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Church in Regina

Church Family Day

RECREATION

The matter of recreation is never a problem to a consecrated person. Anyone who is not absolute in his consecration has a problem with recreation. Among God's children, the matter of recreation does not exist to those who are consecrated. In order to settle the matter of recreation, one must first settle the matter of consecration. As long as our consecration is not settled, the matter of recreation cannot be settled. A man who has not settled the matter of consecration may approve what God disapproves. This is why we must first deal with our consecration.

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| 1 Cor. 10:23 | All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable; all things are lawful, but not all things build up. |
| 1 Cor. 6:12 | All things are lawful to me, but not all things are profitable; all things are lawful to me, but I will not be brought under the power of anything. |
| 1 Cor. 10:31 | Therefore whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. |

June 13, 2016

God's Eternal Economy

God's eternal economy
Is to make man the same as He is
In life and nature,
But not in the Godhead
And to make Himself one with man
And man one with Him
Thus to be enlarged
And expanded in His expression
That all His divine, that all His divine
Attributes may be expressed
In human virtues

I Am Crucified with Christ

Chorus:
I am crucified with Christ
And it is no longer I who liveth,
But it is Christ who lives in me;
And the life which I now live
In the flesh, I live in faith –
The faith of the Son of God
Who loved and gave Himself up for me

1. And now I'm walking by the Spirit
Step by step, day by day,
O Lord, I love You.
You're the precious One to me.
As I do this and that
Lord, remind me where you're at;
You're in my spirit,
Dispensing grace to me.

2. And now I'm walking by the Spirit,
Marching on toward the goal.
O Lord, Your purpose
Means everything to me.
All self-love I lay aside
For the churches, for Your Bride,
For the fulfillment
Of Your economy.

The Lord's Recovery

The Lord's Recovery
Is God becoming the flesh,
The flesh becoming
The Life-giving Spirit,
And the Life-giving Spirit,
Becoming the sevenfold
Intensified Spirit –
To build up the church
Which becomes the Body of Christ
And that consummates
The New Jerusalem

We are One Family

From all corners of earth we're called
Blent in Christ in one accord
Tearing down the dividing wall
He has firmly joined us all.
With one soul bear enduringly,
In one spirit, stand steadfastly.
Trust and care given mutually
In Christ, we all are just one family.

Chorus:
Let icy hearts have warm reprieve.
Let weary souls find sweet relief.
Let blessings be always new as we live.
Let brothers take action. Be strong!
Let sisters sing with joyful song.
Let God's family be ours all life long.

Lord, I am Continually With Thee

1. Lord, I am continually with Thee:
Thou hast holden me
By my right hand,
Thou shalt guide me.
Thou shalt guide my with Thy counsel,
And afterward receive me –
Receive me to glory.
2. Whom have I in heaven but Thee?
And there is none upon the earth
That I desire beside Thee.
My flesh and my heart faileth;
But God is the strength of my heart,
And my portion forever.

Hidden Behind the Scenes

Hidden behind every scene,
Lovingly, sweetly operating,
One who is sovereign and wise,
Patiently guides even our eyes.
Look at My Son, the Beloved,
Sitting here at My right hand.
Jesus is King, yhet He's bound,
He cannot move until His people give
Him ground.

Chorus:

Lord, we see You! Lord, we love You!
Lord, we submit everything to You.
Each day, Your ruling and Your reigning
Brings a sweet supply.
Oh, what a rich blessing!
We're in the hand of our King.
Everything You hope to accomplish do in
me.
2. In us a small Kingdom seed,
Orders our steps, governs our deeds
Jesus enthroned in our hearts,
Gently He touches our every part.
Do you not know you're the temple
Of your God, King of kings?
Through us our Lord has a way,
To rule and to reign here on the earth day
by day.

Therefore With Joy

Therefore with joy shall ye draw water
Out of the wells of salvation
And in that day shall ye say,
Praise the Lord! (Repeat)

Call upon His name,
Declare His doings among the people,
Make mention that His name is exalted.
Cry out and shout, thou inhabitants of
Zion:
For great is the Holy One of Israel in
the midst of thee.

