

## LESSONS FROM A BOWLING ALLEY

### I. Avoid the gutters.

- A. In case you don't bowl, there is an area on each side of the bowling lane called the gutter.
  - 1. If your ball goes in there it doesn't come out.
  - 2. It also does not allow you to knock down any pins.
- B. The gutter is there to keep your score low.
- C. Matthew 15:14.
  - 1. There are spiritual gutters, or ditches, in life that must be avoided.
  - 2. Sometimes, we can allow others to take us down these paths.
- D. Proverbs 4:14-17.
  - 1. Psalm 1:1-3.
  - 2. There is a way that is sinful and nothing on that way is right.
  - 3. This is the broad way that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13).

### II. The center pin is the most important one.

- A. In the configuration of bowling pins there is a center pin that is key to success.
  - 1. If you want to get a strike hitting that center pin is key.
  - 2. It affects the other pins around it and sends them on their way.
- B. There is one main objective that we have that affects everything that we do (Matthew 6:33).
- C. When we are busy seeking the kingdom, everything else falls into place.
  - 1. Our lives are guided by one objective.
  - 2. Everything else that we do is affected by that one objective.
- D. This is true no matter what else is our main objective.
  - 1. Everything is influenced by what we put in the center of our lives.
  - 2. Just as hitting that center pin affects our bowling score, what is at the center of our lives affects everything else.
- E. Hebrews 12:1-2.
  - 1. We are in a race and there must be one aim.
  - 2. We have to put aside the sins that beset us and focus on Christ in order to reach that heavenly goal.
  - 3. If Christ is not our center pin then our aim is off.

### III. If you don't succeed at first, try again.

- A. In a bowling frame, you have two opportunities to knock all ten pins down.
  - 1. Sometimes you may knock just a few down the first time.
  - 2. You then have an opportunity to knock down the rest.
- B. Aren't you thankful that God gives us second chances?
- C. What if we only had one opportunity to do right or we were lost forever?
  - 1. No one would make it.
  - 2. We all sin and need forgiveness.
- D. 2 Timothy 4:11.
  - 1. Mark left Paul and Barnabas on a mission trip.
  - 2. We aren't told why but apparently it was not a good reason in Paul's mind for him to leave.
  - 3. Barnabas wanted to take him again and Paul would not have it.
  - 4. So sharp was their disagreement that they parted ways.
  - 5. What if that had been the end of the story for Mark?
    - a. We would have always thought of him as a quitter.
    - b. Thankfully, this verse lets us know that Mark had matured and become valuable to the cause of Christ.
  - 6. There are a lot of Mark's in the world.
    - a. People that mess up in their youth.
    - b. What if we wrote everyone off who messed up while young?
    - c. Hardly anyone would make it.

### IV. Consistency is important.

- A. Like any athletic endeavor, consistency in form and motion is vital to the success of the

effort.

1. If you are consistent with your approach and motion you will generally get the same good result.
  2. When you go one way one time and another the next you are going to get in trouble and not be consistent.
- B. My parents always had bowling on the TV on Saturday's.
1. It amazed me how consistent those guys were.
  2. They had the same motion every time.
  3. It was interesting when they did not do well that the commentator could view the replay & show the mistake.
- C. We must be consistent in our efforts for Christ.
1. We can't be Christians one day and sinners the next.
  2. We can't be hit and miss.
- D. 2 Peter 1:5-11.
1. If these things keep on being in you is the tense.
  2. We have to keep on striving to add these things to our lives so that heaven can be our home.

**V. Follow the guides.**

- A. On a bowling lane, there are guide marks to use for aiming.
- B. If you consistently bowl your ball on the same marks, in the same way the ball will hit in the same place.
- C. God has given us a guide to make it to heaven.
1. It is called the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
  2. This book was given by Him for our learning.
- D. There is no other guide to heaven.
- E. The Bible is all that there is going to be.
- F. Remember 2 Peter 1 - if we follow those things an entrance shall be ministered to us abundantly.
- G. Paul told the Philippians to mind the same rule (3:16).
1. This pattern that he said mind is the one he laid out for them.
  2. It is the one that ends with the right result.

**VI. We need special shoes.**

- A. Bowling shoes are beautiful aren't they?
- B. Ephesians 6:15.
- C. If we are going to make it to heaven we must have these special shoes.
- D. John 17:17.
- E. John 8:32.
- F. If we don't have these shoes there is no way to be prepared for the battle.

**VII. Score is being kept.**

- A. If you know how to keep score in bowling you are way ahead of me.
1. When you get a strike or a spare I get lost.
  2. I am thankful that they have the electronic score keeping.
- B. 2 Corinthians 5:10.
1. Our works determine our end.
  2. God is keeping up with what we do here on earth.
- C. Revelation 20:12-13.
1. Did you notice the last phrase in the last sentence?
  2. Again, our works are being monitored.
- D. Revelation 14:13 - our works follow us even after death.