

HOW TO WIN THE RACE

To win the race, we can draw from both the instructions of the inspired writer, Paul, and learn from his example. Inside the bulletin we learned from 1 Corinthians 9.24-27 that winning the prize of eternal life requires focus. There is a second strategy required for ensuring that we will be crowned victor.

To be assured of certain victory, we must practice self-discipline. Paul continues in our text to write that *“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 word “temperate” is translated from the word “kratos” which means, “dominion.” It is prefixed by the word “en” meaning inside. The idea is to have dominion over your inner thoughts and desires. We might use the phrase, “exercise self-control.”

In fact, the word, “self-control” refers to restraining yourself from things you desire. Akin to this term is “self-discipline” which refers to the ability to make yourself do the things you don’t want to do. Athletes in the Grecian games would restrain themselves from indulgences such as sexual intimacy, eating unhealthy foods, and drinking alcohol. Paul says that if you want to win the race and be awarded eternal life, you need to learn how to control your desires and say “no” to what you want.

Paul then uses himself as an example. In verse 27, he writes, *“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”* When it came to the desires of the flesh, Paul forced his body into submission. That was not always the case. There was a time when Paul did not do what he willed to do, but did what he willed not to do (Rom. 7.15,16). But he came to the point where he learned self-control. If we want to win the prize of eternal life, we must learn to force our bodies to submit to our will. It is no accident that the very next chapter addresses the problem of temptation.

We are in a race. In a real race, *“all run, but one receives the prize”* (1 Cor. 9.24). But in this metaphoric race with heaven as the prize, we can all be winners. The crown of life is available “not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearance” (2 Tim. 4.8). The prize can be yours if you focus our attention on the prize before you and bring your body under control. CLP

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“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”
-Mark 16.15

June 5 , 2022

MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS : 9:00 AM
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP: 9:50 AM
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP: 6:00 PM
WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS 7:30 PM

HOW TO OBEY PERFECTLY

Love is more than just words. The apostle John wrote, *“Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth”* (1 John 3.8). How do we demonstrate our love for God? Jesus answered that question when He said, *“If you love Me, keep My commandments”* (John 15.13). To this John agrees who wrote, *“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments”* (1 John 5.3).

When we love, we fulfill the entire law of God. When Jesus revealed that the two greatest commands are to love God and love your neighbor, He said, *“On these two commands hang all the Law and the Prophets”* (Matt. 22.40). The Ten Commandments can be grouped into two categories: Those that relate to God (Ex. 19.1-11), and those that relate to man (Ex. 19.12-17). The command of God is to love. The commandments of God tell us how to love Him and how to love our neighbor.

As Paul provided a sampling of the commandments, he wrote, *“and if there is any other commandment, all are summed up in this saying, namely, ‘You shall you shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”* (Rom. 13.8-10). If we want to be perfect in our obedience to Him, there is only one thing to do – Love! CLP

WHEN YOU PRAY

1 TIMOTHY 2:1

INTRODUCTION:

1. The secret to living a life of joy and gratitude is to have a strong and active prayer life. (1 Thess. 5.16-18)
2. 1 Timothy 2 answers four questions revolving around the concept of prayer.

I. WHY DO WE PRAY?

- A. **1 TIMOTHY 2.1:** “*first of all.*” Prayer is a priority in our lives. (1 Tim. 1.15)
- B. **1 TIMOTHY 2.1:** “*therefore*” In light of the good fight of faith, we need to pray. (1 Tim. 1.19,20)
- C. **1 TIMOTHY 2.1:** “*I exhort.*” Lit., to call to the side.

II. WHAT DO WE SAY?

- A. **1 TIMOTHY 2.1:** “*supplications.*” We are to beg God for what we need. (cf. 1 Tim. 2.8)
- B. **1 TIMOTHY 2.1:** “*prayers.*” Not a formality, but talking to God to tell Him what is on our minds.
- C. **1 TIMOTHY 2.1:** “*intercessions.*” Praying on behalf of someone else. (cf. Rom. 8.26,27)
- D. **1 TIMOTHY 2.1:** “*thanksgivings*” We express to God our gratitude for all His blessings.

III. WHO DO WE MENTION IN PRAYER?

- A. **1 TIMOTHY 2.1:** “*for all men.*” We are to pray even for those we don’t like. (Jonah 4.2; Matt. 5.44)
- B. **1 TIMOTHY 2.2:** “*for kings*” Regardless of who is in office.
- C. **1 TIMOTHY 2.2:** “*all who are in authority*” Political leaders, law enforcement, teachers, etc.
- D. **1 TIMOTHY 2.2:** “*that we...*” Pray for ourselves.

IV. WHO IS INVOLVED IN PRAYER

- A. **1 TIMOTHY 2.3-5:** God is involved in our prayer as the One we address. (Matt. 6.9; James 5.16)
- B. **1 TIMOTHY 2.5:** Jesus is involved in our prayers as the One who mediates for us. (Gal. 3.19; John 14.6)
- C. **ROMANS 8.26,27:** The Holy Spirit is involved as the One who intercedes for us.
- D. **HEBREWS 1.14:** Angels are involved in our prayers as those who carry out God’s orders.

CONCLUSION: Prayer is a blessing belonging to the faithful.

HOW TO WIN THE RACE

The Bible uses different metaphors to help us understand eternal life. One of those metaphors is a race. Eternal life is characterized as a prize to be won. It is a crown that is awarded to the victor. As Paul was nearing the end of his life, he wrote that “*there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day*” (2 Tim. 4.8).

How do you run the race to ensure that you will win? How can you compete in a way that will award you the crown of life? What gave Paul the confidence to know that he would be awarded the crown of life? The answer is found in 1 Corinthians 9.24-27. In this passage, Paul compares our spiritual life to the Grecian games. From this analogy, there are two strategies that Paul suggests to ensure our victory. The first will be addressed here. The second is addressed on the back of this bulletin.

First, if you want to win the race and obtain the prize of eternal life, you need to be focused. 1 Corinthians 9.24 say to “*run in such a way that you may obtain it.*” To win the race, you are to have your sights set on the prize. Using another metaphor, Paul told Timothy that “*no one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier*” (2 Tim. 2.4). It is easy to get distracted by the cares of the world. We set our minds on accumulating the things of the world. We are consumed with worries about our health and our family. But when we lose focus, we are no longer running the race to win. Instead, we are to “*set your minds on things above and not on things on the earth*” (Col. 3.2).

The apostle Paul is an example of that. If you keep reading our passage, he continues this thought in verse 26: “*Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.*” The idea is that Paul is not wandering around aimlessly. He is focused on the prize. His focus is underscored in Philippians 3. He was not going to rest on his laurels believing he already won (Phil. 3.12). He was not going to be distracted by the mistakes of the past (Phil. 3.13). Instead he writes, “*I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*” (Phil. 3.14). He set eternal life in front of him as the goal, and he lived his life focused on reaching that goal.

If you and I want to win the race of faith and obtain the prize, the crown of life, it requires that we set heaven as our goal and focus our efforts on obtaining it. Everything we do is with that goal in mind. Every day is spend moving us closer to that goal. Are you focused on the prize?