

Chapter 5

Music And Sports

Music and sports are enjoyed by young and old alike. Many young people learn how to play a musical instrument (either through their school or through a private instructor). Others have had a part in a school or church choir. Almost every school has some kind of athletic program. Gym classes include athletic instruction, and there are school opportunities for sports involvement. There are also town leagues where young people can participate in various sports such as soccer, basketball, football and baseball. In this chapter we will learn that music and sports also had an important place in the lives of people who lived long ago.

Music

What would music have been like in a day before there were any pianos or guitars? Often when we hear music today, it comes through a radio or DVD player or some other kind of digital format. In Bible times none of these electrical devices had yet been invented.

Music and musical instruments appear early in the Bible, even in the book of Genesis. Can you find a verse in Genesis chapter 4 which tells of a man who used two musical instruments? Verse _____ Even before the great Flood, men were playing musical instruments. Even before the creation of the world, Satan was created as a music creature perfectly prepared to offer up praise to God (Ezekiel 28:13, see the last part of the verse).

In Old Testament times, music was a form of celebration. When something tremendous and wonderful happens, do you ever feel like shouting and singing? What great thing did God do for the children of Israel in Exodus chapter 14?

_____ After God did this, do you think the people wanted to celebrate? _____ In Exodus 15 and verse 1 we learn that Moses S_____ a S_____. Also in Exodus 15:20 we learn that Miriam (the sister of Moses) and other women took musical instruments and danced and sang. Who did they sing to (Exodus 15:21)? _____ Why did they sing and dance (Exodus 15:21)? "for He hath _____."

Another great celebration is recorded in 1 Samuel 18:6. What had David just done to Goliath the Philistine (1 Samuel 17:50)? _____ Was this a good reason to celebrate and rejoice? _____ How did the women celebrate this great victory (see 1 Samuel 18:6)? Did they sing? _____ Did they dance? _____ Did they play musical instruments? _____

Did you know that someday there will be a celebration and a time of rejoicing that will never end? In Revelation 14:2-3 we see a heavenly scene. Is there any singing? _____ Are there any musical instruments? _____ Throughout eternity believers will have a great celebration

(circle each one that is true):

- a. Because of how wonderful man is
- b. Because of how great God is
- c. Because of what the Lord Jesus did on the cross
- d. Because the Boston Red Sox (or whatever your favorite team might be) won the World Series
- e. Because of who God is and what God has done

If you do not have a very good singing voice now, do you think God will provide you with a better voice when you are in your new body (if you are a believer)? _____ Musicians always practice before putting on their best performances. When is the best time for believers to practice for the great heavenly celebration? _____

The one person who probably did more for music than anyone else in the history of the world was DAVID. When King Saul wanted a man who could play well, what man was chosen for the job (1 Samuel 16:17-19)? _____ What instrument did he play (1 Samuel 16:23)? _____ Actually this word "harp" does not really describe the large instrument that we call a harp today. David's harp was actually a LYRE (a much smaller stringed instrument which could be carried around easily). David's lyre probably had ten strings.

Not only was David a skilled musician, but he was also a skilled composer. Look at the beginning of some of the Psalms (in the middle of the Bible). Who wrote most of these beautiful Psalms? _____ The book of Psalms is actually a HYMN BOOK. The Psalms were put to music and sung. The singing was usually accompanied by a musical instrument. The Lord Jesus Christ and His disciples sang from this songbook, as we are told in Matthew 26:30 (the hymn that they sang was probably from Psalms 113-118).

In Bible times, there were three kinds of instruments just as there are today. There were stringed instruments (like David's lyre), there were percussion instruments (like cymbals, bells, timbrels) and there were wind instruments (like a flute, pipe or trumpet). Read Psalm 150, the last Psalm. Does God want us to praise Him with different kinds of instruments? _____

Music was often used in the WORSHIP of God. David and many of the kings that followed him used musicians in the temple for the purpose of worship. Today we may use good music for the same purpose. Good music can be helpful and bad music can be harmful. Suppose you came to church on Sunday morning and found no organ playing, no hymns being sung, no choir singing, etc.? This would seem quite different, would it not?

Music carries a powerful message. Background music is used in movies and on television programs to create a mood. A scary scene is even more frightening because of the background music that is chosen. If the same scary scene is shown and if the musical sound effects are changed to something that is cheery and festive, then the scene would not seem nearly as scary. Music can create different moods and can strongly influence our feelings. If the producer of a movie wants to move his audience to tears, he uses a certain kind of music. If he wants the audience to feel good about a major war victory, then he chooses another kind of music. If he wants to keep his audience in suspense, then he chooses a kind of music that will keep people on the edge of their seats. Music can influence us in many ways.

