



Week One – Olympic Trails: Olympic Trials

CONNECT

- What is one of the most rewarding moments of your life? How hard did you have to work to reach this moment?

WORD

2 Timothy 2:5; 1 Corinthians 9:24 - 27 (NIV)

5 Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

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 wreath. 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.

THOUGHT

In 2nd Timothy chapter 2 and 1st Corinthians chapter 9, Paul exhorts us to endure hardships. Emphasizing the importance of discipline in the Christian life. Discipline, which includes sacrificing personal rights and comfort for the sake of others.

An Olympic story: Six young men were slated to compete against one another in Seattle Washington. The event was the hundred-yard dash. The men lined up, waited for the starting gun, and took off in a sprint. About halfway down the track the man in front stumbled and fell, skinning his hands and knees. The other five men stopped and helped him up. After they brushed him off and we're sure that he was unhurt, they decided to finish the race together, holding hands. None of the judges could tell who won the blue ribbon; none of them could see through their tears. No one in the stands that day would ever forget this demonstration of compassion. As the race ended the crowd stood and cheered for ten minutes. These young men were competing in the Special Olympics, and they showed that they cared more for a fallen friend than for winning a race.

DISCUSSION

1. How does the example of an athlete teach us about the Christian life? (2 Tim. 2:5)

2. In verses 24-26 of 1st Corinthians chapter 9, Paul shares the heavy price that comes from being an athlete, though all train, all are not crowned winners. However, for the Christian all who run the race are crowned. How would this illustration encourage you to steadfastly endure in your own sufferings?

3. How would you describe your gospel readiness program?

- a) I haven't found the gym
 - b) I'm not sure I'm ready to make the necessary sacrifices
 - c) I'm ready anytime, if only I had a team of people to train with me
 - d) I've run the race and I'm exhausted
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4. Paul recognized the potential to be "disqualified" (9:27). What sin(s) am I most susceptible to succumb to? How can I guard against these sins? Who will hold me accountable?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

- Figure out your church's growth strategy and get involved in the process
- Share with someone the race God has you on, reaching out to the lost, serving in church, etc. allow them to hold you accountable to running the race

PRAYER

- Ask God to use you in your spheres of influence
- Pray asking God to help you renew the race He has you on so that no thing can disqualify you