

# Idolatry of Sports

(Pray that All would see it as Foul Play)



## To the Reader

I would like to remind you my fellow brothers and sister in Christ, what God's word says both in the Old and New Testament concerning competition "sports." For if you truly and heartfully consider what's being said here, you will come to realize that competition sports are built on the foundation of pride which God hates and every trophy held by the victory become an idol of worship as well. And yes, I do mention and quote from the book of Maccabees (found mainly in the Greek Septuagint) which was part of the King James bible for over 200 years. However, it was removed from most of our modern-day version bibles as well as most King James bible sold today. However, there are still a few bible publishers (Cambridge being one of them) who still see it as having enough value to be placed in today's KJV bibles. Has the lust of sports corrupted the minds of those persons and publishers who had the audacity to consider them unworthy for today's modern bibles? God knows. Amen

## LEARNING FROM THE BOOK OF MACCABEES

It's sad to see fellow Christians today so wrapped up in the things of this world. For we are seen running alongside those who are seeking after empty vain pursuits. And one of those vain pursuits is competition sports. For isn't it true that we hear Christians talk and brag more on their favorite teams than they do on God or any church event. And we see parents spending so much time running their children to-and-fro from one practice to another, thus getting them hooked on it as well. Even church leaders have gotten involved and even boast about their favorite teams from the pulpit. And why Christian, for this is idolatry?

For we see in the books of Maccabees a falling away of the children of Israel who gave themselves to the ways of the Gentiles (Greek culture). And one of those ways was by building themselves a gymnasium and thus giving themselves over to idolatrous sports. I say this because competition sports are based on

the pride of man that lusts after victory and feeds on the attention from its onlookers. Just look at the frenzy and cheering of the crowds and the prideful reactions of the players. Again, this is idolatry brothers and sisters in Christ. And the sad part about all this is the fact that fellow Christians as well as our assemblies (churches) are getting involved in this idolatry by holding sport events in honor of it. My fellow Christians whom I love, do you really believe that God approves of this? No, of course not. For we also read in Proverbs that: *“He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy. (Psalm 147:10-11)* So God is not impressed or please with idolatrous sports events.

SOME SCRIPTURE TO CONSIDER ON THIS SUBJECT ABOVE:

- In those days lawless men came forth from the sons of Israel, and they persuaded many, saying, “Let us make a covenant with the Gentiles surrounding us, for ever since we were separated from them, many evils have found us.” This proposal found favor in their eyes, and some of the people eagerly desired to enter into this agreement. So they went to the king, and he gave them authority to observe the ordinances of the Gentiles. Then they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem according to the customs of the Gentiles, and made themselves as the uncircumcision. So they fell away from the holy covenant, yoked themselves to the Gentiles, and sold themselves to do evil. (1 Maccabees 1:11-15)
- But after the death of Seleucus, when Antiochus, called Epiphanes, took the kingdom, Jason the brother of Onias labored underhand to be high priest, Promising unto the king by intercession three hundred and threescore talents of silver, and of another revenue eighty talents: Beside this, he promised to assign an hundred and fifty more, if he might have license to set him up a place for exercise, and for the training up of youth in the fashions of the heathen, and to write them of Jerusalem by the name of Antiochians." (2 Maccabees 4:7-9)
- So there was the fullest expression of Hellenization and the adoption of foreign customs because of the surpassing wickedness of Jason, who was ungodly and not a true high priest. Therefore the priests were no longer eager to serve at the altar, but they despised the temple and neglected the sacrifices. Instead, they hastened to take part in the unlawful proceedings in the wrestling-school after the invitation to the discus. They counted the honors of their fathers as nothing, but regarded Greek honors as the best. (2 Maccabees 4:13-15)

