



The Heart of a Devoted Christ-Follower

By Johnny Caruso on April 11, 2022

TODAY'S READING: 1 Corinthians 9

The descriptions I have read of the Apostle Paul are not of a man who spent a lot of time on the athletic fields. But in verses 24-27, he describes a runner and a boxer. Instead of the race or the boxing ring itself, Paul talks about the attitude that one who competes must have. The Corinthians were very familiar with these sports. Corinth is where the Isthmian games took place, second only to the Olympics. Paul uses athletic examples 13 times in his letters.

Run that you may win the prize. No athlete runs to lose, so they must train, and train and train. Without effort, nothing can be won in a sporting event. You must exercise self-control. A Roman athlete had to train for 10 months before being allowed in the games. An athlete must do without things that would hinder his race. Although these things may not be bad in themselves, they will hinder the pursuit of his goal.

The prizes at the games were several things. But you may have seen the thing that was most cherished--a wreath placed on the winner's head. Paul says that this prize will fade, but what we strive for and receive as Christ-followers is a crown that is imperishable and will last forever.

We do not run aimlessly, which means we stay in our lane. We do not run all over the place. We stay in the lane of the Christ-follower--a life of self-sacrifice. We choose not to give in to those things that are not profitable to the life of one being sanctified to be more like Christ.

I do not beat the air aimlessly or shadow box. I discipline my body and life in the way of those who were bought with a price, the shed blood of Jesus.

It is interesting to me that we, as Christ-followers, are so confused about the liberties we are afforded through the cross. We make judgement calls on things we indulge and participate in. We struggle because of the self-gratification of the body. We look at the world and seem to be jealous about the things they are pursuing.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, German pastor, who was imprisoned and eventually murdered by Adolf Hitler said, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."

PRAYER: Lord, may we live a life while waiting Your return equal to the sacrifice You made.

TOMORROW'S READING: 1 Corinthians 10

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