

Why Christians Should Have Nothing to Do With Snowmobiles

A Comic-Serious Example of the Foolish Arguments Often Used to 'prove' that Things are 'worldly'"

By Pastor Norman H. Street

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Before I became a Christian, I went snowmobiling most winter weekends and thoroughly enjoyed it. But now I see the pastime in a different light. True, the church I attend is against snowmobiles and to teach a Sunday School class I had to sign a consecration pledge stating that I do not own a snowmobile and will never ride one. I think that I would have come to this conclusion anyway because anyone ought to be able to see (if he really thinks about it) that the whole sport of snowmobiling is “out of bounds,” and Christians need to think twice before they do anything “just for fun.” Perhaps it will help others to avoid this form of worldliness if I present some facts and arguments.

- 1. Snowmobiles are sinful.**
- 2. Snowmobiling is a waste of time.**

Christians are always pleading that they haven't got time for Bible study. They are too busy to help in the youth work at the church, etc., but

they have time to go snowmobiling. Anything, which takes up time better spent in spiritual things, is wrong for a Christian.

3. Snowmobiles are harmful to those who ride them.

Not only are they in danger of harming themselves, but they may do great harm to others. The finger of suspicion points straight at snowmobiles as the likely cause of increased incidences of ruptured discs necessitating spinal fusions and many other physical ills caused by being jostled and slammed up and down in a vehicle with scarcely any springs or shock absorbers.

Those who ride them like to invite their friends to join them in the sport. Some of these not so experienced as the owners have suffered serious injuries in accidents such as broken arms and legs. We have heard of people travelling at high speed being decapitated by wire fences. Surely it is wrong for any Christian to endanger his life on a snowmobile.

4. Snowmobilers have a bad influence.

People who own snowmobiles and spend a lot of time with them influence others to get as glued to the sport as they are, and Christians should not have such obsessions except in spiritual things related to the Lord's work.

5. Snowmobiling Leads to Worse Things.

In spite of all I have said, you may not be convinced that snowmobiles are a great evil, but you cannot deny this: they could be the thin edge of the

wedge of worldliness creeping in, and we must guard against small beginnings. The thing may not be so bad in itself, but if it leads to sin then what are we to say? In some places, it seems that all trails lead to the tavern where you will see dozens of snowmobiles parked outside. Others go in for racing and of course bets are placed, so the sport brings the Christian into the company of people who gamble and drink. Some of the worst people drive snowmobiles. What part can a Christian have in this business?

6. The Matter of Christian Testimony

Snowmobiles are an annoyance to many people. They roar up and down polluting the air with exhaust fumes, and at night their lights distract motorists and flash into people's houses. Farmers are afraid to go out at night on their own property for fear they would be struck down. Snowmobilers have no respect for other people's property or privacy.

Any Christian wearing a snowmobile suit is therefore a poor testimony. He is bound to be a stumbling block to others. People will say "If that's what Christians do, count me out. I'll have nothing to do with Christianity."

7. Snowmobiles are an invention of the devil.

When the automobile, "the horseless carriage" was invented, preachers warned that it was an invention of the devil and they were laughed at. But no one can deny that the automobile brought on a weekend pleasure craze, which kept thousands of people away from the churches.

How many parents regret that they ever bought an automobile or ever taught their own children to drive? Parents, knowing the dangers, were

always careful about how and when they used their automobiles, but their young people were reckless. Some drove too fast, killing themselves and injuring their friends. Others parked the automobile down some lovers' lane .

. .

The same will be true of snowmobiles. Mark my word. So now you can understand why I will never own a snowmobile. (The fact that I cannot afford one has nothing to do with it.) Nothing could be more worldly than riding snowmobiles, and a Christian is plainly told "*love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.*"

Furthermore, I will not have fellowship or associate with snowmobilers or with those who do not own snowmobiles, but are friendly toward those who do.