## THEY DO IT TO RECEIVE A PERISHABLE CROWN

So again, God isn't impressed with our athletic abilities such as football, baseball, basketball, soccer or the worlds Olympic events. This is because all these things are built upon the pride of man which God hates. For his word says: *“Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, Than to divide the spoil with the proud.”* This spoil is referring also to the money or trophies that the proud victor receives in these sports events. (Proverbs 16:18-19) And let's take note to what Paul said concerting those who run in a race. For we read: *“Now everyone who competes exercises self-control in everything. They do it to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable crown.”* Notice how he distinguishes “they” (those who receive a perishable crown) from “we” (those of us who receive an imperishable crown). This is a clear indication that it's only those of the world who should be caught up in the vain, prideful, empty pursuits of sports, and not us Christians. (1 Corinthians 9:25)

Now you may be saying, “why would Paul use an evil illustration to make a point on how we should be conducting our life as Christians.” But I say, why not? Doesn’t Paul also use a thief as an illustration on the return of our Lord? For we read: *“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:2) And didn't the apostle John record the words of Jesus Himself when He said: *“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”* (Revelation 16:15) So, does the apostle Paul as well as John and even Jesus Himself approve the ways of a thief? God forbid, of course not. And let’s remember that Jesus said: *“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”* (Matthew 10:16) So, even though Jesus may be alluding to being sly and cunning at times, he clearly is not wanting us to do it in a harmful way as the serpent did to Eve.

## FOUL PLAY

*For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* (Galatians 5:14)

According to that passage above, does football, hockey, rugby, boxing or any other competitive sport show love to your neighbor? Or, can any of the fruits of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22 be applied to them as well? And what about the passage that says: *“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”* (Galatians 6:10) So again, can any of these be applied to sports? No, of course not. So why fellow Christians take part in any of them, or even worse, get you children hocked on it as well? For we are to: *“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”* (Proverbs 22:6)

So that being said, let us: *“admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.”* (Titus 2:1-8) So: *“Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”* (2 Corinthians 5:9-10)

And let’s not forget how many of our youth have died in football alone. For again, the Word of God says that *“Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.”* So, wouldn’t it make sense to keep a youth away from this? Here below are a few tragic article clippings on youth who have died playing High School Football.

- Experts Alarmed Over 13 High School Football Deaths This Season: For freshman Tyrell Cameron, it was a fractured neck after being hit during a punt return. Ben Hamm took a hit to the head. The same was true for Kenny Bui and Andre Smith. Cam’Ron Matthews felt woozy before he collapsed on the sidelines. Evan Murray also felt woozy, this following a hit to his stomach, while Luke Schemm collapsed on the sidelines soon after he got hit a final time. Within hours or days of their respective collisions or tackles, all seven of these high school football players were dead. In all, 13 high school and one youth football players have died since July 1, according to Doug Casa, Ph.D., the chief executive officer of the Korey Stringer Institute at the University of Connecticut, which researches sudden death in sport. Dr. Robert Cantu, who

researches catastrophic sports deaths, tells PEOPLE, "Even one death is too many." Taken from the website - People at: <https://people.com/sports/experts-alarmed-over-13-high-school-football-deaths-this-season/>

- We Had No Idea This Many Kids Have Died Playing High School Football This Year: Since the start of the high school football season, five high school football players have died following on-field injuries, matching both last year's total and the average number of football-related deaths since the late 1990s, according to the National Center for Catastrophic Sport Injury Research at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Between 2005 and 2014, another 92 high school football players died indirectly from the sport, with causes ranging from heart-related issues to heat stroke and water intoxication. On October 5, for example, Roddrick "Rod" Williams, an offensive lineman at Burke County High School in Georgia, died two weeks after he collapsed during practice. Burke County Coroner Susan Salemi told WSB-TV that his death was due to a heart condition. Amid lingering unease over the long-term effects of concussions, some schools have considered getting rid of football altogether. A string of serious injuries at one Missouri high school—paired with diminished participation—led the school board to eventually shut down the football program in June. Taken from the website - Mother Jones at: <https://www.motherjones.com/media/2015/10/high-school-football-death-camron-matthews/>

