

Attitudes in the Stands That Should Be in the Pews

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It's football season again—high school, college, and professional football teams all over the nation are beginning their yearly quest for a championship. This football season, millions of fans will cheer for their teams. Those who fill the stands possess certain attitudes that are needed in the hearts of those who fill the pews.

Knowing the Facts

Fans buy magazines, go online, and do the research to get all the info on their team and opponents. They know their team's stats, what years they won championships, what numbers are on the jerseys of their favorite players, what their team is ranked in the polls—all kinds of information! Why? Because they love the sport!

If we love the Lord, there are many things we should know. Just as a football fan can tell you all about his favorite players, we should be able to tell people about the men and women of the Bible. We should know all about Job, Esther, Paul, Peter, Matthew, Noah, Moses, David, Daniel, and many more—but especially Jesus.

Just as a football fan knows the rules of the game, we should know the rules of Christianity. We should be able to give the plan of salvation (1 Pet. 3:15). We should be able to tell someone how to worship in spirit and in truth. We should be able to tell someone how to live faithfully, and we should know the penalties for breaking the rules (Rom. 6:23; 1 Jn. 3:4).

Instead of watching sports most of the day on a Saturday, how many chapters of the Bible could have been read during the duration of just one football game? The average college football game lasts “about 3 hours” (Answers.com), and the average adult reads between 200 and 300 words per minute (wpm). Those who enjoy reading typically read above 400 wpm. Many people read at speeds above 800 wpm and maintain excellent comprehension (freereadingtest.com).

Therefore, during the time it would have taken to watch one football game, at an average rate of 250 words per minute, the sports fan could have read **Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First Thessalonians, Second Thessalonians, First Timothy, Second Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, First Peter, Second Peter, First John, Second John, Third John, and Jude**, and still have over 35 minutes remaining! That would be 76 chapters of God's Word, and he would still have time to include **First Corinthians**, for a total of 92 chapters in three hours! That's 19 out of the 27 books in the New Testament! Granted, one may read more slowly and want to spend more time in each book for deeper study (I would), but the point is clear—people have time to study God's Word! Paul wrote, “...give attendance to reading...to doctrine” (1 Tim. 4:13).

Talking It Up

I know a lot of people who love to talk about football. A lot of joking goes on about which team is better and who will win, and the conversation can go on for a really long time. Why do they talk about it? Because they love the sport! If we love the Lord, we should be talking about Christianity to others. Perhaps we do not like to discuss it, because we have not studied it as we should. If that is the case, what should we do? Study (2 Tim. 2:15), because “talking about Christianity” is a command from God (Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Tim. 2:2).

Willing to Part With Money

At a college or professional football game, the tickets are overpriced, the food and drinks there are overpriced, the souvenirs are overpriced – everything is overpriced! That money goes toward the stadium, paying the coaches, and all kinds of expenses. The die-hard fans are willing

to shell out the money, because they love it.

We need to be willing to part with our money if we love the Lord. That money is used to carry out God's will. It is used to spread the Gospel and help others in need, which is much more important than any game (1 Cor. 9:14; 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:1-9; 9:6-7; Gal. 6:10; James 1:27).

Willing to Spend Time to Be There

When I was growing up, we would sometimes get up at 2 A.M. on Saturday mornings to go to college football games! People will go to great lengths in preparation for "tailgating," but what about worshiping God? How many will not even get up early enough to drive five or ten minutes and assemble with the church at 10 A.M.?

Again, the average football game lasts about three hours. 80,000 people or more will sit there for three hours on a hard metal seat in the heat, rain, or snow without complaining. What about the nice padded pews in an air conditioned building? Is it too much to ask for someone to sit in a pew for an hour or two? Most churches only meet four hours out of every week. There are 168 hours in a week, so faithfully assembling would only take up about 2% of our week! How can we say we are 100% dedicated and "bearing our cross daily," when we will not even give God 2% of our time? *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is..."* (Heb. 10:25; cf. v23-31; Luke 9:23; 14:33).

Not Upset About Overtime

When a football game goes into overtime, that is a great thing! Why do fans see it as a great thing? Because they love the sport! If we love the Lord and His Word, then a worship assembly that goes into overtime will not be something to get upset about. *"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight"* (Acts 20:7).

Loyal, Even When Surrounded By the Other Team

At football games it is usually more difficult to stand up and cheer for your team when you are surrounded by fans of the opposite team. The same concept applies to Christianity. When in the church building, it's much easier to be a Christian, but what about when we are outnumbered? Do we still stand up for Christ, or do we compromise? (Dan. 3:10-18; Esther 2:2; Mark 8:38; Matthew 10:32-33; 1 Pet. 4:1-4, 12-16).

Excited About Victory

Some of the greatest memories I have of going to football games are when I think about the end of the games that we won. I remember my dad and my uncles jumping up and down giving everybody around them high fives and yelling. I'll never forget that feeling of victory, but the feeling of victory one gets from winning a football game (or even the national championship or Super Bowl) is nothing compared to the feeling of victory faithful Christians will experience when the Lord returns in the clouds! (1 Thess. 4:16-17; 2 Tim. 4:8). That is something to get excited about! Don't lose sight of the excitement of Christianity, and remember, whether your team won the championship will be the least of your concerns on the Day of Judgment. *"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord"* (1 Cor. 15:57-58).

The basic idea for this article/sermon came from an unknown author.

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