

For the Love of the Game

A Call for the Redemption of Sports

The Reality

Sports are broken.

- Lance Armstrong
- Florida youth football league coaches indicted on betting scandal
- Father indicted on second degree murder for drugging his son's tennis opponent
- There are many more in every sport at every level...

The Response

People are trying to do something about this problem. But, their well-intentioned efforts often fall short of dealing with the problem.

What is needed is a complete redemption of sports (all sports at all levels).

- Redeem
- Restore

The Challenge

Lots of sports. Lots of issues. Very few resources.

Different perspectives on sports.

Different perspectives on the source of the problem.

Does God care who wins? When this question is asked in a group, almost always half say yes and half say no (thus creating confusion).

The Solution = The Redemption of Sports

A change in outward behavior is not enough → we need inner transformation.

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:1-2 ESV)

We are commanded to:

1. Present our bodies as a living sacrifice
2. Do not conform to this world
3. Be transformed by the renewing of our minds

For transformation to happen, we need a new way of **thinking**. This new way of thinking will be a **biblical framework** for addressing the brokenness of sports and will include:

1. A picture of the original design of sports and competition
2. A picture of the corruption by the fall on sports and competition
3. A picture of the restoration steps for sports and competition
4. A picture of the final outcomes for sports and competition

This biblical framework comes from the gospel, which is first and foremost a story.

The Four Chapters of the Gospel Story

1. Creation – life as it ought to be
2. Fall – life as it is
3. Redemption – life as it can be
4. Consummation – life as it will be

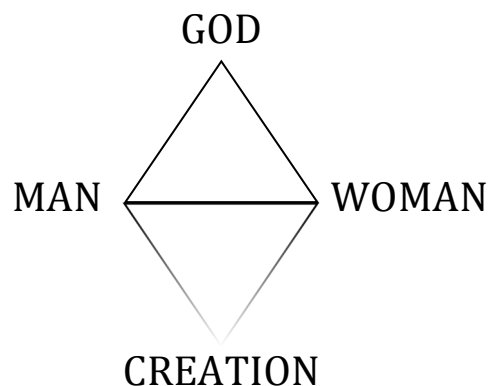
The gospel is not just for redemption of people it is for the redemption of ALL things including sports and competition

The First Chapter - Creation

Moses wrote the book of Genesis during the time the Israelites were wandering in the desert to remind them of what God had done for them (they had forgotten their story)

The Main Characters of the First Chapter of the Story

1. God
2. Creation
3. Man/Woman



Implications of Creation

- God - there is one God not many, who created out of overflow not need, with a design for flourishing
- Creation - not God but good, where the physical realm is an object of God's love
- Mankind - valuable because of essence not just function, when expressed in the function God gives this gives glory to God
- Competition – If we cannot find competition and sports in the garden, then sports/competition are a part of the fall. Since sanctification/redemption is about overcoming the curses of the fall and if sports are a part of the fall, then we should get out of sports. This means it is very important for Christian athletes to find competition/sports in the Garden before the fall.

COMPETITION IN THE FIRST CHAPTER

From living out the dominion mandate

- The whole earth was not like the garden
- The earth needed to be subdued – treasures still needed to be unlocked or brought out
- This required filling the earth with images of God
- This required cooperation and competition

Competition comes from the Latin word “competere” which means striving together.

*Competition in the garden was a **striving together** to more fully express the image of God in each other and to **unearth** the treasures in creation*

From living out the image of God – “Let us make man in our image”

- Not let me make man in our image
- Not let us make man in my image
- Whoever God is talking to shares creative power and image

The Godhead is a community

The nature of this community was cloudy until the coming of Jesus Christ

Jesus revealed much about the dynamics of this community but it was still confusing

At the core of this community is the idea of PLAY

Creation is the result of the Trinity at play!!!

While being made in the image of God involves a great deal, one aspect of living out our image of God is when we PLAY