Higher Ground

1. I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining every day;
Still praying as I onward bound,
"Lord, plant my feet on higher
ground."

Lord, lift me up, and let me stand
By faith on Canaan tableland;
A higher plane than I have found,
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.

2. My heart has no desire to stay
Where doubts raise and fears dismay;
Though some may dwell where these
abound,
My prayer, my aim, is higher ground.

3. I want to live above the world,
Though Satan darts at me are hurled;
For faith has caught the joyful sound,
The song of saints on higher ground.

4. I want to scale the utmost height
And catch a gleam of glory bright;
But still I'll pray till rest I've found,
"Lord, lead me on to higher ground."

RECREATION

I. THE PREREQUISITE

The matter of recreation is never a problem to a consecrated person. Anyone who is not absolute in his consecration has a problem with recreation. Among God's children, the matter of recreation does not exist to those who are consecrated. In order to settle the matter of recreation, one must first settle the matter of consecration. As long as our consecration is not settled, the matter of recreation cannot be settled. A man who has not settled the matter of consecration may approve what God disapproves. This is why we must first deal with our consecration.

II. THE PURPOSE OF RECREATION

After the matter of consecration is settled, we can speak about the purpose of recreation.

A. For Taking Care of the Family

We speak about recreation not because of our personal need, but because of the children in our family, that is, our next generation. Recreation is not a problem at all to those who are consecrated, but there are other people in our family. We have children, and we also have brothers and sisters. If they, too, are consecrated, then we will not have a problem. But often they are not consecrated, and our attitude is very much related to them. The kind of recreation we allow or do not allow makes a great difference to them. We speak of the matter of recreation because we want to lead our family in the proper direction.

B. For Ourselves

Sometimes we ourselves also need diversion. To what extent should this diversion be considered proper? How far can a Christian go? We need to see some basic principles before the Lord.

What kind of recreation should parents permit for their children? What recreation is considered proper as far as Christians are concerned? As God's children, we should all be clear about this. If we have a breach in this matter, the world will come into our family. It will be difficult to drive the world away from our children once it enters our family. In order to preserve our family for the Lord, we have to pay attention to the matter of recreation.

III. THE PRINCIPLES BEHIND RECREATION

A. Man's Need

Recreation is scriptural and is compatible with the Lord's will. First of all, we have to acknowledge man's need for recreation. A Christian should not go to the extreme. **Man has a need for recreation.** Many people are very busy with their schedules. If they do not have some kind of diversion, it is easy for them to become sick; their health can quickly deteriorate. **The basic principle of recreation is that it should offer some diversion in our life.** This is especially necessary for the young ones. We should not expect them to study from morning until night. They must have some kind of recreation. We should not expect them to do the same thing all day long. They must have diversions. We must be clear first about this underlying principle.

The Lord spoke of children playing flutes and dancing in the streets (Luke 7:32). This dancing is different from the dancing in a ballroom. This dancing and flute-playing are the result of joy. There is nothing wrong with such merry-making. In fact, there is the need for such things. **The basic principle of recreation is diversion.** A person has been working for five, six, or eight hours. He has been doing the same thing over and over again. This easily can tire him out. Doing the same thing over and over again easily strains one's nerves and tires one's body. There is the need to have a change, a diversion. This diversion will relieve one's tiredness. A change in work recovers a person from his fatigue.

