



THE WORD *Alive*

The Preaching Ministry of
Ashley River Baptist Church

GOING FOR THE GOLD 1 COR 9:24-27

24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26 Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. 27 No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Paul calls for the same intensity in Christian commitment that characterized the competitors in the Isthmian games.

I. THE INTENSITY OF THE RACE (9:24)

A. An INCREASING intensity—a “race”

The OT characterized the Godly life as a walk (Psalm 1)

The NT characterized the Christian life as a race accelerated—increased—more intense

RUN: exert oneself, make an effort; speed on, make progress

B. An INCLUSIVE intensity—Not all will win the race.

1—Paul does not mean that only one Christian will win the prize.

Winning means finishing the race.

2—Paul DOES mean that every believer should run with the same intensity, eagerness and self disciplined as the athletes.

II. THE INTEGRITY OF THE RACE (9:25)

A. The SCOPE of the integrity (25)

1. Every runner—no competitor can afford self indulgence.

They go into strict discipline - strict training.

2. ALL things—No area of life was outside discipline

B. The SERIOUSNESS of the integrity.

The Contestants took a public oath for vigorous self-control over a ten month period. Covered both BODY and DIET and SELF RESTRAINT.

C. The STATUS of the integrity

1. For the Athlete—a crown that will not last.

2. For the Christian—a crown that will last forever

a. Life (Rev. 2:10) crown of life Rev. 2:10 “I will give you the crown of life.”

b. Righteousness (2 Tim 4:8)—Crown of righteousness.

III. THE INTENTIONALITY OF THE RACE (9:26)

A. Intentionality of DIRECTION—“I do not run like a man running aimlessly”—without direction or aim.

B. Intentionality of CONNECTION—“I plant my blows”—“Plant my blows—No air beater—like shadow boxing—no random blows

IV. THE INTERRUPTION OF THE RACE (9:27)

A. The avoidance of interruption

1. Buffeting the body—beat body to avoid disqualification

Paul did not beat his body physically but he held the body in check—tight control over lust,

2. Making the body a slave.

B. The awfulness of the interruption:

To be disqualified: failing to meet the test, disqualified; worthless; corrupted (mind)

1) lose the prize of the race—the Christian may lose the reward.

2) lose the race—Can you lose your salvation? NO! If you don't finish you were never in it. “The faith that fails before the finish had a flaw from the first.”

CHALLENGE: There is a prize attainable for all of us that will last forever... eternal life.

The attainment of this prize is the ultimate goal of life and Paul encourages us to pursue it over and above all other pursuits with all the intention and intensity of an athlete so as to insure we attain this prize. Are you running with intensity toward Christ?