**Premature and Excessive Celebrations**

If you’ve watched sports very much, you’ve seen it…

* The basketball player who celebrates hitting a big shot a little too much or too long and fails to get back on defense allowing his man to score a fast-break layup.
* The football player who catches a long pass or breaks a long run only to be too casual or too celebratory and drop the ball before crossing the goal line.
* The cyclist or distance runner who eases up to celebrate with his arms up in presumed exhilarating victory only to endure the agony of defeat by a competitor who pushes hard and passes him just before the finish line.

As with so many areas of *physical* life, there are corresponding *spiritual* applications. We can be guilty of “excessive” or “premature” celebration *spiritually* also…

1. We can waste time “celebrating” our accomplishments in helping someone else to obey the gospel, or we can get busy either:

* Helping them to *grow up to maturity* and *learn what is pleasing to the Lord,* Eph.4:11-16;5:10; or, as Jesus put it *“teaching them to observe all that I commanded,”* Matt.28:20; or,
* *Keep on preaching/teaching the Word,* Acts 8:26-39,40, because we *know* and *appreciate* the value of every soul, Matt.16:26; 1Tim.2:4; 2Pet.3:9.

1. We can “celebrate prematurely” and *drop the* (spiritual) *ball* ourselves before crossing the finish line.

* Baptism is the *starting line,* not the *finish line,* John 1:12; 3:3-5; Heb.5:11 - 6:4.
* The Hebrew Christians were warned about this, cf. Heb.3:12 – 4:11; 10:36-39; 12:1-11.

To bring our lesson back to the *positive* side of things (in a *concluding admonitions* kind of way) consider some statements made by Paul regarding himself in such matters, cp. Phil.1:12-26; 3:38-14 with 2Tim.4:6-8.