

General Topics :: Can a pastor punch?

Can a pastor punch? - posted by washad (), on: 2008/2/1 21:04

I have been reading the past issues discussed here and did not see where this has been discussed and I had a question. Is it acceptable for a Christian to fight (as in boxing, wrestling, etc.)? I ask because this is one of the ways that I relax and fellowship with some of the men that I know. Pretty much we have simple rules. Punch quick but not with power. No up percuss and avoid the nose! Contact is to be expected. No getting angry or there is no place for you in the "ring" again, ever. We really enjoy this and we have never had an accident, other than a few bloody noses. I guess the draw is simple: kill and pushing yourself as far as you can go. We don't have time limits just go till somebody quits. This is done either in a private gym or out in someones yard so this is not up for the public to see.

One of our regulars has apparently been telling some others about this and recently someone has said that this is not appropriate for a pastor since we are not to be given to violence and no brawler. I thought this was referring to fistfights in anger or within the family structure. By the way I am not very good and usually get the worst of it so believe me this is not a pride thing. I'll accept any reproof or correction with prayer. I just want to see this clearly, how does it look from the outside? What are your thoughts.

Re: Can a pastor punch? - posted by elanham (), on: 2008/2/1 23:33

Consider the Lords zeal over your physical body and its place in His heart. God warns us clearly on how we treat what He calls His temple. Corinthians tells us that the body is for the Lord and the Lord for the Body. He also instructs us that our bodies are the Temple of His Spirit. Those who damage or defile this Temple Him shall God destroy. Ask Christ to allow you to feel somewhat of His grief over how many of His children spend their time including Pastors. You will have a heightened sense of the severity and solemnity of life as God himself has. Remember you are called to be a soldier in the Kings service. What you refer to as fellowship is not the fellowship that the early Church shared. That form of fellowship centered around Christ and His brethren who shared a common desire to refresh Jesus rather than being refreshed or relaxed themselves. The question that you need to answer is this. Is it a time to "relax" by engaging in activities that do nothing but feed the ego of men acting like little boys. Or is it time to gird yourselves up knowing that the night cometh when no man can work. Knowing that many shall fall away giving heed to seducing spirits. How can we off the Kings household give ourselves to such activities as beating each other up when we are called to uttermost sobriety and fear. If we as His body are not stabbed inwardly by the condition of society and the Church how will the world acquire any sense of impending doom that is scheduled to come crashing down upon them. Awake O' thou that sleepest. Arise from the dead and Christ will shine on you. You must come to know that you are indeed engaged in a mortal combat with unseen forces that are determined to see Gods purposes for your life fall to the earth and become fruitless. Dont spend your precious energies physical or emotional playing one upmanship games with others but spend them on the true wrestling match that will call for the expenditure of every ounce of fortitude that you have in your spirit by the Grace of God. Grace, Grace to you.

Re: Can a pastor punch? - posted by rowdy2 (), on: 2008/2/2 2:26

Whatever you do, give thanks and do it to the Glory of God. Give thanks you were able to perform a service for God. So me don't have this freedom. I am one of those because I was kind of from the more baser sort in my youth and have a weakness in that area. Our Lord hedges His children up and I have to wait until His will is made known to me or I'll spend all my time blabbing for my Shepard.

Some Pastors are bruised reeds but some of the ones that have power and covered with a little more camel hair will send you running and discombobulated.

I have a better answer if it is given to you to receive it.

Prayer is asking God to bend our body soul and spirit to conform to His will. Wait in belief and when The Spirit has searched out your heart it will be given to you if the desires of your heart are the will of God.. We are not passing royal decree. We are subjects serving and attempting to do the will of Our Lord the King and His royal house.

Eddie

Re: can a pastor punch - posted by BVO (), on: 2008/2/2 2:55

I feel about the same way as elanham. We do alot of these debates at home as there are those who are given to entertainment, and those who believe that entertainment is a time killer and a distraction from the work. There are many things that were lawful to Paul, but not expedient. I was thinking earlier about this same sort of issue of christian oximorons (sp?) such as "christian fantasy", "christian fiction", and "christian violence".....I think that Philippians 4:8 is powerful- FINALLY, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy- think about such things. And may I add? Do these things.

The world around you watches you to see what a christian looks like. I personally believe that violence is wrong and most heathen will have a better idea of "wrong" than many christians thus giving them the excuse of hypocrisy to stay away.

