

October 14, 2018

Run to Win

1 Cor 9:24-27

1. Run to win (vs. 24. 25)
  - a. Run with purpose (vs 26)
2. Train Hard (25, 27)
3. Don't be disqualified (27)

1. Run to win
  - a. Paul uses an analogy at the conclusion of chapter nine to illustrate the argument he has been making concerning the right to surrender his rights
    - i. In chapters 8 and 9 the idea of freedom or rights comes up 8 times
      1. 8:9, 9:1, 4, 5, 12 (twice), 15, 19
    - ii. This analogy comes directly on the heels of Paul saying that he has given up his rights by becoming all things to all people that he might save some, and all this for the sake of the Gospel
    - iii. So there is a link between giving up his rights and running a race
  - b. The analogy of running a race is used four other times in the NT
    1. **Gal 2:2** I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not **run** in vain.
    2. **Php 2:16** holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not **run** in vain or labor in vain.
    3. **Heb 12:1** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us **run** with endurance the race that is set before us,
    4. **2Ti 4:7** I have **fought** the good fight, I have finished the **race**, I have kept the faith.
  - ii. In two of these passages Paul emphasizes having not run "*In vain*"
    1. In vs 26 he speaks of not "running aimlessly" or "beating the air"
      - a. In a boxing match there are statistics kept on punches thrown and punches landed. The ideal for every

fighter is that every punch he throws would connect with its target.

- b. In a race it is impossible to win if there are not defined parameters for the race. Could you imagine ten runners at the starting line, the gun goes off and they all head in separate directions, some straight ahead, some cutting through the infield, another up the bleachers, others over the hurdles, a few running the track in reverse and all stopping when it seemed best to them.

2. You don't run to receive a participation trophy, you run to win and that is exactly how Paul says you are to run in the Christian life - as one seeking to win the prize

- a. There is a beautiful complexity here in that it sounds like you and I might be in competition together to win Christ - if all the runners run but only one wins how can he be telling us all to run so as to win. This seems a bit self serving.

- i. The way I am to run the race and win is by running in such a way that everyone else might finish before me.

- 1. Why can Paul say in **2Ti 4:7** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

- a. Because he became all things to all people by giving up his rights and served them in order that they might get into the race and receive the prize

- c. Paul wants us to run, to run with purpose and to win

## 2. Train Hard

- a. In order to win Paul points out that champion athletes and champion Christians train

- i. Vs 25 "Every athlete exercises self-control in all things" and vs 27 "I discipline my body and keep it under control"

- 1. If an athlete wants to win they must be disciplined in more areas of life than just their sport - they restrict their diet, pay attention to their sleeping, don't participate in activities that might compromise their goal.

- ii. In verse 27 Paul says that he disciplines his body and makes it his slave - the word translated discipline in the ESV is rendered a little better in the NIV where it says "I strike a blow to my body." The is a compound word which means to strike under the eye so as to bruise"
  - 1. So Paul is saying I punch myself hard in the face until my body does what I tell it to do
    - a. [2Co 11:24](#) Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. [2Co 11:25](#) Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; [2Co 11:26](#) on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; [2Co 11:27](#) in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. [2Co 11:28](#) And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.
    - b. Could you imagine the scene: Paul has just been beaten, or whipped or stoned, or he's hanging on to a piece of driftwood floating at sea and he's body is - his flesh- is saying I'm not going back in there. I done getting beat up. And Paul begins to punch himself in the face in order to tell his body it will be worse for you if you do not go again.
  - b. The reason for this extreme behavior is that lives are at stake, eternity is at stake
    - i. An athlete is willing to discipline his body in order to receive a wreath or a medal that will shrivel, and fade and tarnish
    - ii. How much more should the christian be willing to discipline beat his body in order that he and others might obtain eternity with Christ
  - c. Train hard! train hard!
- 3. Don't be disqualified
  - a. This might seem a bit confusing to some of us because it would appear to be a contradiction to a couple of my favorite biblical doctrines - that of the Election of God in the salvation of sinners, and the enduring or persevering nature of that in work of God in the life of the believer

- i. If these things are true than how can Paul talk about being disqualified?
  - ii. If God is the author of salvation - which he is- and if he brings salvation to those he as chose - which he does - and if salvation then is dependent on God and not men- which it is- and if God is the one who began this work and who has promised to finish it - which he is and which he has- how then can Paul write as if he can somehow be disqualified from something that is dependent on God and not him
- b. By his grace God has chosen to offer us assurance of our salvation
  - i. assurance is the indwelling of His Holy Spirit which is given to us the seal of our salvation
    - 1. [Eph 1:13](#) In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, [Eph 1:14](#) who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.
    - 2. And we who have the spirit strive to live by the spirit (Gal 5)
- c. We are disqualified when we strive in our flesh and not in the spirit
  - i. In Matthew 7:21-23 Jesus tell those listen in that not everyone who calls him Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of the Father.
    - 1. And many will protest that they did all kinds of wonderful things in Jesus name and he will say to them depart from me I never knew you
    - 2. If we are keep in step with the spirit we will be be doing the will of the Father for “no one knows the thoughts of God but the Spirit of God (1 Cor 2:11)