

# A Missional Life

“Play as MISSION: Reframing Recreation” (2 Corinthians 5:14-20)

**\*Love to do? Hobby? Sports; Exercise; Video games; mahjong; Gardening; Travel; Baking**

During the 1924 Olympics, missionary athlete Eric Liddell famously said:

“God made me fast. And when I run, I feel His pleasure.” Liddell understood something many believers miss. Running wasn't competing with God's calling. Running was part of God's calling. His athletic gifts became a platform for gospel witness around the world.

**For Liddell The track became a mission field.**

The biblical perspective affirms that recreation itself is good. -1 Tim. 4:4-5 “**Everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if received with gratitude; it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.**” The Bible states There is “**a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance.**” (Eccles 3:1-4). Scripture explicitly validates joy, play, and celebration. It is good to rest; to play; compete; be on a team; exercise; recreate, have a hobby

-We have a clear mandate that whatever we do, we do it for God's glory:

-1 Cor. 10:31 “**Therefore, whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do *all* things for the glory of God.**” God owns it all; He is sovereign over all; He gives us capacity to play etc...for Him!

**Jesus is Lord not only of our work but also of our play.** God intends recreation to be more than escape, He intends it to become mission. **There is no neutral territory in the Christian life.** =Everything belongs to Christ. Including recreation.

Many Christians unintentionally divide life into categories: Spiritual & Non-sp. activities.

Church is spiritual. Bible study is spiritual. Prayer is spiritual. Golf is not. Fishing is not.

Vacations are not. Sports are not. The Bible destroys that distinction. **Everything belongs to God.**

\*The mission field is not only where you work & live. **It is where you play**, where you eat, where you travel, where you cheer, where you exercise, where you gather, and where you build friendships. The mission field is where we spread God's glory in ALL that we do! **Everywhere!** Followers of Jesus may take vacations from work, BUT we never take vacations from being ambassadors of Christ -from representing Christ in all we have, in all we do, & *wherever* we go!

**The MISSION of the WELL:** Leading ALL GENERATIONS to love God, follow Jesus, and model His mission to transform all peoples and nations (w/ the gospel) =the work God invites each of us into\_ -Am I on Mission with Christ in all areas of my life? (work-sch/live/play/rest?)

1. **Work** as Mission: Work is God's **idea**. Work is **worship** when done for Christ.
2. **Neighborhood** as Mission: Where you live is no accident. A fundamental principle for the Christian: We are **missionaries** before we are homeowners, renters, or commuters. God first calls us to **love** where we already are planted and make an **impact** on those right around us.
3. **Play as Mission:** The first disciples discovered that boats, nets, lakes, and ordinary life could become places of extraordinary mission. On the lake & around the lake, the disciples became fishers of men. Nothing has changed. **The golf course. The hunting camp. The gym. The pickleball court. The baseball field. The neighborhood pool. The hiking trail. Bike trail. The fishing boat. These are not interruptions to God's mission. They are opportunities for God's mission.** God sends us out daily where people are (**we are in the people business**).

-Followers of Jesus do not merely go on mission trips. **Followers of Jesus live as missionaries wherever they live, work, and play.**

## READ 2 Corinthians 5:14-20

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; <sup>15</sup> and He died for all, so that those who live would no longer live for themselves, but live for Jesus who died and rose on their behalf. Our lives *in* Christ=changed; Our lives are His; **on mission**

<sup>16</sup> Therefore from now on we recognize no one by the flesh; even though we have known Christ by the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer. =People are both phys. & spiritual.

-**We are to see people as valuable to God** (everyone); as **spiritual** people created for **eternity** [either in Hell or w/ God in heaven]. Everyone will *outlast* this earth/temporary experience.

-So we are to engage with people as those who are IN Christ (already) OR those who NEED Christ (Bible calls em: **lost** spiritually; **blind**; **dead**; **outside** of Christ; **unbelievers**; child. of **wrath**)

-How do you see people? With your lens or with spiritual eyes? (**scenery, machinery, ministry**)

-Will you begin to ask the Lord to give you NEW vision (new sp. eyes) to see 'em like He sees 'em

**Vs. 17:** Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *this person is* a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Change. Transformation. Conversion = **death to life; light from dark; hope from fear; joy from loss; eternal life from spiritual death.** -This happened to YOU?

-How we see and interact with others matters -we dealing with a new creation or the old model?

**Vs. 18:** Now all *these things* are from God [salvation; justification; sanctification; & reconciliation]

...God Who reconciled us to Himself *through Christ* and **gave us the ministry of reconciliation**, -

**How do we glorify God most? How do we live on mission everywhere?** By embracing Christ's Mission to intercede; mediate; to demonstrate to lost sinners that Jesus loves them; died for 'em -By embracing His mission for us to reconcile the wayward to the TRUTH -**to lead 'em to Jesus.**

### How?

=By being ready to share the hope within us (**Jesus saves**); and by being willing to show & serve others the LOVE of Christ Who is a Forgiver, Lover, and Reconciler of souls-of lost/broken/hurt

=By knowing, living, and sharing the gospel to spiritually starved souls...**Pastor what is gospel?**

**\*\*Vs. 19:** namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their **wrongdoings against them**, =Glorious gospel (Good news) that God sent Jesus to become man, perfect, sinless, righteous, obedient, law-keeper who died for our sins, buried, raised, reigning **AND Jesus now stands ready to forgive us** (not holding our sins against us) =**debts paid justify**

**Vs. 19:** and now He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. =Our Mission – glorify Him by rightly **representing** Him to a lost and confused world. WHERE??? Everywhere. **Where u play!**

**Vs. 20:** Therefore, **we are ambassadors** for Christ, as though God were making an appeal *through us*; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> He made Him who knew no sin *to be* <sup>in</sup> sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**\*\*An ambassador never stops representing his king.** Whether at work, at a football game, on a hiking trail, at a hunting lease, F45, at a coffee shop, believers are representatives of King Jesus.