## PRIDE GOETH BEFORE DESTRUCTION

*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. (Isaiah 14:12-14)*

So again, God hates arrogance and pride because it not only brought about the fall of Satan, but the fall of mankind also. For in Genesis chapter 3:4-6 we read that Eve's heart was deceived by the Devil's tempting words, wanting to be like God and thus bringing sin upon her, Adam, and the whole human race as well. And we know because of this folly, God out of his heart of love toward us, had to send his beloved Son Jesus Christ to the cross for our sins. So again, God hates pride and all competition sports are based on pride. Yes, that includes playing sports with you children if it done in a competitive manner. That's because kids, just like adults, play to win and the only reason they want to win is to show their opponent that they are better than them. This all stems from pride in their hearts. For the Bible says: *"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."* (Proverbs 22:15)

So, by participating in sports activities with your children, you are training them in the ways of pride which God hates. So please don't go there my brothers and sister in Christ. And those of you who disagree with this, try to think of one sport activity that doesn't involve the quest to win. And again, the drive to win is to show your opponents that you are better than them. It's all based on PRIDE which is evil.

### THE DOWNFALL OF PRIDE IN ONES LIFE

- First, we have the fall of Satan as mentioned above: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above

the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.” (Isaiah 14:12-14)

- Then we have the pride and idolatry of sports: “In those days lawless men came forth from the sons of Israel, and they persuaded many, saying, ‘Let us make a covenant with the Gentiles surrounding us, for ever since we were separated from them, many evils have found us.’ This proposal found favor in their eyes, and some of the people eagerly desired to enter into this agreement. So they went to the king, and he gave them authority to observe the ordinances of the Gentiles. Then they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem according to the customs of the Gentiles, and made themselves as the uncircumcision. So they fell away from the holy covenant, yoked themselves to the Gentiles, and sold themselves to do evil.” (Maccabees 1:11-15)
- Then we have Ananias and Sapphira who let their pride get in the way of speaking the truth. They did not want people to know that they were holding back for themselves a portion of money from the land which they sold. This was all because they did not want people to look down upon their generosity. So therefore, pride got in their way. For we read in the book of Acts chapter 5 these words: “But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles’ feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.” Now if you read on you would find out that both of these two fell down dead after this. And let's remember what it says in Proverbs 16:18, “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” And such was the case with these two unfortunately.
- Also, we have King Herod who was acting in pride by soaking up the words of the people who were declaring him as a god: “And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.” (Acts 12:21-23) Again, a person was struck dead because of pride. So, I think now you can clearly see that pride goes before destruction as God’s word says.
- Now we have the qualifications of a Bishop which include the warning of a prideful heart: “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.” (1 Timothy 3:6)
- Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. (Proverbs 16:18)
- For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. (1 John 2:16)
- The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate. (Proverbs 8:13)
- When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom. (Proverbs 11:2)
- Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase. (Daniel 4:37)
- For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man. (Mark 7:21-23)

- The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us? (Psalm 12:3-4)
- Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments. (Psalm 119:21)

## IN CLOSING

So, what camp should we who are in Christ Jesus be in? Is it the prideful and self-seeking who will go into everlasting punishment, or those who are the Kingdom seekers who want to spent their life doing the things which matters most to God? For we must remember that Jesus separated the people groups of the world into two classes. One class is going into the kingdom of heaven, and the other into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. And why, because one class was a people who loved their neighbor as themselves, but the others were a class of self-seekers who were living only for themselves. (Matthew 25:31-46)

*Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 'for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matthew 25:31-46)*

### Reference:

- Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth. (Deuteronomy 11:18-21)
- But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (Galatians 5:22)
- Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. (Philippians 4:5)

### Video on Sports and Idolatry:

- [https://youtu.be/fWvCHji\\_jok](https://youtu.be/fWvCHji_jok)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMTPjuB3E2w&list=PL6BA21542FCB7A5CF>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24BcP8LY0ZU>