After a child studies for eight hours in school, he needs to come home to play. This kind of playing affords him a break from his regular schedule. However, jumping and playing around for eight hours is not a break. **We must acknowledge the need for a break and diversion in our lives, but we cannot make recreation our whole life.** A man can turn away from his work to something else when he is tired, but he cannot pursue recreation all day long. Some people like to go for a swim in the summer. I do not see anything wrong with this. It is all right to swim for half an hour or an hour when one is tired, but if a person stays in the water all day long like a duck, it is not recreation. I would like to point out to you that when a man has a problem with recreation, the recreation in itself is not his problem; rather, **his problem is with his living.**

Some people charge that Christians have no recreation, but they really do not know what they are saying. Can something be recreation when one indulges in it all day and all night? These activities are bondages to a person; they are not recreation. Strictly

speaking, very few people have problems with recreation itself. Most problems come from man's indulgence in recreation. Some people indulge in activities three days and three nights in a row. **Their recreation has become their life. Only such people will say that it is difficult being a Christian.** Everyone who has a problem with recreation is an extreme person. They have made recreation their whole life. **We must be clear that man has a need for diversion, but he does not have a need for indulgence.** He has a need for respite, but he does not have a need for his whole life to revolve around respite. All things are lawful, but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful for us, but we will not be brought under the power of anything. **If we indulge in something day and night, it means that we are enslaved by that thing. It is a great mistake to indulge in something this way.**

B. Four Kinds of Recreation

Next, there are four kinds of recreation. A Christian can find recreation in four things:

1. Rest

The best recreation for a Christian is rest. If you are tired, you should take a rest. When the Lord Jesus and His disciples became tired from their work, He told the disciples, "Come by yourselves privately to a deserted place and rest a while" (Mark 6:31). We must realize that the Lord's rest was a kind of recreation to Him. He did not say to go and rest a while, but to go to a deserted place and rest a while. **Often a change in place, a solitary place in the hills or by a river, affords a person the necessary relief from his tiredness.** This is the most common recreation for a Christian.

2. A Change in Work

If a person feels tired after doing the same work for too long, he can do something else after a while. Instead of working eight hours at one task, he can spend one or two hours on something else. Perhaps he sits down to work most of the time. He can give himself a break by working in a standing position once in a while. Perhaps he works with his mind most of the time. He can divert himself by doing some physical work. As soon as he does this, his tiredness disappears. We are not after the kind of recreation that the world is after. As long as we have a change in the things we do, we have a means to relieve our fatigue. We can rearrange our lives a little. **The principle of recreation is diversion.** As long as we have a change in the kind of work we do, we have the necessary break we need.

3. Hobbies

At the same time, [the Christian life has room for some proper hobbies](#). Some brothers like to take photographs. Others like to keep birds, plant flowers, or paint. These are legitimate hobbies within the bounds of the Christian life. Some like music; they may write some songs and play them on the piano. Some like calligraphy. All of these are proper forms of recreation.

[But no matter what kind of recreation it is, whether it be rest, a change in work, or a hobby, it has to be something that a person can pick up and drop at will. If a person cannot drop an activity, something is wrong with it.](#) It is all right for a person to take photographs, study them, and learn a little about them. However, we are against anything that controls a person's life. The recreation must be easy to pick up and easy to drop. It is all right for a young brother to play the violin. But if he cannot put it down, he has a problem. The trouble with many young believers is that they cannot put their recreation down. When they find that they are bound by these things, they have to deal with them. They have to sever them, or else they will not be able to go on properly as Christians; they will be enslaved. [Recreation must be something that one can pick up freely and drop freely. He must not be enslaved by it. This is an underlying principle. We must remember that in order for something to be proper recreation, whether it be a hobby, a change in work, or rest, a person must not be bound by it.](#)

Some young brothers like to collect stamps. There is nothing wrong with stamp-collecting. In fact, there are many benefits to such a hobby. It can teach a person about the geography and history of all the countries in the world, but it is a problem when one becomes ensnared by it. [Any recreation that affords proper diversion without putting one under its bondage is a lawful recreation.](#)

Parents must teach their children to have proper recreation. They must not drive their children to improper recreation by failing to provide them with the proper kind. I have seen many strict parents who have ruined their children this way. Their homes are like institutions rather than homes. As a result, the children sneak away from home to engage in improper recreation. We must be clear that children need recreation. We can go with or without entertainment, but our children must have some entertainment. [If we deprive them of their right to play, they will be bored and restless at home, and they will sneak away to do things behind our back.](#)