What is an answer? We in Ohio at least for a while had the mysterious pastoral wood cutting/chopping connection going on for these and more reasons:

1. Many people burn firewood
2. Many need help cutting firewood
3. Brethren need fellowship
4. Eating and working are great environments for talking and sharing.
5. Many pastors need an outlet for exercise and stress relief.
6. You are blessing a person who obviously need help.
7. It will baffle an unsaved person that others would selflessly help them for no gain

I actually was considerably affected as an unsaved person by a christian offering to help me cut firewood which gave him the right and time to speak into my life words of life ultimately causing me to trust in Christ. This is a rather lengthy way to say that there are ambitious ways to "relax" while doing the Lord's work that are lawful and good. I hope this helps. Love in Christ, Barry

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2008/2/2 7:19

Quote:
-----One of our regulars has apparently been telling some others about this and recently someone has said that this is not appropriate for a pastor since we are not to be given to violence and no brawler. I thought this was referring to fistfights in anger or within the family structure. By the way I am not very good and usually get the worst of it so believe me this is not a pride thing. I'll accept any reproof or correction with prayer. I just want to see this clearly, how does it look from the outside? What are your thoughts.

Boxing is definitely violence. We are very numbed to the fact of tv and movies showing death and violence so much that it does not move us. If you read through the epistles many times it talks about violence and wrath. And the fruit of the spirit is the opposite, gentleness and self control.

Re: Can a pastor punch?, on: 2008/2/2 10:01

Quote:
-----Romans 14:22 Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

"If in doubt, throw it out", I always say. If you feel "ok" about having that kind of fun with your buddies and you don't feel that the LORD is pricking your heart over it, I mean why not. If it's taking you away from the word of God and prayer, then you should re evaluate your position. It may be something you will have to relinquish.

By the way, of the posts that I have read so far in this thread, everyone seems to think that he's angry and he's having a fight with his buddies. But that's not what's in his original post, he says that he enjoys the wrestling, it's a past time. And he is wondering if this past time is a hindrance.

Re: Can a pastor punch?, on: 2008/2/2 11:49

Interesting question - I've never heard it asked before

Should there be a problem with *friendly* boxing bouts, any more than any competitive sport? I'm honestly not sure. The way our brother described these bouts it seems that there's no animosity and no harm done beyond a few bruises, which you could get in any sport.

I can see the point of those who have responded so far, that any aim to hurt another person is wrong, but would be much more concerned if a Christian took up karate or kick boxing, because of the unclean *spiritual* origin of these sports.

in Him

Jeannette

Re: Can a pastor punch? - posted by Smokey (), on: 2008/2/2 12:27

I really can't imagine any of the great armies of ancient Israel that went out representing God, and the people, that had not done a whole lot of banging on each other to practice, and prepare for the battle. ?

Blessings Greg

Re:, on: 2008/2/2 12:43

Quote:
-----I really can't imagine any of the great armies of ancient Israel that went out representing God, and the people, that had not done a whole lot of banging on each other to practise, and prepare for the battle. ?

Israel and the Palestinians were and still are enemies. There is a wide gap between that example and what Washad is saying. He has a sparring partner that he enjoys wrestling with. Has Israel ever enjoyed wrestling with the enemy? They may have enjoyed killing them, but this is not what Washad is asking, and Washad's buddies are not the enemy.

Re: - posted by BrianPaul (), on: 2008/2/2 13:53

This is from Power of God by Charles Finney:
You may find some insight in this chapter.

Chapter IX

INNOCENT AMUSEMENTS

We hear much said, and read much, in these days, of indulging in innocent amusements. I heard a minister, some time since, in addressing a large company of young people, 'say that he had spent much time in devising innocent amusements for the young.

Within a few years I have read several sermons and numerous articles pleading for more amusements than have been customary with religious people. With your consent, I wish to suggest a few thoughts upon this subject--first, what are not, and, secondly, what are innocent amusements.

1st. This is a question of morals.

2nd. All intelligent acts of a moral agent must be either right or wrong. Nothing is innocent in a moral agent that is not in accordance with the law and gospel of God.

3rd. The moral character of any and every act of a moral agent resides in the motive or the ultimate reason for the act. This I take to be self-evident and universally admitted.

4th. Now, what is the rule of judgment in this case? How are we to decide whether any given act of amusement is right or wrong, innocent or sinful?