The Second Chapter - The Fall

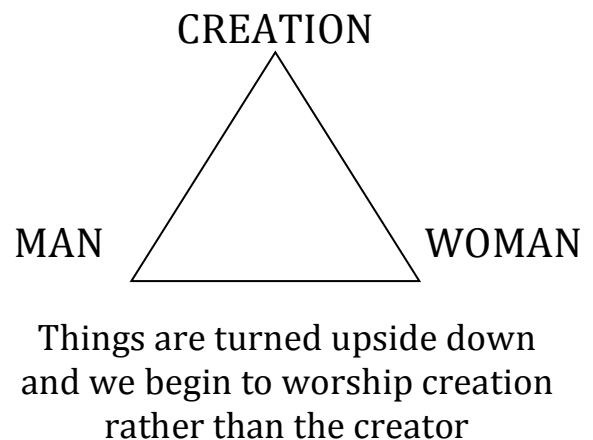
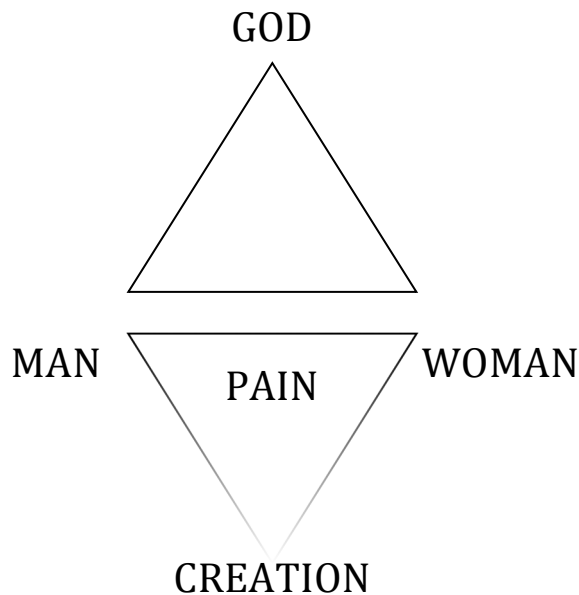
The Temptation for Adam & Eve

The immediate impact of what they did

- Guilt/Shame
- Covering – hiding from each other
- Fear
- Hiding from God
- Blame
- Scrambling

The Judgments by God

- Pain – in every relationship we have
- Romans 1:18-25



Implications of the Fall

- Evil is an intruder in this world – doesn't belong!
- Evil is anything that destroys God's design, takes it out of alignment with God's character
- Sin is participation in or promoting of anything that destroys God's design – either passively or actively
- The judgment of sin has cosmic effects – not just spiritual – including impacting competition
- Evil/Sin have defaced but not destroyed God's design

COMPETITION IN THE SECOND CHAPTER

Looking at the judgments from the fall, competition is now

- Striving against (at all costs) rather than striving together
- A place for me to establish glory rather than express glory
- Missing the importance of PLAY

The Story of Glory

- We were made for and given glory.
- We lost our glory.
- We search for glory.

This search leads us away from God to all kinds of sources for this glory – our idols.

My people have committed two sins: they have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, **broken cisterns** that cannot hold water.” Jeremiah 2:13

The Third Chapter – Redemption

Jesus Christ is the HERO of THE STORY!

Jesus Christ - the KING!

Jesus Christ is the WORD become FLESH!

Redemption - to buy or pay off; clear by payment: to redeem a mortgage. to buy back, as after a tax sale or a mortgage foreclosure. to recover by payment or other satisfaction: to redeem a pawned watch

Bible Verses --- Romans 3:21–26, Galatians 4:4–6, Titus 2:14

Restoration - to bring back to a former, original, or normal condition, as a building, statue, or painting, to bring back to a state of health, soundness, or vigor. to put back to a former place, or to a former position, rank, etc.: to restore the king to his throne

Bible Verses --- Ezekiel 36:22–27, Colossians 1:15–20

Implications of Redemption

- We can change. Things can change.
- We are to work for this change - both personally and cosmically.
- Change is appropriating/living out what is already ours in Christ - not adding something to what we currently have.
- We will never fully experience this change but God promises to give us tastes while we press on.

JUST AS WE WERE TO REIGN, NOW WE ARE TO RESTORE!!!!!!

CSO – to redeem the idol of sports and those who play them...

COMPETITION IN THE THIRD CHAPTER

- First and foremost, the restoration involves restoring the motivation to glorify God and not ourselves
- This involves a ruthlessly honest process
 1. Confess – we look for and agree with every stain of the fall we find
 2. Repent – we turn away from the beliefs that drive our idolatry
 3. Believe – in the gospel

The Fourth Chapter – Consummation

Revelation 21,22 (Notice the Garden images found there)

Romans 8:14-18

Colossians 1:27

Why did Jesus come and die – full reconciliation of all things

COMPETITION IN THE FOURTH CHAPTER

(DURING THE CONSUMMATION)

Once again, we will look back to the reason competition was created

- Striving together rather than striving against
- A place for me to express glory rather than establish glory
- Able to recognize the importance of PLAY