4. Games

There are many games, such as chess, ball games, and horse-riding, which can be considered proper activities, even though they contain the element of winning and losing. The element of winning and losing is related to skill. It is all right for children to engage in table-tennis, basketball, volleyball, riding, or chess. All these are proper activities and do not involve any sin. **Parents should be generous toward these matters and should guide their children to the proper recreation.** Elderly ones may not have time for strenuous sports, but they should not forbid the young ones from them. **We want our children to set aside their time for the Lord, but we also need to take care of their need for diversion. We should allow them some recreation.**

We have mentioned four kinds of recreation: rest, a change in work, hobbies, and games. A Christian can engage in these four kinds of recreation, but he should not be under the power of any of them. It is wrong to be bound by any of them. The younger a believer is in the Lord, the more he has to be careful not to be bound. This matter may not be a problem to us today. It may not make any difference to us whether or not we play the piano, but it makes a great difference to a new believer. His conscience will bother him every time he engages in these activities. **At the beginning of the Christian life, the more one is involved in a recreation, the more he is bound by it. As soon as he experiences bondage in any activity, he should stop immediately.**

C. The Purpose of Recreation Being to Enhance One's Work

Third, we must ask why we need recreation. **The purpose of recreation is to enhance our work.** Recreation has a purpose; it is not recreation for the sake of recreation. I do not engage in a ball game because I love ball games. I play because I want to work better. I do not sleep because I love to sleep but because I can work better after I sleep. I plant flowers not for the sake of planting flowers but so that I can work better after my gardening diversion. All of these things are for the purpose of enhancing our work. They must help us to serve God better. Some people break down mentally or physically after doing the same thing day and night for two or three weeks. Such brothers and sisters should be allowed some kind of diversion. They can change their work. They can play the piano or engage in some ball games. They should do these things only for the purpose of recovering from fatigue. **It is altogether for the purpose of increasing one's efficiency. After they are done with their recreation, they can work better and serve the Lord in a stronger way.**

Sometimes a person may take a respite in a rural place, as the Lord Jesus did, or travel and tour a little. This is also good. He may play games with his children at home as well. These activities are not entanglements; they are for the purpose of helping a person in his work. If an activity results in the lowering of one's performance, it is in the wrong principle. A recreation must always enhance a person's work. It is easy to become tired after doing the same thing over and over again day and night. This is why one should jog, garden, or play for a while. We do not promote these things, but we acquiesce in them. The basic principle is that these activities must enhance our performance rather than frustrate it.

Having a holiday after working for two or three months is right. But having a holiday every day is laziness, not vacationing. A Christian must learn to work on earth and not be lazy. We allow people to have recreation for the purpose of increasing their work efficiency, but we must not give others any ground for criticism. We do not want to be extreme, and we do not want to bring shame to God's name.

D. Not Having the Element of Chance in Recreation

Fourth, all recreation must involve skill. It must not involve games of chance. We may say that the only kind of recreation that is proper is that which involves pure skill and nothing of chance. Any recreation that involves both skill and chance is a kind of gambling, not recreation. If an activity involves only chance and has nothing to do with skill, it is gambling, and Christians should turn away from it. Anything that involves chance is a kind of gambling. Christian recreation should involve only skill; it should not have any element of chance. A game of dice is altogether a matter of chance; a Christian should never engage in this. It is altogether gambling. Young people can play chess, because chess is a matter of skill, not a game of chance.

There are two kinds of recreation: One involves skill, and the other involves chance. A game of dice involves one's luck. Therefore, it is a game of chance. A Christian must not engage in any kind of gambling. Some love to play mahjong before they are saved. That is gambling. It involves a little skill plus a good element of chance. A Christian can play only with skill, not with anything that involves chance. He cannot even have games that depend partly on skill and partly on chance.