I answer: 1st. By the moral law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," etc., "and thy neighbor as thyself." No intelligent act of a moral agent is innocent or right unless it proceeds from and is an expression of supreme love to God and equal love to man--in other words, unless it is benevolent. 2nd. The Gospel. This requires the same: "Therefore, whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." "Do all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." 3rd. Right reason affirms the same thing. Now, in the light of this rule, it is plain that it is not innocent to engage in amusements merely to gratify the desire for amusement. We may not innocently eat or drink to gratify the desire for food or drink. To eat or drink merely to gratify appetite is innocent enough in a mere animal, but in a moral agent it is a sin. A moral agent is bound to have a higher ultimate motive--to eat and drink that he may be strong and healthy for the service of God. God has made eating and drinking pleasant to us; but this pleasure ought not to be our ultimate reason for eating and drinking. So amusements are pleasant, but this does not justify us in seeking amusements to gratify desire. Mere animals may do this innocently, because they are incapable of any higher motive. But moral agents are under a higher law, and are bound to have another and a higher aim than merely to gratify the desire for amusements. Therefore, no amusement is innocent which is engaged in for the pleasure of the amusement, any more than it would be innocent to eat and drink for the pleasure of it. Again, no amusement is innocent that is engaged in because we need amusements. We need food and drink; but this does not justify us in eating and drinking simply because we need it. The law of God does not say, "Seek whatever ye need because ye need it"; but, "Do all from love to God and man." A wicked man might eat and drink selfishly--that is, to make his body strong to execute his selfish plans--but this eating and drinking would be sin, notwithstanding he needed food and drink.

Nothing is innocent unless it proceeds from supreme love to God and equal love to man, unless the supreme and ultimate motive be to please and honour God. In other words, to be innocent, any amusement must be engaged in because it is believed to be at the time most pleasing to God, and is intended to be a service rendered to Him, as that which, upon the whole, will honour Him more than anything else that we can engage in for the time being. I take this to be self-evident. What then? It follows:

1st. That none but benevolent amusements can be innocent. Fishing and shooting for amusement are not innocent. We may fish and hunt for the same reason that we are allowed to eat and drink--to supply nature with aliment, that we may be strong in the service of God. We may hunt to destroy noxious animals, for the glory of God and the interests of His kingdom. But fishing and hunting to gratify a passion for these sports is not innocent. Again, no amusement can be innocent that involves the squandering of precious time, that might be better employed to the glory of God and the good of man. Life is short. Time is precious. We have but one life to live. Much is to be done. The world is in darkness. A world of sinners are to be enlightened, and, if possible, saved. We are required to work while the day lasteth. Our commission and work require dispatch. No time is to be lost. If our hearts are right, our work is pleasant. If rightly performed, it affords the highest enjoyment and is itself the highest amusement. No turning aside for amusement can be innocent that involves any unnecessary loss of time. No man that realizes the greatness of the work to be done, and love, to do it, can turn aside for any amusement involving an unnecessary waste of time. Again, no amusement can be innocent that involves an unnecessary expenditure of the Lord's money. All our time and all our money are the Lord's. We are the Lord's. We may innocently use both time and money to promote the Lord's interests and the highest interests of man, which are the Lord's interests. But we may not innocently use either for our own pleasure and gratification. Expensive journeys for our own pleasure and amusement, and not indulged in with a single eye to the glory of God, are not innocent amusements, but sinful. Again, in the light of the above rule of judgment, we see that no form of amusement is lawful for an unconverted sinner. Nothing in him is innocent. While he remains impenitent and unbelieving, does not love God and his neighbor according to God's command, there is for him no innocent employment or amusement; all is sin.

And right here I fear that many are acting under a great delusion. The loose manner in which this subject is viewed by many professors of religion, and even ministers, is surprising and alarming. Some time since, in a sermon, I remarked that there were no lawful employments or innocent amusements for sinners. An aged clergyman who was present said, after service, that it was ridiculous to hold that nothing was lawful or innocent in an impenitent sinner. I replied: "I thought you were orthodox. Do you not believe in the universal necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit?" He replied: "Yes." I added: "Do you believe that an unregenerate soul does anything acceptable to God? Before his heart is changed, does he ever act from a motive that God can accept, in anything whatever? Is he not totally depraved, in the sense that his heart is all wrong, and therefore his actions must be all wrong?" He appeared embarrassed, saw the point, and subsided.

