

Ox Pusher Or Ditch Filler?

Whoever said, "a stitch in time saves nine," was a pretty good observer of life. Prevention is often better than redemption. Redemption would not be necessary if sin could be prevented. Each of us would live much better if we avoided what causes us misery. Take the person who drinks a little wine or beer at times. I have never known any "moderate drinker" who did not, at some time or another, get a little too much. What starts as "sometimes," becomes an "all the time" habit. It proves the point that the best way to stay sober is to stay away from intoxicants (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

This principle applies in a lot of ways. Consider the opportunities we have to assemble with the Lord's people. Three times a week we can assemble with the saints. It may not be a big gathering. It might not have much social or entertaining activity, but it is the most valuable association for humans on this earth.

Yet some of us miss an assembly here and there, now and then. With some, it gets to be a sort of routine. Missing a Bible class on Sunday grows into a regular forsaking of Bible classes on Sunday. Then the same pattern emerges on Sunday evening, then Wednesday night, and that leads to a "Sunday morning" only (now and then) attender.

We should remind ourselves that God condemns those who forsake His assemblies (Hebrews 10:25). I realize that forsake is a strong term, but so is drunkenness. Just like a "now and then" drinker will, sometime or other get drunk, sometime or another a "now and then" attender will quit the Lord.

That phrase, "a stitch in time saves nine," is true. When applied to our duty to attend church assemblies, the "stitch in time" is to avoid missing the first one — and the way to never miss any assemblies of the church is to attend them all. Situations arise, now and then, when people feel they cannot attend regularly. Have we not all made reference to the "ox in the ditch?" Sometimes the ox may have been given a gentle push in the ditch, but sometimes we do have legitimate reasons that prevent us from attending.

When you think the ox is in the ditch, you might want to consider selling the ox or filling the ditch. I need to fill some ditches and sell a few oxen before I let worldly affairs keep me from gathering with the saints to worship God, do His work, and study His word. We would do well to take some advice: "It is always better to build a fence at the top of the cliff than to keep an ambulance down in the valley."

Adapted From Dudley Ross Spears