

“Just Don’t Get Caught!”

One of the headline stories in sports the past few years has been the use of performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids. Evidently, some athletes are so driven by their quest to win a medal, or hit some extra home runs, that they abuse certain substances.

Sadly, recent Olympic Games have been marred by such controversy. Originally, the Olympics were supposed to celebrate amateur athletics. This was supposed to be competition in its best and purest form. Sadly, I’m afraid that worthy ideal was lost some time ago. I used to anticipate the opportunity to watch the Summer Olympics. Much of that joy is now gone.

Professional sports have endured the same problem, with some of the heroes now recognized as some of the biggest cheaters. How sad!

All one has to do is witness the sorry spectacle of Lance Armstrong to know exactly what I’m talking about.

But what concerns me most is the flawed morality which says, “It’s okay to do it just so long as I don’t get caught! It’s okay to take steroids to increase my strength or improve my speed if I can just hide it.”

What are these athletes thinking? Don’t they realize how their illegal habits cast a shadow on *all* athletes, including the many who are trying to do things right? How could any athlete take pride in an Olympic medal which he won illegally? What joy and honor could there be in that?

Right now would be a good time to remember Numbers 32:23: “. . . Be sure your sin will find you out.” You may be able to fool man, but you’re not going to be able to hide your actions from God. It doesn’t matter if you deceive man for your entire life; eventually sin catches up with you. If we do not repent and turn

from our sins, they will confront us in Judgment. 2 Cor. 5:10 reminds us that we will be judged by the things which we do in this life.

Yet, so many act as if they are *free* just so long as they don't get *caught* by men. How spiritually short-sighted and immature is all such thinking!

Let's leave sports for a moment and bring all of this closer to home. Sadly, I've witnessed several instances where a brother or sister in Christ is overtaken in sin from which he or she is unwilling to turn. Despite all efforts to get that person to come back to Christ (Gal. 6:1-2), he refuses to humble himself and repent. Then, just as the congregation is about to withdraw itself, as Scripture demands, (Rom. 16:17, 2 Thess. 3:6), the individual "withdraws himself" to prevent public censure.

What is this? It's almost as if the individual is *more* worried about the public aspects of marking and withdrawing than the fact that his soul is in jeopardy. His greatest concern is publicly getting caught! He seems to be more worried about what man *does* than what God *knows*! Sadly, leaving the church does not make the sin go away. . . .

Let's make this even more personal. How about the secret sin in our lives? Of course, no sin is secret from God (Luke 8:17, Rom. 2:16), but I'm talking about those sins which we attempt to hide from man. Do we really think we're getting away with anything? Do we truly imagine that, just because man doesn't catch us, that God won't judge us?

"Just don't get caught!" is something children say, not mature Christians. May we have the courage to remember that all of our thoughts and actions are open before the Lord.

--John N. Evans