Whatever is lawful in a moral agent or according to the law of God is right. If anyone, therefore, engages lawfully in any employment or in any amusement, he must do so from supreme love to God and equal love to his neighbor; and is, there-

efore, not an impenitent sinner, but a Christian. It is simply absurd and a contradiction to say that an impenitent soul does, or says, or omits anything with a right heart. If impenitent, his ultimate motive must necessarily be wrong; and, consequently, nothing in him is innocent, but all must be sinful. What, then, is an innocent amusement? It must be that and that only which not only might be but actually is engaged in with a single eye to God's glory and the interests of His kingdom. If this be not the ultimate and supreme design, it is not an innocent, but a sinful amusement. Now, right here is the delusion of many persons, I fear. When speaking of amusements, they say: "What harm is there in them?" In answering to the selves and others this question, they do not penetrate to the bottom of it. If on the surface they see nothing contrary to morality, they judge that the amusement is innocent. They fail to inquire into the supreme and ultimate motive in which the innocence or sinfulness of the act is found. But apart from the motive no course of action is either innocent or sinful, any more than the motions of a machine or the acts of a mere animal are innocent or sinful. No act or course of action should, therefore, be adjudged as either innocent or sinful without ascertaining the supreme motive of the person who acts.

To teach, either directly or by implication, that any amusement of an impenitent sinner or of a backslider is innocent is to teach a gross and ruinous heresy. Parents should remember this in regard to the amusements of their unconverted children. Sabbath school teachers and superintendents who are planning amusements for their Sabbath schools, preachers who spend their time in planning amusements for the young, who lead their flocks to picnics, in pleasure excursions, and justify various games, should certainly remember that, unless they are in a holy state of heart, and do all this from supreme love to God and a design in the highest degree to glorify God thereby, these ways of spending time are by no means innocent, but highly criminal, and those who teach people to walk in these ways are simply directing the channels in which their depravity shall run. For be it ever remembered that, unless these things are indulged in from supreme love to God and designed to glorify Him, unless they are, in fact, engaged in with a single eye to the glory of God, they are not innocent, but sinful amusements. I must say again, and, if possible, still more emphatically, that it is not enough that they might be engaged in as the best way, for the time being, to honour and please God; but they must be actually engaged in from supreme love to God, with the ultimate design to glorify Him. If such, then, is the true doctrine of innocent amusements, let no impenitent sinner and no backslidden Christian suppose for a moment that it is possible for him to engage in any innocent amusements. If it were true, as the aged minister to whom I have referred and many others seem to believe, that impenitent sinners or backsliders can and do engage in innocent amusements, the very engaging in such amusements, being lawfully right and innocent in them, would involve a change of heart in the unconverted, and a return to God in the backslider. For no amusement is lawful unless it be engaged in as a love-service rendered to God and with design to please and glorify Him. It must not only be a love service, but, in the judgment of the one who renders it, it must be the best service that, for the time being, he can render to God--a service that will be more pleasing to Him and more useful to His kingdom than any other that can be engaged in at the time. Let these facts be borne in mind when the question of engaging in amusements comes up for decision. And remember, the question in all such cases is not, "What harm is there in this proposed amusement?" but, "What good can it do?" "Is it the best way in which I can spend my time?" "Will it be more pleasing to God and more for the interest of His kingdom than anything else at present possible to me?" "If not, it is not an innocent amusement, and I cannot engage in it without sin." The question often arises: "Are we never to seek such amusements?" I answer: It is our privilege and our duty to live above a desire for such things. All that class of desires should be so subdued by living so much in the light of God, and having so deep a communion with Him as to have no relish for such amusements whatever. It certainly is the privilege of every child of God to walk so closely with Him, and maintain so divine a communion with Him, as not to feel the necessity of worldly excitements, sports, pastimes, and entertainments to make his enjoyment satisfactory. If a Christian avails himself of his privilege of communion with God, he will naturally and by an instinct of his new nature repel solicitations to go after worldly amusements. To him such pastimes will appear low, unsatisfactory, and even repulsive. If he is of a heavenly mind, as he ought to be, he will feel as if he could not afford to come down and seek enjoyment in worldly amusements. Surely, a Christian must be fallen from his first love, he must have turned back into the world, before he can feel the necessity or have the desire of seeking enjoyment in worldly sports and pastimes. A spiritual mind cannot seek enjoyment in worldly society. To such a mind that society is necessarily repulsive. Worldly society is insincere, hollow, and to a great extent a sham. What relish can a spiritual mind have for the gossip of a worldly party of pleasure? None whatever. To a mind in communion with God their worldly spirit and ways, conversation and folly is repulsive and painful, as it is so strongly suggestive of the downward tendency of their souls, and of the destiny that awaits them. I have had so marked an experience of both, idles of this question that I think I cannot be mistaken. Probably but few persons enjoy worldly pleasure more intensely than I did before I was converted; but my conversion, and the spiritual baptism which immediately followed it, completely extinguished all desire for worldly sports and amusements. I was lifted at once into entirely another plane of life and another kind of enjoyment. From that hour to the present the mode of life, the pastimes, sports, amusements, and worldly ways that so much delighted me before have not only failed to interest me, but I have had a positive aversion to them. I have never felt them necessary to, or even compatible with, a truly rational enjoyment. I do not speak boastingly; but for the honour of Christ and His religion, I must say that my Christian life has been a happy one. I have had as much enjoyment as is probably blest for men to have in this life, and never for an hour have I had the desire to turn back and seek enjoyment from anything the world can

