches to do their work. Let's take a moment to consider when something is merely an approved alternate method, and when something is actually an illegal change that goes beyond what we are authorized to do.

First, for recreational programs to be an alternate method for a congregation to use, such programs must fulfill a work God has assigned. So, we ask, what work has God assigned which recreation fulfills? Or, what work did God assign that a game of softball fulfills? The answer is none. God has not assigned any work that recreation is key to fulfilling. Recreational events are not merely an alternate method, they are separate events that God did not authorize. Recreation itself accomplishes nothing which has been assigned by God.

Some people think that if they have a prayer or a brief devotion before or after a recreational event, then the recreation becomes a valid teaching tool. While the devotional message might be a good message, the fact remains that the recreation itself is not a teaching tool. The recreation is a separate thing that could easily take place without any prayer or devotion at all. The little mention that Jesus gets before or after the recreation is secondary to the primary event of the recreation.

Second, there is the matter of expediency and good stewardship. A congregation's primary mission is to sow the seed. Every available option is not always expedient and responsible. Some programs are wrong just because they are wasteful. Spending the Lord's money (which is usually in short supply) on recreational programs is a clear example of poor stewardship. Sure, people are having fun and feeling good, but how much do these programs really connect with lost souls? The sad truth is that recreational programs primarily benefit the local

members and make them feel as though they are doing the Lord's work, when in reality the Lord's work is left undone.

Third, if tacking a comment about Jesus and His sacrifice on Calvary magically makes games and parties a proper work for a church, then almost every activity one can think of becomes an authorized work. Who would believe such a thing?

## Do Good unto All Men

Some people justify their modern recreational programs by appealing to Galatians 6:10. In this verse Paul teaches, *"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."* Advocates of recreational programs argue that since we are to do good unto all people, and since games and parties are good, congregations are therefore authorized to provide recreational programs.

If man is allowed to define "good" to suit himself, this is a solid argument. Furthermore, just about anything that man decides is "good" is automatically authorized. Obviously, this leads to more problems than it solves. Just because man labels something as "good" does not prove that God agrees. In II Timothy 3:16,17 we are told that the Scriptures equip us, *"...for every good work."* Before we can truly say that a work is "good," we must first find the Scriptures that say it is "good."

## But It's Edifying

Some justify recreational programs by saying that recreation edifies the members. This argument uses the word "edify" in a way that is not found in the Scriptures. The Bible does not use the word "edify" to refer to playing games and having parties. When the Bible speaks of edification, it speaks of teaching. Paul spoke of edification saying, *"But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive*

*edification*" (I Cor. 14:3-5).

Also consider the fact that recreation does not promote spiritual growth. If recreation promotes spiritual growth, then the sports stars of our day should be great examples of spirituality, but sadly, they are often anything but spiritual role models. If recreation promotes spiritual growth then our nation should be a great spiritual nation because of the tremendous amount of time and money spent on recreational activities nationwide, but sadly, our nation is not a great example of spirituality. The fact is that recreation does not promote spiritual growth. While a little talk about Jesus may take place in the same location as recreational activities, Jesus is not the primary focus. Rather He is demoted to a secondary consideration tacked on to justify playing games in the name of Christ.

## If the Individual Can, then the Congregation Can

Some people attempt to defend recreational programs by arguing that if an individual Christian can do it privately, then it can be added to the

### God's Plan of Salvation

Hear the Gospel: Romans 10:14-17

Believe: John 3:16; Hebrews 11:6

Repent: Luke 13:3, Acts 17:30,31

Confess: Romans 10:9,10; Matthew 10:32,33

Be united with Christ in baptism: Romans 6:3-5

None of the above steps save in and of themselves. It is the grace of God that appointed these as steps leading to the saving blood of Jesus. To get to the saving blood each step must be taken just as it is presented in the Bible. These steps only have value because God's grace has so granted. Without God's grace these steps would be worthless. Have you followed these steps to the saving blood of Jesus?

work of the local congregation. Let's look into this argument for a moment.

First, this argument fails to take into account the distinction that the Bible draws between the individual and the congregation. The Bible makes this distinction in I Corinthians 11, when Paul teaches that if anyone is hungry he should eat at home. Here we see that what could be done at home was not allowable as a work of the church. In I Timothy 5:16 we saw that benevolence was the primary responsibility of the individual and that the church was not to be burdened with certain benevolent needs. Once again we see that what was proper for the individual was not proper for the church.

