

Go for the Gold!

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain....”

1 Corinthians 9:24

The original Olympic started 2700 years ago and lasted for a thousand years, then they died out and were revived in 1896. All the sweat and agonizing trainings were for the thrill of victory and the reward of the gold medal.

Paul talks about winning the race of life to obtain the “incorruptible crown”. There are crowns awaits every overcomer. Ultimately, the measurement of the true Christian success is whether you shall receive crown in the judgment seat of Christ.

Paul makes 3 statements concerning the race of life, namely, there is a principle; a price and a prize. In Matthew 6:33, there is a principle of kingdom-mindedness; the price of living righteously before God and the prize of receiving the provision for all our needs.

Let’s examine the qualification principle in 2 Timothy 2:5 “if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.” What does it mean to strive lawfully. It simply means to abide or play by God’s rules. Hence, the principle of becoming a winner in obtaining the gold medal or the crown, we need to do it God’s way, the way of holiness.

The athletes in the Olympic games have to do everything and conduct themselves according to the rule book or they will be disqualified and they can’t get the gold! Satan is always trying to get you to compromise, to settle for less than the best. The easy way of the flesh will disqualify you as the winner.

Secondly, there is a price you must pay to win! “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.” (1 Cor 9:25) The Williams translation: practices rigid self-control in training! Excellence will cost you something! Paul says that all who strive to win prize are temperate. That’s a reference to the 10 months tough training Greek athlete undergoes before competing in the Greek games.

Paul added, “Now I keep under my body” is a Greek phrase that literally means to strike one under the eye or to give one a black eye! The Greek boxer in the Olympics wore furlined gloves covered with cowhide and loaded with lead and iron. We need to treat our sin and laziness like a Greek boxes: give it a black eye. Deal harshly with this flesh. If we don’t, we become a “castaway”: a technical term to be

disqualified for breaking training rules. If Paul did not subdue the flesh, he won't be the apostle to the gentile!

Thirdly, the sweetness and comfort of the prize. "I press towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil 3:14) Paul says in 1 Cor 9:24, we must run to win: Go for the gold! You are not in the race just to be in a race: But you're there to win the prize: run to win! Paul pushed himself forward, going for the gold! Paul endured through every hardship of being beaten, suffered hunger, stoned, imprisonment, cold, naked and shipwrecked for one reason, to win the prize. My friends, there are seven crowns and many mantles and scrolls assignments to be won so that you will press forward to win them all.