give. But some may ask: "Suppose we do not find sufficient enjoyment in religion, and really desire to go after worldly amusements. If we have the disposition, is it not as well to gratify it?" "Is there any more sin in seeking amusements than in entertaining a longing for them?" I reply that a longing for them should never be entertained. It is the privilege and therefore the duty of everyone to rise, through grace, above a hungering and thirsting for the fleshpots of Egypt, worldly pastimes and time-wasting amusements. The indulgence of such longings is not innocent. One should not ask whether the longing should be gratified, but whether it should not be displaced by a longing for the glory of God and His kingdom.

Professed Christians are bound to maintain a life consistent with their profession. For the honour of religion, they ought to deny worldly lusts; and should not, by seeking to gratify them, give occasion to the world to scoff and say that Christians love the world as well as they do. If professors of religion are backslidden in heart, and entertain a longing for worldly sports and amusements, they are bound by every consideration of duty and decency to abstain from all outward manifestation of such inward lustings. Some have maintained that we should conform to the ways of the world somewhat--at least, enough to show that we can enjoy the world and religion too; and that we make religion appear repulsive to unconverted souls by turning our backs upon what they call their innocent amusements. But we should represent religion as it really is--as living above the world, as consisting in a heavenly mind, as that which affords an enjoyment so spiritual and heavenly as to render the low pursuits and joys of worldly men disagreeable and repulsive. It is a sad stumblingblock to the unconverted to see professed Christians seeking pleasure or happiness from this world. Such seeking is a misrepresentation of the religion of Jesus. It misleads, bewilders, and confounds the observing outsider. If he ever reads his Bible, he cannot but wonder that souls who are born of God and have communion with Him should have any relish for worldly ways and pleasures. The fact is that thoughtful unconverted men have little or no confidence in that class of professing Christians who seek enjoyment from this world. They may profess to have, and may loosely think of such as being liberal and good Christians. They may flatter them, and commend their religion as being the opposite of fanaticism and bigotry, and as being such a religion as they like to see; but there is no real sincerity in such professions on the part of the impenitent.