Second, very few people will consistently stand by this argument. Most people easily see that if everything an individual can do is a proper work for the church, there is nothing that the church can not take on as a work. Who would really believe such a thing? Fortunately, not very many people do. Even the people who use this argument to justify recreational programs realize that it is a faulty argument. Unfortunately, they prefer to embrace their faulty argument rather than to give up their church-sponsored recreation.

## But It Doesn't Say that You Can't

It is true that the New Testament does not specifically state *Thou shall not add recreational programs to the work of the church*. But, the New Testament **does specifically state** that we are not to add to or take away from the Word. The Bible is undeniably clear on this point.

Paul wrote, "*Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it*" (Galatians 3:15).

John wrote, "*For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book*" (Rev. 22:18,19).

The absence of a specific prohibition against recreational programs does not automatically authorize recreation. God has told us what He

desires. Our duty is to respect His will without assuming that He also desires other things in addition to what He said.

Those people who insist that a specific prohibition must be given before something is wrong turn the Bible into an impossible monstrosity. Can you imagine how many volumes it would take to specifically list everything that is allowed and everything that is not allowed? Can you imagine the depth of detail that would be required to assure that someone did not presume to find a loophole? Fortunately, God did not pursue such an overwhelming course. He simply told us what He wanted and then told us not to add to or take away from His word.

Next, consider that if everything that is not specifically forbidden is allowable, then Galatians 3:15 and Revelation 22:18,19 are virtually meaningless. Let's consider the Lord's Supper as an example. It is observed using unleavened bread and grape juice. This is our practice as taught in Matthew 26:26-30. There is never a specific statement in the Bible that says we can't use something else in the Lord's Supper. There is not a prohibition against using cookies and soda pop or burgers and fries in the Lord's Supper. According to the *But It Doesn't Say That You Can't* argument we must conclude that such changes are acceptable because there is no verse that specifically states *Thou shalt not change the Lord's Supper*. Once this way of thinking is accepted, the door is open to almost any change that men desire, and Revelation 22:18,19 and Galatians 3:15 mean nothing. Most people will reject the *But It Doesn't Say That You Can't* argument in connection with the Lord's Supper and other changes that they don't approve of, but they will turn around and accept it as their authority for adding recreational programs to the work of the church.

## The Fellowship Argument

Modern man uses the word "fellowship" to describe any enjoyable gathering of people. When the Bible uses the word fellowship, it refers to things far more serious than having a party and playing games. Consider the following example from John, "*If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us*

from all sin" (I John 1:6,7). When the Bible speaks of fellowship, it speaks of a spiritual partnership that we have with Christ and one another. We must not allow man to redefine Bible words and thereby justify error and unauthorized practices. Our duty is to understand and use Bible words in the way God intended.

## Gospel Meetings are Just a Gimmick

Some people defend their recreational programs by claiming that gospel meetings, lectureships, Vacation Bible School, and debates are all just gimmicks, too. This is the old *two wrongs make a right* approach. Their thinking is that if we can sin by holding a gospel meeting, then we

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have no right to condemn their sin of recreational programs.

First, understand that these things are not recreational events. These things are exclusively teaching arrangements. We do not use any trickery or gimmickry to lure people into these teaching arrangements. We offer no door prizes, no coffee, no sweets, no refreshments, no prize coupons taped under seat cushions, nor any other incentive other than the opportunity to learn about the Bible. For someone to claim that such teaching opportunities are mere gimmicks and equivalent to modern recreational program is blatantly dishonest and misleading. Tragically, people who follow such dishonest preachers and leaders will suffer eternal ruin (Matt. 15:14).

## The Love Feast of Jude 12

Some people claim that Jude 12 authorizes recreational programs. The problem is that we are not certain what was being practiced in Jude 12. Different people have different ideas. Some think it was just a picnic, others think it was a church sponsored meal, some think it was a meal for needy Christians, and some think that it was the Lord's Supper (see *Barnes Notes on the New Testament* for more information). When we take I Corinthians 11:34 and I Timothy 5:16 into consideration we can easily see that Jude 12 does not contradict these verses and now authorize recreational programs. In fact, Jude 12 condemns the self serving attitude that recreational programs tend to accommodate.

