

Running the Race

By Red Miller

Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

While watching the Olympics one is struck with how much focus it takes to even credibly compete in the Games. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. It requires purpose and discipline. It requires that we examine our time, our talent and our treasures. The race demands that an athlete focus on all of their abilities to compete.

The apostle Paul looks at our spiritual walk in the same way. He uses this illustration to explain that Christian living takes hard work. It demands thoughtfulness and discipline, self-denial, and grueling preparation.

As Christians, we are running toward our heavenly reward. The essential disciplines of prayer, Bible study, and worship equip us to run with vigor and stamina. As Christians we shouldn't just observe from the grandstand. We need to do more than just turn out to jog a couple of laps each morning. We need to train diligently because our spiritual progress depends upon it.

Though getting the crown that Paul is talking about requires the same disciplines as an athlete. The crown Paul is talking about lasts forever and not only does just one person win the prize but all who compete and complete are first place winners.

God loves you and so do I!