In my early Christian life I heard a Methodist bishop from the South report a case that made a deep impression on my mind. He said there was in his neighborhood a slaveholder, a gentleman of fortune, who was a gay and agreeable man, and gave himself much to various field sports and amusements. He used to associate much with his pastor, often invite him to dinner, and to accompany him in his sports and pleasure-seeking excursions of various kinds. The minister cheerfully complied with these requests, and a friendship grew up between the pastor and his parishioner that continued till the last sickness of this gay and wealthy man. When the wife of this worldling was apprised that her husband could live but a short time she was much alarmed for his soul, and tenderly inquired if she should not call in their minister to converse and pray with him. He feelingly replied: "No, my dear; he is not the man for me to see now. He was my companion, as you know, in worldly sports and pleasure-seeking, he loved good dinners and a jolly time. I then enjoyed his society and found him a pleasant companion. But I see now that I never had any real confidence in his piety, and have now no confidence in the efficacy of his prayers. I am now a dying man, and need the instruction and prayers of somebody that can prevail with God. We have been much together, but our pastor has never been in serious earnest with me about the salvation of my soul, and he is not the man to help me now." The wife was greatly affected, and said: "What shall I do, then?" He replied: "My coachman, Tom, is a pious man. I have confidence in his prayers. I have often overheard him pray, when about the barn or stables, and his prayers have always struck me as being quite sincere and earnest. I never heard any foolishness from him. He has always been honest and earnest as a Christian man. Call him." Tom was called, and came within the door, dropping his hat and looking tenderly and compassionately at his dying master. The dying man put forth his hand, saying: "Come here, Tom. Take my hand. Tom, can you pray for your dying master?" Tom poured out his soul in earnest prayer. I cannot remember the name of this bishop, it was so long ago; but the story I well remember as an illustration of the mistake into which many professors and some ministers fall, supposing that we recommend religion to the unconverted by mingling with them in their pleasures and their running after amusements. I have seen many illustrations of this mistake. Christians should live so far above the world as not to need or seek its pleasures, and thus recommend religion to the world as a source of the highest and purest happiness. The peaceful look, the joyful countenance, the spiritual serenity and cheerfulness of a living Christian recommend religion to the unconverted. Their satisfaction in God, their holy joy, their living above and shunning the ways and amusements of worldly minds, impress the unconverted with a sense of the necessity and desirableness of a Christian life. But let no man think to gain a really Christian influence over another by manifesting a sympathy with his worldly aspirations.

Now, is this rule a yoke of bondage? I do not wonder that it has created in some minds not a little disturbance. The pleasure-loving and pleasure-seeking members of the Church regard the rule as impracticable, as a strait-jacket, as a bondage. But to whom is it a strait-jacket and a bondage? To whom is it impracticable? Surely it is not and cannot be to any who love God with all their heart and their neighbour as themselves. It certainly cannot be so regarded by a real Christian, for all real Christians love God supremely. Their own interests and their own pleasure are regarded as nothing as compared with the interests and good pleasure of God. They, therefore, cannot seek amusements unless they believe themselves

es called of God to do so. By a law of our nature we seek to please those whom we supremely love. Also, by a law of our nature, we find our highest happiness in pleasing those whom we supremely love; and we supremely please ourselves when we seek not at all to please ourselves, but to please the object of our supreme affection. Therefore, Christians find their highest enjoyment and their truest pleasure in pleasing God and in seeking the good of their fellow-men; and they enjoy tiffs service all the more because enjoyment is not what they seek, but what they inevitably experience by a law of their nature.

This is a fact of Christian consciousness. The highest and purest of all amusements is found in doing the will of God. Mere worldly amusements are cold and insipid and not worthy of naming in comparison with the enjoyment we find in doing the will of God. To one who loves God supremely it is natural to seek amusements, and everything else that we do seek, with supreme reference to the glory of God. Why, then, should this rule be regarded as too strict, as placing the standard too high, and as being a strait-jacket and a bondage? How, then, are we to understand those who plead so much for worldly amusements?

From what I have heard and read upon this subject within the last few years, I have gathered that these pleaders for amusements have thought that there was more enjoyment to be gained from these amusements than from the service of God. They remind me of a sentence that I used to have as a copy when a school-boy: "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." They seem to assume that the service of God is work in the sense of being a task and a burden; that to labour and pray and preach to win souls to Christ, to commune with God and perform the duties of religion is so wearisome, not to say irksome, that we need a good many playdays; that the love of Christ is not satisfactory; that we must have frequent resort to worldly amusements to make life tolerable. Christ on one occasion said to His disciples: "Come aside and rest awhile." This is not wonderful when we consider that they were often 80 thronged as not to have time even to eat their ordinary meals. But it was not amusement that they sought; simply rest from their labors of love, in which labors they must have had the greatest enjoyment.