Mahjong is a game of chance, even when it does not involve any money. It gives the player a kind of hope, a kind of prayer. He hopes that chance will be on his side. This kind of hope is wrong. Mahjong is wrong even when no betting is involved.

Billiards involve skill. Even though there are wins and losses, there is nothing wrong with the game itself. However, when money is involved, it is wrong; it becomes a kind of gambling.

We can say that some games are a kind of gambling in themselves, while others are not. However, one can take a game that does not involve gambling and turn it into a kind of gambling. This is another matter altogether. Even something as harmless as a meal can become a kind of gambling. Throwing dice is a gambling game in itself, even though money is not involved. A Christian should not engage in this kind of game. [As Christians, we have principles that govern our judgment. When we say that we can do something or we cannot do certain things, we are guided by principles.](#) It is right to play a game that involves skill, and it is wrong to play something that involves chance. Any kind of game that involves skill is permissible. But any game that depends on chance is not permissible; it is a kind of gambling.

Moreover, we should not touch anything that the world would consider a kind of gambling. We must have our principles. We must find out what gambling is and what games of chance are. Anything that involves chance is gambling.

Some brothers ask whether hunting, fishing, and keeping birds is permissible. In the Bible, hunting began from Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-9), and the Lord did not seem to like it. Fishing is permissible. Once you are clear about the principle, you will know what to do with many other things. [In conclusion, it is right if it involves skill only, and it is wrong if chance is involved.](#) Gambling is completely out of the question. One would have to be very fallen to ask whether it is permissible for a Christian to gamble.

Some birds can be kept because they have been domesticated for years and are like house pets; they would not live if they were freed. But we must free those that can survive by themselves. There are domestic pigeons as well as wild pigeons. We can apply the same principles to these matters.

E. Recreation Meeting One's Need

Fifth, [our recreation must meet our need.](#) We have a certain recreation because we have a certain need. We should not have any recreation without having the need for it. Many brothers are so busy that they think they have no need for recreation. Other brothers have nothing to do all day long, and they think about recreation all the time. Those who have a genuine need for diversion do not feel the need for it, while those

who do not need diversion think that they have a need for it. We do not need to tell everyone about the need for diversion. We do not like to grant license to God's children. We do not want to give a blanket endorsement for any kind of recreation. [What we want to tell God's children is to judge for themselves whether they have such a need. The principle is always to live for the Lord and to recognize that all our time is His.](#)

Life is measured by time. Life is not time itself, but it is measured by time. [A man cannot waste his time on everything and then find that he has no more time for God.](#) To waste an hour of time is to waste an hour of one's life. To waste two hours of time is to waste two hours of one's life. If you take an hour for recreation, that hour must eventually be of benefit to you in your work. If there is not the need for this hour, the recreation is a waste of your time. To waste your time is to waste your life. If we can spend an hour more for the Lord, we can reap one more hour of results. [If we spend an hour on recreation, and this recreation can enhance our work, it is an investment, not a waste.](#)

[Hence, diversion is based on need. It can also be based on the advice of elderly brothers or the instruction of doctors.](#) Sometimes an elderly brother may advise you to take some diversion because he can sense a buildup of tension within you. At other times a doctor may advise you against certain activities and warn you of dire consequences. Recreation is to take care of need, not for the sake of play. I have my own kinds of recreation. I participate in recreation not for the sake of recreation, but for the sake of enhancing my work. A busy person may need recreation, or he may not need it. [The general rule is that recreation is for those who have the need for it. Those who do not need it are not obligated to have it.](#)

We realize that young people need recreation. We can see the need for our teen-agers to have recreation. Some parents do not have such a need, so they think that their children have no such need. However, depriving children of recreational activity will drive them down the road to evil. We have to recognize their need even though we may not be altogether certain of our own need. The principle is that recreation is for those who need it; those who do not need it can live without it.

F. Recreation Matching One's Fitness

Sixth, [all recreation must match a person's fitness.](#) The first consideration in recreation is [physical fitness.](#) Everyone must remember this while engaging in recreation.