When God's people worship God, they must remember that God is HOLY. He deserves our

reverence and respect because of how great He is. The worship service should be GOD-CENTERED, and not man-centered. The music should be that which creates a mood of reverence and respect for the greatness of our HOLY GOD. "H _____ and reverend is His Name" (Psalm 111:9). "Be _____, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).

The Bible also speaks about people DANCING. We have already seen that certain women danced during times of great celebration. Dancing was an expression of joy. Sometimes people are so excited and so filled with gladness that they actually leap for joy and begin moving their body in a rhythmic way. Who do we find dancing in 2 Samuel 6:14? _____ Was he filled with gladness (verse 12)? _____ Did he shout (verse 15)? _____ Did he leap (verse 16)? _____

When the Bible talks about DANCING it is never talking about the kind of dancing people do today (as when a man and woman dance together as a couple). If you want to see the kind of dancing that people did in Bible times, watch the crowd at a football game right after the home team wins the game in the final seconds of play. Do you think you will see people leaping and shouting and dancing around?

When we sing (especially in church), how important are the words? Does God want us to understand what we are singing (1 Corinthians 14:15)? _____ When we sing, who should we sing to (Exodus 15:1)? _____

Think about the music that you hear on the radio. What kind of words do you hear? Are they words that will help you to become a better person? Are the words of the song encouraging you to think in the right way? Is the music uplifting and inspiring and soothing to your heart so that you can think clearly and act rightly? The song that Moses sang contained words which told how great God is (see Exodus 15:11). Think of some of the bad music that is found on the radio. Would you want to sing these songs someday in heaven when you are in the presence of Jesus?

What about the people who sing most of the popular songs that are heard on the radio. Are these people able to say, "The LORD is my song!" (see Exodus 15:2)? Are these people who love the Lord and who want to worship God? Is the music similar to what you might hear at a song service in church or is it similar to what you might hear in a dark jungle of Africa and in other parts of the world where there are tribal societies? In Ecclesiastes 7:5 we learn that it is better to hear the rebuke of the wise (hear a wise man tell you what you are doing wrong) than to hear the _____ of _____.

Think also of the dances of today. Do people go to these dances to celebrate how great God is? Are the people who attend these dances all excited about the great things that the Lord Jesus has done for them when He died on the cross? What kind of music is usually played at these dances? What kind of words are usually sung? What kind of songs does God want to fill the believer's heart with (Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19)?

God wants every believer to be a musical instrument that will play for Him! To do this, we must be in tune with God and in a right relationship with God. Just as David's lyre did just what David wanted it to do, and it played just what David wanted it to play, so also God wants to use us as His instrument. Are you willing to let God use you (use your hands, feet, eyes, ears, brain, lips and every other part of you)? See Romans 6:13.

Can a guitar be used for the Lord? Can a guitar be used in the wrong way? Can a piano be used for the glory of God? An organ? A trumpet? Can these instruments be used in wrong ways? Can a person's voice and hands and feet be used for the Lord? Can these things be used in the wrong ways?

The living God lives in the heart and in the soul of every person who is a believer (Revelation 3:20; John 1:12; John 14:17; Romans 8:9). The living God uses **His Word, the Bible** to instruct us and to teach us. As one plays the piano and follows the sheet music, so the believer follows God's Word the Bible.

Sports

Could you imagine living in a world where there was no baseball, no tennis, no basketball, no football, no bowling, no hockey and no volleyball? What would life have been like without any World Series or Super Bowl?

As we read the Bible, we learn that the Jewish people were not very involved with sports and athletics. The Jews were very skilled at ARCHERY (see 1 Samuel 20:20-22) and at throwing stones from a sling (see Judges 20:16 and 1 Samuel 17:50), but these were things the men did to prepare themselves for hunting or for warfare. Fishing and hunting, considered sports today, were necessary means of livelihood in Bible times. Back then people were skilled in these areas so that they could survive, not so that they could win a fishing derby or a hunting contest.

Though the Jewish people were not very involved in sports and athletic games, the Greek people were. The most famous of the Greek games were the Olympic games (and as you know, the Olympics are still held today). The Olympic games were held every four years at Olympia in honor of the god ZEUS. The events included running (both short and long distances), discus throwing, leaping, spear-throwing, wrestling and boxing. Thus the Olympic games were very similar to track and field events that we have today.