**Application:** Your recreational spaces are not interruptions to mission; they are mission fields.

**Ephesians 5:15-16** "Look carefully then how you walk... making the best use of the time."

This doesn't mean recreation is a waste of time. It means recreation should be **stewarded**.

## **Biblical Observation**

Jesus did not spend all His time in synagogues. He walked roads. Attended weddings. Shared meals. Visited homes. Spent time around fishing boats. Gathered around tables with sinners, drunks, the ungodly, the confused, the vulgar, the profane – and He impacted them everywhere He went.

-Jesus entered ordinary spaces. *Why?* Because people live there. **And the mission follows people.**

**Application:** Enjoy God's gifts while remaining open to God's purposes.

Ask yourself:

- How do I approach recreation?
- Is it merely escape?
- Is it self-indulgence?
- Or is it stewardship? Every youth sports game; golf swing; fishing trip; family vacation can become an act of worship when surrendered to Christ, played for His glory while ON MISSION.

## **Historical Illustration: Moravian Missionaries**

**The Moravians transformed world missions. Many worked ordinary jobs. They became carpenters. Tradesmen. Farmers. Merchants.**

**They intentionally entered everyday settings where relationships could flourish.**

**One historian estimated that only one in every sixty Moravians became a missionary.**

**For them there was no distinction between vocation and mission. Every sphere belonged to Christ.**

**Application** Look differently at your recreational relationships. Ask:

- Who consistently appears in my recreational world? Whose on my team? Who shows up a lot?
  - Who might be spiritually searching?
  - Who needs friendship?
  - Who needs encouragement?
- =Our Mission often begins with persistent prayer and intentional presence.

## **Remember: OUR CHARACTER PREACHES BEFORE OUR WORDS**

**-Matthew 5:16** "Let your light shine before others in such a way that they see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

**-1 Peter 2:12** "Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable."

\*\*People watch Christians. People are watching your life; where you go; how you play; how you respond in adversity **\*parents being asked to step out by referee...**

=Because recreation reveals us. Competition exposes us. Pressure exposes us. Frustration exposes us. Losing exposes us.

A church member joined a local cycling group. Their language was rough. Dirty jokes. For years he simply rode with them. No agenda. No pressure. Just faithful presence.

When one cyclist's wife was diagnosed with cancer, the group was devastated.

The Christian rider showed up. He brought meals. Prayed. Visited. Encouraged. Really pressed in: Eventually the hurting family asked: "Why are you doing this?"

That question opened the door to the gospel.

Years later multiple members of that cycling community came to Christ.

Not because someone launched a program. Because someone rode a bicycle on mission.

The goal is not to turn recreation into a project. The goal is to become fully present where God has already placed you. Love people. Serve people. Know people. Pray for people. Live the gospel And watch what God does.

### **PRACTICAL STEPS FOR LIVING ON MISSION WHERE YOU PLAY**

Before every recreational activity ask:

- 1. How can I glorify Christ here?** (1 Corinthians 10:31)
- 2. Who can I encourage here?** (Hebrews 10:24)
- 3. Who needs friendship here?** (Philippians 2:4)
- 4. Who might be spiritually open here?** (Colossians 4:5-6)
- 5. How can I display Christ here?** (Matthew 5:16)

## **Community Group Questions**

- 1.** How does 2 Cor. 5:14-20 challenge or expand your understanding of being an ambassador everywhere including in recreation, hobbies, sports, travel, or leisure activities? What activities in your life might God be inviting you to view differently?
- 2. Read John 20:21.** Where do you regularly recreate (gym, golf course, hunting lease, neighborhood events, youth sports, hobbies, travel, etc.)? Who are the people God has consistently placed around you in those environments?
- 3.** What practical habits could help you become more intentional about building relationships and engaging spiritually with people you encounter during recreational activities?
- 4.** How do you typically respond when things do not go your way during recreation or leisure activities? What aspects of your character best reflect Christ, and what areas need growth?
- 5.** Why is faithful presence and genuine friendship often an important foundation for gospel conversations? Can you share a time when a relationship opened a door for spiritual influence?
- 6.** How can we enjoy recreation as a gift from God without allowing it to become an idol that competes with God? What warning signs might indicate that a hobby or activity has become too important?
- 7. Personal Mission Challenge** **Read Matthew 4:19 and Acts 17:26-27.**  
God sovereignly places us in specific locations and relationships for His purposes.  
  
-Think about one recreational environment where you spend significant time. Who is one person or family there that God may be prompting you to pray for, encourage, serve, or intentionally pursue in relationship over the next month? What is one specific step you can take this week?