I often ask myself: "What can it mean that so many of our highly-fed and most popular preachers are pleading so much for amusements?" They seem to be leading the Church off in a direction in which she is the most in danger. It is no wonder that lay-men and women are easily led in that direction, for such teaching exactly accords with the innumerable temptations to worldliness which are presented to the Church on every side. The Bible is replete with instruction upon this subject, which is the direct opposite of these pleas for worldly amusements. These teachers plead for fun, hilarity, jesting, plays, and games, and such things as worldly minds love and enjoy; but the Bible exhorts to sobriety, heavenly-mindedness, unceasing prayer, and a close and perpetual walk with God. The Bible everywhere assumes that all real enjoyment is found in this course of life, that all true peace of mind is found in communion with God and in being given up to seek His glory as the constant and supreme end of life. It exhorts us to watchfulness, and informs us that for every idle word we must give account in the Day of Judgment. It nowhere informs us that fun and hilarity are the source of rational enjoyment; it nowhere encourages us to expect to maintain a close walk with God, to have peace of mind and joy in the Holy Ghost, if we gad about to seek amusements. And is not the teaching of the Bible on this subject in exact accordance with human experience? Do we need to have the pulpit turn advocate of worldly amusements? Is not human depravity strong enough in that direction, without being stimulated by the voice of the preacher? Has the Church worked so hard for God and souls, are Christians so overdone with their exhausting efforts to pull sinners out of the fire, that they are in danger of becoming insane with religious fervor and need that the pulpit and the press should join in urging them to turn aside and seek amusements and have a little fun? What can it mean? Why, is it not true that nearly all our dangers are on this side? Is not human nature in its present state so strongly tending in these directions that we need to be on our guard, and constantly to exhort the Church not to be led away after amusements and fun, to the destruction of their souls? But to come back to the question: To whom is it a bondage, to be required to have a single eye to the good pleasure and glory of God in all that we do? Who finds it hard to do so? Christ says His yoke is easy and His burden is light. The requirement to do all for the glory of God is surely none other than the yoke of Christ. It is His expressed will. Who finds this a hard yoke and a heavy burden? It is not hard or heavy to a willing, loving mind.

Just the thing here required is natural and inevitable to everyone that truly loves God and is truly devoted to the Saviour. What is devotion to Jesus but a heart set upon rendering Him a loving obedience in all things? What is Christian liberty but the privilege of doing that which Christians most love to do--that is, in all things to fulfill the good pleasure of their blessed Lord? Turn aside from saving souls to seek amusements! As if there could be a higher and diviner pleasure than is found in laboring for the salvation of souls. It cannot be. There can be no higher enjoyment found in this world than is found in pulling souls out of the fire and bringing them to Christ. I am filled with amazement when I read and hear the appeals to the Church to seek more worldly amusements. Do we need, can we have any fuller and higher satisfaction than is found in a close, serious, loving walk with God and co-operation with Him in fitting souls for heaven?

All that I hear said to encourage the people of God in seeking amusements appears to me to proceed from a worldly, instead of a spiritual state of mind. Can it be possible that a soul in communion with God and, of course, yearning with compassion over dying men, struggling from day to day in agonizing prayer for their salvation, should entertain the thought of turning aside to seek amusement? Can a pastor in whose congregation are numbers of unsaved souls, and amongst whose membership are many worldly-minded professors of religion, turn aside and lead or accompany his Church in a backsliding movement to gain worldly pleasure? There are always enough in every Church who are easily led astray in that direction. But who are they that most readily fall in with such a movement? Who are ready to come to the front when a picnic, a pleasure excursion, a worldly party, or other pleasure-seeking movements are proposed? Are they, in fact, the class that always attend prayer-meetings, that are always in a revival state of mind? Do they belong to the class whose faces shine from day to day with the peace of God pervading their souls? Are they the Aarons and Hurs that stay up the hands of their pastor with continual and prevailing prayer? Are they spiritual members, whose conversation is in heaven and who mind not earthly things? Who does not know that it is the worldly members in the Church who are always ready for any movement in the direction of worldly pleasure or amusement, and that the truly spiritual, prayerful, heavenly-minded members are shy of all such movements? They are not led into them without urging, and weep in secret places when they see their pastor giving encouragement to that which is likely to be so great a stumbling-block to both the Church and to the world.

Pres. Finney, in forwarding his revision of the above tract for publication by the Willard Traet Repository, accompanied it with a note to Dr. Cullis, in which he said:

"The previous pages contain a condensation of three short articles that I published in the Independent. I recollect that the editor of the Advance, and one of the editors of the Independent, both of whom had published what I regard as very loose views, approving and recommending the worldly amusements of Christians, criticized those articles with an asperity that seemed to indicate that they were nettled by them. They so far perverted them as to assert that they taught asceticism, and the prohibition of rest, recreation, and all amusements. I regard the doctrine of this tract as strictly Biblical and true. But, to avoid all such unjust inferences and cavils, add the following lines.