We expect our body to reap profit, not suffer loss through our recreation. If our body suffers through our recreation, we are violating the principle of recreation. We are here to improve our body. If a certain kind of recreation damages our body, something is wrong with that recreation. Suppose a man is sick with tuberculosis. If he wants to have any recreation at all, his recreation must not bring his health down. A sister who has a heart disease may need some recreation at times, but her recreation must serve to relieve her fatigue rather than to aggravate her heart disease.

When I was young, I had a friend who was a very evil person. After he believed in the Lord, he turned and became a wonderful person. Before his conversion, he loved basketball. After he was saved, he felt a little guilty about playing it. He decided to play it one more time and then quit. After that last game, he vomited blood and died. This was not recreation. It did not match his physical fitness at all. He thought that he could preach the gospel after he had enjoyed his game. He did not expect that he would die after that game. What a waste that was!

[I hope we will realize that our body is the Lord's. Our diversion is for the Lord. Our not having a diversion is also for the Lord.](#) We do not do anything for ourselves. If we engage in some kind of diversion, we must remember that it is for the Lord. Also, if we forfeit diversion, we must remember that we are doing it for the Lord. Whether or not one has diversion, the principle is to not do harm to the body. It is always unwise to harm the body. It is not only wrong to harm our body with improper activities, but also wrong to harm our body with proper activities. The bodies of God's children do not belong to them. In any kind of diversion, we must ask ourselves whether or not it will profit our body. Do it only if it is profitable. Do not do it just because you like to do it. Suppose a sister has a heart disease. If she sees a brother playing ball in the field and wants to join him, she may end up with more trouble. It is not wrong for the brother to be in the ball game, but it is wrong for the sister who has the heart disease to be in the game. We hope that God's children will pay attention to this matter. Everything we do should be done for the service of the Lord. Even if we have a little diversion today, our goal in having it should be to better serve the Lord.

I do not want to see believers dying at a young age. I have always hoped that there would be more elderly brothers and sisters in the church. Please remember that being elderly in the world is different from being elderly in the church. In the world, the older one becomes, the more senile he becomes. The younger ones are the more progres-

sive ones. However, **in the church the older one becomes, the more advanced he becomes.** In the world the younger ones cannot move forward unless the older ones die first, because the older ones are always a hindrance to the younger ones. However, it does not happen this way in the church. **The older one becomes, the fresher he becomes, and the higher and deeper are the things he touches. A church is poor and defeated if it does not have any elderly brothers and sisters.** I do not like to see brothers and sisters in the church passing away at a young age through the neglect of their own body. Instead of becoming a supply to the church, the lessons that the Lord has given them are wasted. The church should not incur such a loss. It cannot afford such a loss.

When we have sports and games, we cannot strive to break records as if we were athletes. Professional athletes are not motivated by the games themselves but by the desire to break records. We must play it as a game and play it to the benefit our body.

G. Choosing the Recreation That Matches One's Disposition

Seventh, **recreation has to do not only with physical fitness but also with one's disposition.** When a person is doing what he likes to do, he tends to be more mentally relaxed and psychologically happy. Doing something that you do not enjoy doing is a labor; it is not a recreation. Some sisters love flowers. If you ask them to water flowers for half an hour, they show no sign of fatigue, even though the same task may tire others out. Before they do it, they may be quite tense, but after they work, they feel relaxed. However, if you ask a person who has an aversion for flowers and who hates gardening to water for half an hour, this will be a burden. Therefore, recreation is related to disposition as well. **In choosing a certain form of recreation, you must choose the kind of activity that will relax your nerves and calm your mind,** like the examples we have just mentioned. Everyone has some kind of recreation that suits him. Gardening is a recreation to some; to others, it is not. Some like dogs and cats, while others are nervous and fearful when they are around them. We must find something we like. These things will enhance our work.

