

## **Running for the Gold**

### **1 Corinthians 9:24–27 (NKJV)**

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

This is the first time in the last 27 years I have been here that they have picked a Biblical theme for Old Settlers.

Paul was very familiar with the Olympics and alluded to them often in the Scriptures.

Only the best of the best get to the Olympics.

- I. To be in the Olympics you must first qualify.
  - A. They did a survey and it seems that 40% of Americans think that they are good enough to compete in the Olympics.
    - 1. We American have such a humble view of ourselves.
    - 2. So too when we come to think how we measure up to God's standards.
    - 3. Romans 3:23 (NKJV)
      - a. <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
    - 4. The truth is that not one of us, of our own achievement is able to get on God's team, so to speak.
  - B. Colossians 1:12 (NKJV)
    - 1. <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.
  - C. You can only qualify by repenting and putting faith in Jesus as your Savior.
    - 1. John 3:36 (NKJV)
      - a. <sup>36</sup> He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."
    - 2. 1 John 5:11-12 (NKJV)
      - a. <sup>11</sup> And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. <sup>12</sup> He who has the Son has life; he who does

not have the Son of God does not have life.

3. John 14:6 (NKJV)

- a. <sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

II. Second you must place yourself under a strict regiment of conditioning.

A. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things

1. Some things are lawful but not expedient.

2. 1 Corinthians 6:12 (NKJV)

- a. <sup>12</sup> All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

3. Hebrews 12:1 (NKJV)

- a. <sup>1</sup> Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

B. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection

1. Ephesians 2:3 (NKJV)

- a. <sup>3</sup> among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

III. You must play by the rules.

A. The official rules.

1. You don't get to make up your own rules.

- a. We live in a day when the Bible is on the outs and man's wisdom is what is accepted.

2. Psalm 119:32 (NKJV)

- a. <sup>32</sup> I will run the course of Your commandments, For You shall enlarge my heart.

3. Marijuana Disqualified Sha'Carri Richardson.

IV. You must persevere

A. Galatians 5:7 (NKJV)

1. 7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?
- B. Only then do we get the gold so to speak.
1. 24. . . . one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.
  2. 25 Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.
- C. Yes all that the world offers is a perishable crown.
1. In the Isthmian games the prize was a pine wreath. The contestants competed for more than that, of course. The wreath represented fame, acclaim, and the life of a hero. Winners were immortalized, much as they are today. But that “immortality” was just as mortal as the wreath itself, and lasted little longer. Both were perishable. *John F. MacArthur Jr., 1 Corinthians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 214.*
  2. James 1:12 (NKJV)
    - a. <sup>12</sup> Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.
  3. In the Isthmian games at Corinth only one could receive the prize but the Lord has a better plan
  4. 2 Timothy 4:7-8 (NKJV)
    - a. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, **and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.**

Do you long for the return of Jesus Christ?

Is that your greatest desire?