"Let no one say that the doctrine of this tract prohibits all rest, recreation, and amusement whatever. It does not. It freely admits all rest, recreation, and amusement that is regarded, by the person who resorts to it, as a condition and means of securing health and vigor of body and mind with which to promote the cause of God. This tract only insists, as the Bible does, that 'whether we eat or drink,' rest, recreate, or amuse ourselves, all must be done as a service rendered to God. God must be our end. To please Him must be our aim in everything, or we sin."

Re: Can a pastor punch? - posted by rowdy2 (), on: 2008/2/2 20:06

COLOSSIANS 2

20. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

21. (Touch not; taste not; handle not;

22. Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

23. Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

Re: - posted by washad (), on: 2008/2/3 15:37

I wanted to thank you all for taking the time to answer my question. You have given me much to consider. I have decided to cancel our bouts for a while to pray over this matter. If there is something that is unbiblical or even questionable that could cause my brother to stumble or, worse, the lost to become more hardened then I want it out of my life. Above reproach right? Anyway thanks for your attention.

-washad

any additional comments I will not respond to but I will read them with interest. see ya around!

Re: - posted by rowdy2 (), on: 2008/2/3 16:01

What good is salt if its lost its savor, don't let men judge you or your image will be like their's not your real creator's.

Respectfully Eddie

Re:, on: 2008/2/6 8:38

Actually... I've coached wrestling in the past.

As for boxing, I dont personally endorse it because the goal is to knock out your opponent, which is caused by personal injury... usually a concussion. If a knock out isnt acheived then at the very least it's who can cause the most bodily injury to the other.

This, in my opinion, is madness. I wont judge Christian men like George Foreman or Evander Holifield who are boxers... they have to account for themselves before God for what they do. But as for me, I'm not in favor of the sport at all.

Wrestling is different... the goal is not to do bodily injury. I'm speaking of real wrestling, not the junk thats on TV.

Pro-wrestling is fake, y'all. Just thought I would mention that. One of my best friends was a pro-wrestler in the WWF back in the late 80's early 90's... and even tho it's fake, there are plenty of good reasons to not involve yourself in it... sex, drugs, etc runs that sport.

As for football, again, the goal is not personal injury. Injuries do happen, but thats not the point of the sport. Injuries happen in baseball too.

Krispy

Re: - posted by SimpleLiving (), on: 2008/2/6 13:24

I ran across this response by Charles Ryrie, when asked about self-defense. (I remember this thread, so I thought I would share it.)

Quote:
-----It all has to do with wisdom, understanding, and tact. In my karate class one of our principles is this: "Restrain your physical abilities by spiritual attainment". This is a fancy way of saying that since one has the ability to bring great harm doesn't mean he or she needs to use it. Just because I can break someone's arm, doesn't mean I need to use that ability. Just because we have a gun doesn't mean we need to fire on someone who breaks into the home. -- Charles Ryrie

I think the "use wisdom" is the key because there are instances where God condoned violence and areas where it says He detests it. My advice is to pray about it and hear from God. That's using wisdom.

Re: Can a pastor punch? - posted by murrcoir (), on: 2008/2/11 17:45

Quote:

washad wrote:

I have been reading the past issues discussed here and did not see where this has been discussed and I had a question. Is it acceptable for a Christian to fight(as in boxing,wrestling,etc..)? I ask because this is one of the ways that I relax and fellowship with some of the men that I know. Pretty much we have simple rules. Punch quick but not with power. No uppercuts and avoid the nose! Contact is to be expected. No getting angry or there is no place for you in the "ring" again, ever. We really enjoy this and we have never had an accident,other than a few bloody noses. I guess the draw is simple skill and pushing yourself as far as you can go. We don't have time limits just go till somebody quits. This is done either in a private gym or out in someones yard so this is not up for the public to see.

One of our regulars has apparently been telling some others about this and recently someone has said that this is not appropriate for a pastor since we are not to be given to violence and no brawler. I thought this was referring to fistfights in anger or within the family structure. By the way I am not very good and usually get the worst of it so believe me this is not a pride thing. I'll accept any reproof or correction with prayer. I just want to see this clearly, how does it look from the outside? What are your thoughts.

Well at the end of the day you have to answer your own question.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you about it.

Is he saying to you is it okay.

Or is he saying no it's not okay and to stop.

Then you have a choice to do as he says!

It's not about what we think our say it's about you and your heart, when you stand before God.