Asking me to go to the sea would not be recreational to me, but a river does provide recreation to me. Some brothers are different. The stronger the waves, the better it is for them. They are happy to see a boat tossing back and forth in the sea. These are things they like, and they are happy when they do them. Such activities refresh their minds. This has to do with disposition. You must choose the kind of recreation that

matches your disposition so that it will restore your physical strength. If you choose something which goes against your disposition, you will feel tired and will not want to continue with it.

H. Taking Note Not to Stumble Others

Eighth, as Christians, we must be an example to others in all things. We do not want to be a stumbling block to others even in the matter of recreation. We live for the Lord as well as for the brothers; we do not live for ourselves. We must not care just for ourselves and neglect others. Do not complain saying, “Why must they look at me?” Who will they look at if they do not look at you? Of course, they will look at you. If a city is built on a hill, who will not see it? Of course, others will see it. No matter what our conviction is, we must take care of our influence on the young brothers when they see us doing what we are doing. We must ask whether the things we do will stumble others. We are children of God; we have believed in the Lord. We must have sensitive feelings. We must realize that we are responsible to God as well as to many young brothers and sisters.

It does not pose a problem if someone thinks that he can eat meat, but if his eating stumbles a brother, he should not eat. It is not wrong for him to eat meat, but it is wrong if his eating stumbles others. In the same way, it is not wrong to have recreation, but it is wrong to stumble the brothers.

We must consider what the weak ones will think about the many things that we do. I do not want to be a stumbling block to the weak ones. The Lord did not say that we should not be a stumbling block to the strong. Rather, He said we should not be a stumbling block to the weak. There are many whose conscience is weak. They think that they should not go to the temple. In order to take care of the weak conscience of the brother, I will not go to the temple, even though I know that idols are nothing. In the light of this principle, we should not engage in any recreation that will stumble a brother.

What should you do if you are peaceful in your conscience about something, but someone else is not? You must take care of more than the peace in your conscience. You must remember that someone else’s conscience will be bothered by your action. You must refrain from the things that stumble him. It is not enough to say that you will not be stumbled. Remember that others may be stumbled. It is not enough to say that your conscience is at peace; you must remember that someone else’s conscience

may not be at peace. Do not say, “This will not lead me to sin.” Remember that others could sin because of this. You may not have any problem with this matter, but others may have a problem with it. What should you do? We have to turn away from many kinds of recreation for the sake of the brothers.

We must see that many things are lawful but not all things are expedient. Therefore, we must be very careful with our conduct, the more careful the better. We must always learn to take the proper way. We must learn to walk carefully. We allow our brothers and sisters to have some recreation. Recreation is permissible, but sometimes this recreation may stumble others. If this happens, it is better not to do such things at all. We must be careful especially with those who easily come under bondage. Some are easily affected; they easily come under bondage. We must be careful with them. Many people fall easily. If we are a little careless with them, they will fall. This is why we must pay attention to this matter.

I. Not Doing What the Gentiles Consider to Be Improper

Ninth, **we should not take up any recreation that is improper in the eyes of the Gentiles.** This does not mean that we can do anything that the Gentiles consider to be proper. These are the two principles in dealing with the Gentiles. **We may not necessarily do what they approve of, but we certainly will not do anything that they do not approve of.** Are you clear? There are many kinds of entertainment which the Gentiles approve of, but we cannot be involved in them. They approve of movie-going, gambling, and dancing. These are their basic kinds of entertainment, but we do not approve of them. Of course, we would never do any of the things which the Gentiles themselves disapprove of.

It is not worthwhile for us to argue with people about our recreation. Some people in certain places think that ball games are not permissible. **Our testimony is for the Lord, not for a ball game.** Our preaching does not testify of a ball game. It is not necessary for us to bear witness for a ball game. **Our standard must not be lower than the Gentiles’ standard.** Unbelievers in some places may think that chess is improper. In principle, both the game of chess and the game of “Go” (a board game) are proper, but these things are not our testimony. We do not need to waste our time giving a sermon on chess. We can play it, and we can give it up. **Our testimony is for the Lord, not for upholding these minor things. Do not argue with the unbelievers over these minor**

things. We may do many of the things which they approve of, and we will not do any of the things they do not approve of.

