

AMERICAN IDOLS II. RECREATION
By Pastor Richard H. Jones

A. SOME OF THE SIMPLE REASONS WHY RECREATION HAS BECOME AN AMERICAN IDOL

1. Recreation has become an American idol because it, like other things, has been given pre-eminence in people's lives and it oftentimes takes priority over the Lord's service.

When some people ought to be in the Lord's house and involved in His service they are on the golf course, boating, fishing, hiking, or they have their children participating in some little league ball game or other secular activity.

2. Recreation has become an American idol because it offers such a wide variety of activities. There's something for everyone today, so these activities are often placed in competition with church activities and serving the Lord.

When children are given a choice it's only natural that they would opt for T-ball over a Sunday School Class or some team sport over church activities. This is why it's necessary for parents to set some strict guidelines and instill within their children that there's a vast difference between playing and having fun in this world and giving the things of the Lord priority in our lives. Love for the Lord and loyalty to Him should motivate both parents, as well as children, to serve the Lord and refuse to make an idol out of recreational things (Deut. 6:4-7).

It's no mere co-incidence that school and other recreational activities are often held on Wednesday nights or Sundays during church time. Those who belong to the Lord should set church times as times to serve the Lord and not for times of recreation.

3. Recreation has become an American idol because the level of spirituality among Christians has dwindled to an all-time low.

It has been prophesied that these things would be characteristic of the last days of the church age (II Tim. 3:4). But the sad fact is - very few professing Christians seem to see the association mentioned. But here it is - people who put recreation and other things before the Lord's service do not love Him and are not loyal to Him like they should be. This is the number one problem in our churches today - people don't love the Lord like they should.

Recently a young man, who had two small sons, was telling me how he planned to get his children involved in every recreational activity that he could while they were young. The idea was so they would excel and be able to gain scholarships later on for college. It was no surprise he never mentioned getting his children involved in programs of a church because he is an unbeliever.

But for believers the matter comes down to having or not having love and loyalty to the Lord. Many have all the excuses why they prefer to adopt this American idol and pursue fun over the things of the Lord.

How low is your spiritual barometer as you would consider these Scriptures

(I Jn. 2:15-17).

Do the lyrics of this song still relate to you or have they become meaningless?

"My life, my love, I give to thee
Thou Lamb of God who died for me.

O may I ever faithful be
My Saviour and my God."

- Ralph Hudson

B. SOME OF THE SINFUL RAMIFICATIONS OF SERVING THIS AMERICAN IDOL

1. Notice, once again, that recreational activities in themselves are not wrong, but they become idols when they are preferred and placed before the Lord's service.

The person who opts to lay out of church so he can enjoy some recreational activity has made that activity an idol because it has come between him and the Lord.

2. Recreational activities, like entertainments, have led many church members to become unfaithful stewards. Many literally love and live for certain kinds of recreation rather than for the Lord. In this sense they have followed those in the church of Ephesus who left their first love (Rev. 2:4).
3. Recreational activities can take control of a person's life. This world is filled with multitudes who view the world as a playground and fail to discern that God has a purpose for us to fulfill in this life (Jn. 15:16; Eph. 5:15-17).

C. SOME OF THE SHAMEFUL RESULTS OF SERVING THIS AMERICAN IDOL.

1. Making an idol out of recreation has led many Christians to become unfaithful and remain spiritual babes for lack of growth (Heb. 5:11-14).
2. Making an idol out of recreation has led many to adopt a set of misplaced values. They can't seem to realize what's really important in this life and what should take precedent in our lives.
3. Making an idol out of recreation has led many back into the world and in a back-slidden condition. Note what the Bible says about the backslider (Prov. 14:14).

The question is - what will you have when you can no longer golf or play ball, or hike or play any more? Will you come up short spiritually because you made an idol out of recreational activities.

Could you sing these words from your heart because you live for and love the Lord Jesus and refuse to make an idol out of recreation?

"My Jesus, I love Thee,
I know Thou art mine.

For thee all the follies
of sin I resign.

My gracious Redeemer,
my Saviour art Thou.

If ever I loved Thee
My Jesus tis now"

- William Featherstone