## The Water Fountain Argument

Some arguments grasp for anything to justify recreational programs. Water fountains, electric lights, and central heat have actually been claimed as authority for recreational programs. Only in a religious debate would such an argument be advanced. If an employee group was trying to convince their company president and board of directors to start a recreational program for the employees, they would never advance such an argument. Yet, the supposedly "spiritually enlightened" will advance this as a serious argument (and we wonder why people laugh and snicker at religion). Providing a comfortable setting for



worship and teaching is not the equivalent of organizing a baseball team, or building a gym, or having a dinner in the fellowship hall. To claim otherwise is dishonest. Those who make such a dishonest claim, and those who follow them, need to consider the words of Christ when He said, *“They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch”* (Matt. 15:14).

## The Rest Room Argument

Perhaps the most desperate attempt to justify recreational programs is made by appealing to the existence of rest rooms in the church building (yes, this really happens). The argument generally says something like, “Your church building has rest rooms in it, so we can have a fellowship hall and other recreational facilities if we want.” This argument would be humorous if it weren’t such a serious matter. What makes it even worse is that people probably learned this argument from their preacher or other Bible teacher. Let’s take a moment to see how this argument stands up to reason.

First, let’s notice that the common activities in the fellowship hall are recreational activities. Rest rooms, on the other hand, are not for recreational purposes. Just the opposite as a matter of fact. Rest rooms are designed for individual privacy, not a party. Rest rooms are clearly not a recreational facility.

Next, let’s consider the matter of necessity. A rest room meets a necessary need. Rest room facilities are an essential part of providing for an assembly, whether the assembly is religious or secular. Recreational facilities are not a necessary part of providing for an assembly.

Next, let’s consider the matter of urgency. The recreational activities commonly found in the fellowship hall do not parallel the urgency and necessity of tending to rest room needs. A rest room is not merely a convenience. When the need for a rest room occurs, people have a limited time to tend to this need. Some people with medical conditions have almost no time. It is the responsibility of those who organize an assembly to see to it that proper rest room facilities are provided, and that the rest room facilities comply with local and state codes.

Finally, some people will actually argue for their recreational

programs by pointing out that churches back in the apostles' day did not have rest rooms. Of course they did not have modern rest rooms like we do today. They did not have electricity, plumbing, and modern sewage systems, either. Nor were they under laws that required them to provide sanitary rest room facilities as we are today.

Paul said, "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables*" (II Tim. 4:3,4). The rest room argument is a good example of people heaping up teachers and turning aside to fables.

## Are You Still Undecided?

The position that has been presented in this chapter is certainly unusual, especially when compared to what most religious groups practice today. Perhaps you agree that expensive programs and gyms are a bad idea, but you are saying to yourself, "It just doesn't seem to me that a little bit a recreation could do any harm." If you are still undecided, then consider these final thoughts.

First, understand that we do not oppose entertainment and recreation in the realm of the home. Our members are commonly involved in a wide variety of recreational activities. We enjoy getting together with one another and sharing a meal, or watching a ball game, or competing with one another in a friendly game of ball. We only oppose adding such activities to the work of a the church. We believe that recreation is a work of the home, not the church. As long as wholesome recreation is pursued as a work of the home we have no objection. In fact, our members enjoy their favorite forms of entertainment and recreation just as much as anyone.

Next, remember that the big programs of today began years ago with the little programs that looked harmless. When people accept a "little" change, things have a way of growing into something that they never intended. After the first step is taken away from the Bible, additional steps are easier to take.

Next, remember that man's approval does not equal God's approval. Solomon warned us that, "*There is a way that seems right to a man, but*

*its end is the way of death*" (Prov. 14:12). We have chosen not to trust our own judgment in this matter, but rather to completely surrender to the teaching of the Bible, even when that means that recreational programs will not be included as a work of the church.

Finally, consider that even a little change is wrong. A "little" change still violates Galatians 3:15 and Revelation 22:18,19. James wrote, "*For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all*" (James 2:10). There is no way that we can deliberately rebel against God's word, even just a little, and still please Him. We must follow the Bible and leave recreation in the realm of the home. Our number one goal is to get to heaven. We refuse to gamble with our eternity or the eternity of our loved ones. We refuse to gamble with your eternity, too.

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*COMING NEXT CHAPTER*

**That They all  
May  
Be  
One**

John 17:21



Chapter eight  
**Institutionalism**

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