

LIVE FOR GOD'S GLORY (NOT YOUR OWN)

October 8, 2023

WORSHIP

Hosanna
Amazing Grace
10,000 Reasons

WELCOME

Who was your idol
when you were young?
Why?

WORD

1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-27
(ALSO READ **1**
CORINTHIANS 10:1-33)

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. **25** Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. **26** Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; **27** but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

We all have our own "compass" or "GPS" – accumulated knowledge that guides us through life. We make decisions based on this

The recent 19th Asian Games was an exciting event for competitors and spectators alike. News outlets reported on athletes such as Singapore track and field star Shanti Pereira and the members of Gilas Pilipinas, the Philippine men's national basketball team, who won their respective events to bring pride to their sports and countries.

In today's passage, 1 Corinthians 9:24-10:33, Paul begins by talking about a race and urging us to run to win it. One of running's most well-known athletes is Usain Bolt, who is widely considered the greatest sprinter of all time. The history of Olympic sprint winners in the century leading up to Bolt's final Olympics in 2016 reveals several observations about what it takes to win a race. Here are five points which apply both to the track and to the Christian life. To win, we need to FOCUS.

1. Find your right to win.

Full self-control and discipline

Performance, and what is needed to win, generally improves over time. Today's winner may only be tomorrow's runner-up. In the passage, Paul alludes to running and boxing in the Isthmian Games, an Ancient Greek event comprising athletic and musical competitions. Another verse



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which uses the analogy of running is Hebrews 12:1, where believers are encouraged to run with endurance the race set before them.

A key ingredient to performing well in any competition is focus. For example, when training for the 2002 Olympics, the British national men's rowing team narrowed their strategy down to a single question: will it make the boat go faster? This mindset enabled them to excel and become the first British team to win an Olympic gold since 1912. As Christians, we have the right to win: Jesus. But this right is underpinned by the need for each of us to exercise self-control and discipline.

2. Learn from history (His story).

Obliterate the idols of your heart

Performance improvement is seldom linear. An athlete looking to break a record must look at the history and understand that it takes more to win each time. Being led out of Egypt, the Israelites experienced the greatness of God – his deliverance, presence, provision and strength. They enjoyed first-hand the experience of being God's chosen people. Unfortunately, having this privilege led them to feel proud, thankless and complacent. Paul cites their bad examples and warns us against being idolaters, committing sexual immorality, putting the Lord to the test, and grumbling (1 Corinthians 10:6-10).

Succumbing to sin is like being a wolf who has fallen for the Blood Knife method. In this Native American hunting method, a wolf is drawn to a knife which has been stuck into the ice and covered in blood. The wolf begins to lick the blood on the knife, not realising over time that he has begun cutting himself on the blade, until he is too injured to resist the hunters who eventually come for him. The trap of sin can

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similarly ensnare us. It is crucial to take a step back and remember that we can overcome sin and idols because Jesus was victorious over both. God will always provide a way to flee temptation and return to him (1 Corinthians 10:13).

3. Be all in.

Completely devoted to Jesus

Both 1 Corinthians 10:21 and Matthew 6:24 emphasise that we cannot serve both Christ and something else. In fact, the church's regular practice of taking holy communion together, mentioned in 1 Corinthians 10:16, is a reminder that He ultimately owns us. We are one with Christ and, as the body of Christ, one with each other.

The margin of Olympic sprint winners has decreased over time. Where runners used to win by 0.1 of a second, the difference in recent years can be a mere 0.01 of a second. Another record-breaking sprinter was Eric Lidell, who competed decades before Usain Bolt. He was a Christian athlete who famously refused to run the 100m race, his best event, in the Olympics 1924 because it would be held on a Sunday. He instead trained for the 400m race and, the story goes, received a piece of paper before the race that read "He that honours me, I will honour". It was a reference to 1 Samuel 2:30. Lidell won gold in the heat, and set new Olympic and world records. In his own words, his life was a life completely surrendered to God.

4. Inspire others.

Uncompromisingly love others

Jump-in performances in sports are always triggered by one person. In the year after his surprise gold at the 1924



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Olympics, Lidell returned to the country of his birth and became a missionary in China. He served for twenty years, including during the Japanese occupation of World War II, until his death at an internment camp. His story is inspiring, not only because of his athletic achievements but also as an example of a life lived in service of others. We are similarly encouraged to build people up, to seek the good of our neighbours (1 Corinthians 10:23-24) and to fulfil the great commission of making disciples for Christ.

5. Anchor on what matters.

Seek to do all for the glory of God

It is easy, even for believers, to get caught up in the perceived big-ness and small-ness of tasks and achievements. The truth is that in God's universe, everything counts. The scholar William Tyndale touched on this when he advocated for a biblical view of work. For him, "as touching to please God... there's no difference when done to the honour of the Lord between preaching and washing the dishes". Glory is fleeting and repeat winners are rare, but Paul writes that whatever we do, we should "do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

The story of us winning the race that Paul writes about is, ultimately, His story. Despite our sin and idolatry, through Jesus' uncompromising love and sacrifice on the cross, we were given the right to win. God's story is about his glory, a story in which we were redeemed so that we could have a relationship with Him. Are you living for your own glory, or are you living for God's glory?

Are We Ready to Serve Christ?

August 20, 2023

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- God's help and comfort for the residents of Lahaina (Maui, Hawaii) who lost family, homes, businesses in devastating wildfire; for thousands of residents of British Columbia, Canada who need to evacuate from life-threatening wildfires
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented; conflict in African, East Asian and Middle East countries to stop.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples.
- Elders, pastors, deacons, and families (holy, humble, harmonious, happy, heart-working).
- Ministries and churches expansion worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God.
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends

MEMORY VERSE

Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all things for the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

WORD

Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on 1 Corinthians 10:31. What does it mean to do all things for the glory of God and live for God's glory? (Anchor on what matters)
2. How can we practice better discipline and self control in our lives?
3. What are the idols of our heart? How do we let them go?
4. What are practical ways to be completely devoted to Jesus? 5. How can we uncompromisingly love others?