

☞ Today we are going to be taking a look at the details of the race called the Christian life.

1. The apostle Paul must have been a sports fan since he used more athletic metaphors than all the other writers of the New Testament combined.

- ✓ The analogy was a powerful one, to live the Christian life means to be a spiritual athlete who runs a race the long distance of his entire life here on earth. How are you doing in that race? Are you running well and training hard? Have you slowed a bit? Could it be that you are over in the shade sprawled out watching others run past?

2. There are 3 main points I'm going to be following concerning this race that we are in as believers. One, the Christian life is like a Marathon, two ,all who run, win the prize at the end and three we all are potential winners.

- ✓ The Christian life is like a Marathon, both require rigorous training, 1st Corinthians 9:25. The Christian life requires training in the Word of God, Hebrews 5:11-14. The word "trained" in the Greek is the same word we get our English word "gymnastics" from. The Word of God is key to our being in shape spiritually because it is spiritual food. The Christian life requires training in prayer, Daniel 6:5. Daniel had a life that was trained by prayer, he was a real runner! The Christian life requires training in godly living, 1st Timothy 4:7-8. The Christian life is like a marathon not a 100-yard dash! The Christian life is also like a marathon, in that, both demand extraordinary endurance. The Christian life is like a marathon in that both require you to run by the rules. As someone said, "The Christian life lived well is a long obedience in the same direction." The Bible has a lot to say about our spiritual endurance, Hebrews 11:27; James 1:12; James 5:11. Don't give up, have endurance; hang in there especially when the running's hard.
- ✓ 2nd Timothy 2:5, no matter how fast or good you are, you cannot win if you don't follow the rules of the race. Hebrews 12:1, sin is breaking the rules. The Christian life is like a marathon because both can yield a coveted prize. 1st Corinthians 9:25, in that day, the prize for winning a race was a pine wreath that they placed on your head at the end. Talk about a perishable prize!, Philippians 3:14; 2nd Timothy 4:7-8. What would keep you from getting the prize if you stood before the Lord this very day? What would you say to Him about the way you have run the race? Do you need to make some changes now so that there will be no regrets then? Not all who enter the race will win the prize, 1st Corinthians 9: 24. Does this mean that only one believer out of millions will win a prize? No! We are not in competition with each other but are running together as a team and each of have our own race to run.
- ✓ None will lose because they have been beaten; they will only lose because they disqualify themselves. 1st Corinthians 9:27, Paul is not a masochist nor is he promoting it at all, he's saying that, like a marathon runner, he makes his body serve his mission instead of having his body determine the mission. Many are in danger of disqualification because, although they ran hard at first, now they are on the sidelines. There are numerous examples of those who disqualified themselves in the Bible: Demas was a disciple and missionary but got disqualified at the end because he drawn away by the world. Solomon loved his wives more than he loved God. Samson allowed his lusts to control him. These guys are all in heaven now, but they were disqualified for the prize. What in your life today will disqualify you?

All are potential winners:

- ✓ 1st Corinthians 9:24, there is no arbitrary limit to those who can win the prize. Olympic medals are not won by half-heartedness or by accident, they are won by wholeheartedness and commitment. Are you wholehearted? Are you committed or on the sidelines?
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