For example, in certain places fishing may be considered improper. We must accept their view and stop fishing. Our testimony is Christ, not fishing. We have sacrificed everything for the Lord. What is this little recreation to us? We must not give anyone any uneasy feeling because of our recreation. Wherever we are, we should not do what others consider to be wrong. Our standard must not be lower than the Gentiles' standard, especially when it comes to the matter of recreation.

It is foolish for some to argue with others over their recreation. I know of Western missionaries who had bad relationships with the natives just because they wanted to have their own kind of recreation. It is foolish to damage the Lord's work for the sake of a little recreation. We must pay attention to the major issues and be liberal about the other matters. Some brothers have to work among the Muslims, who do not eat pork. When they are among them, they may want to eat pork openly because they think that it is all right for Christians to eat pork. But pork is forbidden in that place. If they eat pork, they will not be able to work among the people at all. In order to take care of the work, we must not come into conflict with others over these small matters.

Today some may want to go to the province of Sikang. Fishing is unheard of in Sikang. The people there have never fished in their whole lives. It is wrong for you to insist on fishing and thus develop friction with the local brothers. Some British missionaries went to India and irritated the Indians over matters of recreation. It is not worthwhile to do this.

I have laid these nine principles before you. We must deal with them carefully. The usual kinds of entertainment that the Gentiles commonly speak of are out of the question here. These kinds of recreation include three main categories: dancing, gambling, and movie-going. They are entirely out of the question for us. We are burdened to only present these nine principles on the positive side. We must not sacrifice these nine principles.

IV. PROPER RECREATION NOT AFFECTING SPIRITUALITY

A. Hopkins's Rabbits and Small Prints

Finally, let me tell you a simple story. The Keswick Convention is a big gathering in England, a somewhat international conference. Every year approximately five or six

thousand people from all over the world gather there for a week. I think that God has greatly used these conferences. Andrew Murray and F. B. Meyer, both of whom had a deep knowledge of the Lord, have been among the speakers at these conferences. During this period of time, Stock Meyer was in Germany, Melton was in France, Andrew Murray was in Holland, and Evan Hopkins was in England. Hopkins was known as the Theologian of Keswick. He was the first person to see the truth of the believers' crucifixion with Christ. He was the husband of Hannah Whitall Smith, the author of *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*. Mrs. Penn-Lewis would not have been able to propagate the truth of crucifixion with Christ without the help of Hopkins, because Britain could not quite accept a female preaching. Hopkins was a very proper person before the Lord. Yet he had a hobby; he loved to draw whenever he was free. At first he drew serious subjects. Later when he had a granddaughter, he began to draw rabbits for her. When he came back from giving a sermon, he would draw rabbits for his granddaughter. During his lifetime, he drew thousands of rabbits. Later some publishers put out a book on Hopkins's rabbits. Hopkins was an intelligent man. He made the face of every rabbit look different. He also liked to print fine calligraphy. He wrote the whole of the Lord's prayer on a shilling note. I am not saying that you should imitate him. I am merely saying this to show you that [recreation does not affect one's spirituality. On the contrary, one touches the human element of a person through his hobbies. Please remember that God's servants are not staid people; that is Catholicism, not Christianity. Christians are plain, simple, and natural people.](#)

B. George Müller Praying for Woolen Yarn on Behalf of a Little Girl

George Müller was a person who was experienced in prayer. Once a girl named Abigail asked him to pray for colored woolen yarn. He prayed about this and she received the yarn. The girl grew up to become one of the best Christians in England. In reading her biography, one is impressed by the lessons she learned in the Lord. [Recreation will not drag a person down if it is done properly. If you keep the proper principle of recreation before the Lord, recreation will uplift you and restore your body and mind to proper health.](#)