Long before the actual contests, the athletes would train and prepare. There were many rules which they had to follow. They had to live in a certain place, they had to follow a strict diet, they had to exercise regularly and they had to obey all the rules of the games when the events took place. Thus an athlete lived a life of strict discipline and self-control. In 1 Corinthians 9:25 Paul compared a Christian to an athlete who is "temperate (self-controlled) in A_____ T_____." The athlete must control his diet and the use of his body. The Christian must control things such as the TONGUE (James 1:26) and his ANGER (James 1:19-20).

The athlete must also follow all the rules of the game. Paul said that if a man competes in an athletic contest, he is not crowned unless he strives lawfully (competes according to the rulebook -- see 2 Timothy 2:5). What would happen if a baseball player ran from first base to third base (without going to second base)? Would the umpire do anything? What would happen if a tennis player served the ball standing only five feet from the net? What would happen if a soccer player caught the ball with his hands and ran down the length of the field as a football player would do? What would happen if a marathon runner jumped on a motorcycle five miles after the race began? What would happen if a boxer used a club to knock out his opponent? Suppose a golfer were to hide a super-powered magnet in the hole so that his specially designed "iron-lined golf-

ball" would be sucked into the hole from a range of 200 feet or less. Would the other golfers appreciate this?

Every sport has certain rules that must be followed and the athlete must follow the rulebook. What RULEBOOK does the Christian athlete need to follow (2 Timothy 3:16-17)?

Prizes were given to the winners of the athletic events. At the Olympics it became a custom to give the winners a wreath made from the leaves of what was considered to be the sacred wild olive tree. This wreath was known as a "crown." Today we usually present a ribbon or medal or trophy to the winner of an athletic contest. In New Testament times they presented this victory crown or wreath. Since the wreath was made of leaves, it would soon wither and fade. What is different about the crown which God will give to His faithful servants who have run the race of life well (1 Corinthians 9:25 and 1 Peter 5:4)?

There was another kind of amusement which the Romans really enjoyed. These were called the Roman gladiatorial shows. Today some people think that sports like football and boxing are too rough and that there are too many injuries that take place as bodies smash together and as men tackle each other and as boxers punch each other in the head until one is knocked out. But these sports are nothing compared to the Roman gladiatorial shows.

The Romans put condemned criminals and especially Christians in the middle of a large amphitheater before a huge crowd (somewhat like the crowds that gather to watch football games today). They would then release lions, bears, elephants or tigers and watch the poor victims be torn to pieces by the animals. Many of God's faithful believers met their death in this way. Should we be thankful today for the freedom to worship God as Christians without the fear of such brutal and cruel treatment from the government? _____ Also in the amphitheater or arena they would have gladiators fight each other to the death. It was either kill or be killed. For a more detailed study on the gladiatorial contexts, see our notes entitled, **Learning From Church History, Chapter 5.**

In 1 Timothy 4:8 Paul talks about exercising the body. Physical exercise is useful and profitable. It might help a person to feel better and sleep better. It might help a person to gain strength and to lose weight. But bodily exercise is only profitable in this life. Sooner or later, what is going to happen to our bodies? _____ Think of the greatest athlete who is playing some sport today. Will he still be playing 20 years from now? _____ Will his body get older and weaker? _____ Will he die someday? _____

There is another kind of exercise that is profitable and useful not only for this life but also for the life to come. What kind of exercise is this (1 Timothy 4:7-8)?

Let us consider the care and exercise that we give to our body and compare it with the care and exercise that we give to our soul:

<p>PHYSICAL EXERCISE FOR THE BODY</p>	<p>GODLY EXERCISE FOR THE SOUL</p>
<p>1) I exercise (sit-ups and pushups and running) to strengthen my body.</p>	<p>1) What are some things I can do to strengthen my soul and make me a stronger person?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>2) I wash and I take baths and showers to keep my body clean.</p>	<p>2) What do I need to do to keep soul clean? What should I do about the sin that stains my life?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>3) I eat the right kinds of food to give my body the nourishment and the energy it needs.</p>	<p>3) What kind of spiritual food should I eat to give my soul the nourishment and health that it needs?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>4) I try to avoid eating too much junk food because it is not very good for me.</p>	<p>4) What are some things that I should not feed my soul with if want to be strong and healthy on the inside?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>5) When I have health problems I go to a doctor who knows how to help me.</p>	<p>5) When I have spiritual problems who should I go to for help?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>