

March Madness?

by Wayne Goff

Every year in March the NCAA national basketball tournament begins with 64 invitees — now 68 if you include the teams that have to win an extra playoff game to get into the tournament. This past Sunday evening, sports channels carried the announcement of the fortunate teams to be invited this year. As the invitations dwindle down to the end, teams nervously sit on couches in front of TV cameras, waiting to see if **their** team has gotten in. When a team sees that they are one of the last to be invited, then they all cheer, scream, holler, and hug one another at their good fortune. It's an exciting time.

What is not emphasized is that after Round One of the national tournament, 32 or 34 teams will have their dream dashed almost immediately. The tournament is single-elimination, so when you lose, your season is over. This adds to the drama and seriousness of the games played.

When I was younger, I put a lot of stock into this tournament. I wanted my team to be invited, to win at least to the "Sweet Sixteen" level, and then on to the national championship game, if possible. Only once in recent memory (1994) has that happened. So now I don't get nearly as excited, worked up, and concerned. Naturally, my wife will tell you otherwise after she has watched me root for my team during this national event. But in my heart, it's just not the same.

The tournament is well named: "**March Madness.**" Solomon described life on earth as "*madness*" because everyone scurries around, trying to accomplish as much as possible with the little earth time they have, never wondering about eternity. Every soul in the grave understands what Solomon was saying — it's madness to work so hard for what won't last while ignoring that which does last! "*This is an evil in all that is done under the sun: that one thing happens to all. Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead*"(Ecclesiastes 9:3). The only problem with this "madness" is that it doesn't just occur in March, it is year-round! May God help us all to see the importance of eternity, and the temporariness of this life and this world!

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