We would like to meet with others who feel as we do with a view to stamping out snowmobiles. If we could get enough Christians to take a strong stand on this, we could form a lobby and work to get legislation enacted prohibiting the manufacture and sale of these terrible machines. We could go from there to tackling other things which take people away from the church every weekend, such as camper and larger pleasure vehicles and private airplanes. You are not serious, Pastor? Of course not! But I want you to think. These are the kinds of arguments Christians use to prove that certain things, practices, or pastimes are worldly. All we do is prove that we are not very smart, and we succeed admirably in looking ridiculous. Many things dogmatically stated here as fact are not even true. Fallacious arguments disgust thinking people. By such arguments as I have used, you could strip yourself of everything -- even your body, as the ascetics did. No matter how tired you may be, don't ever lie on a bed. Wicked people do

that. Don't ever print anything. There's a lot of bad stuff in print. So, of course, we would never print Bibles.

Misguided Christians have carried this kind of twisted, illogical thinking to the point where any kind of game or sport or pastime became a sin. Piety was measured by the number of pleasures prohibited; to young and old alike, they had one answer, "You should find all the pleasure anyone needs in work. Enjoy your work. You must not indulge in the world's foolishness. If you were the Christian you should be, you would use leisure hours for Bible study and prayer. You would not be trying to fill the hours with empty pleasures."

If I should ask you what is worldliness, how would you reply? - with a list of things to be regarded as worldly? Would that be your first answer? Would that be your full answer? I have been a Christian for fifty years and a Pastor for forty years. I have learned that Christians whose definition of separation is in avoiding certain things are likely to be blind to other forms of worldliness. In the sight of God these may be far more damaging to their souls and the souls of others than some of the taboos commonly held by certain groups.

What do I mean? The spirit of Esau, who would not wait, is the worldly spirit of many Christians. What they want, they want now, and they get it now. This instant satisfying of every desire, this covetous, materialistic spirit makes Christians appear to be well-off. In reality they are painfully strapped with debt, very unhappy, and unable to give generously to the Lord's work. That spirit of Esau is surely not of the Father, but of the world.

Many Christians cannot be content with anything: car, house, furniture, clothing that is not either brand new or in "mint" condition. They knock themselves out trying to keep everything up to an impossible level of perfection. And what are all these things they are so "*careful and troubled*" about (Luke 12:15)? Temporal things that soon must pass away — things of this world. That obsession with things and their perfection is worldliness.

I have seen Christians totally worldly in these and other areas yet so completely unaware of the fact that they felt themselves to be in a position to judge other Christians because they broke one of the separation taboos. Lest there be a misunderstanding at this point, we need to remember that there are some things which evangelical Christians have always felt should be avoided for the sake of one's Christian testimony. We may not always agree on each debatable subject, but we must respect one another's conscience in these matters.

Sometimes the list of things prohibited becomes very long because some items are clearly worldly and sinful while others are only considered to be; although it would be difficult to show biblical proof. Such things, in that case, are nothing more than the traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees in "Christian" guise.

Happy are those who know the difference between truth and tradition! And happy is he who heeds our Saviour's Word about removing the beam from his own eye before criticizing or refusing to fellowship with a brother who has only a mote in his eye. That thing in our hearts which causes us to set our brother at naught (Romans. 14) and judge him as not qualified to serve in this or that office because he does not agree with us in debatable matters is infinitely worse than whatever the "*unseparated*" brother is doing,

nor will that attitude ever help anyone to deeper consecration, because it is not the spirit of Christ.

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" If only that could be our prayer each day. If it is not our heart's desire to please Him, then what? Nothing else will really work. We can make up our consecration pledges for workers to sign, we can set down lists of things to be avoided by our members, but legal requirements are not God's way of holiness. Church history clearly shows that those who will conform to legalistic standards inevitably become Pharisees.

True godliness, true consecration, true separation from worldliness and sin springs from only one motive: love for Christ in response to Calvary. Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all.

That Christian who is constrained by such love, and no other, is free. Free to enjoy innocent fun. Free in testimony. Free in prayer. Free in witness. Free from fear. Free from bondage. Free indeed!

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