

Run to Win a Crown!



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The Christian life is an endurance race to obtain an eternal prize and crown! **Every day there are obstacles and hurdles to get over, around, or through—and God coaches us to success—finishing with our faith in Him intact.** Let us learn much from the training, the dedication, and the energy expended by an Olympic athlete because we run to win an *imperishable* crown!

The Olympic games in ancient Greece were well known as the modern Olympic games are today. The Games have always taken place every four years. ¹ *1 Corinthians 9:25* “*And every man that striveth for the mastery [competes for the prize] is temperate in all things [goes into strict training]. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible [perishable] crown; but we an incorruptible.*”

The Christian life is similar to the *training* of an athlete ¹ *1 Corinthians 9:24* “*Remember that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize. You also must run in such a way that you will win. ²⁵ All athletes [striveth] practice strict self-control. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize [incorruptible crown].*”

Everyone was familiar with the Olympic *games*, so the apostle refers to them in teaching a Bible *truth*—¹ *1 Corinthians 9:24* “*Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.*”

We compare our training *by* God and our commitment *to* God as we run the *Christian* race. The *time*; the *dedication*; and the *energy* it takes to be an Olympic athlete, is the *dedication* and the *commitment* it takes to be a true believer running the *Christian* race—SO ¹ *1 Corinthians 9:24* “*Run in such a way that you may obtain it.*”

We can learn from the intense *devotion* and *perseverance* of an Olympian. It takes an *enormous* amount of *committed* practice; *constant* training; and *daily* sacrifice to be such an athlete. They strive for a *gold medal* that is awarded to the one who *runs in such a way as to obtain it*. The *struggles* and *triumphs* of the *Olympic* Games are the *persecutions* and *victories* of the *Christian* life—a *race* that results in an eternal *prize*—*Far Greater than Gold!*

We are running a Christian race like an Olympian who trains hour after hour and day after day. Likewise, we are trusting God every hour through every day for the ability to meet every situation in a scriptural manner—*resisting* temptations; *praying* for strength; *asking* for patience; and *trusting* Him for success with the tasks that are set before us.

As an Olympian listens to the words of their *coach*, we listen to the voice of our *God*—as we enter each day to face its challenges. As we see the *fierce* competition and hear the *victory* shouts when crossing the finish line; we are to see the path ahead of us with profound *discipline* and *energy* in pursuit of an eternal prize—finishing the race and still trusting God.

The Olympics produce the best athletes in the world—their skill is amazing, but the believer knows that they have something much *better* to

win—and definitely Someone much *greater* to *trust* every day—ininitely *superior* and far more *important* than any game or athlete who ever competed.

The Olympic medals are highly valued and very meaningful at the time—but both *pale* when compared to the *eternal crown* obtained by the believer in Christ who *stays* in the race and *endures* to the end—with their faith in Him intact. We ^{Philippians 3:14} “*Press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*”

The Olympic Games remind us—the *gold* medal is for the fastest and best, but the *eternal* prize of a heavenly kingdom and crown is for *every one* of *every age*. Cross-country races are for the *fittest*, but the spiritual *fight of faith* is for the *faithful* of every culture and time.

The Olympics are run in *human* strength; the Christian race in *divine* strength—God gives the ability to those who faithfully trusts Him every day—to obtain an eternal crown that never perishes. ¹ *1 Timothy 6:12* “*Exert all your strength in the honourable struggle for the faith; lay hold of the Life of the Ages, to which you were called, when you made your noble profession of faith before many witnesses.*”

The Olympian exerts all of their strength and energy in the struggle for a gold medal; but the believer exerts all of their strength and energy to win an *eternal* Crown. We just stay in the race—and ^{Philippians 3:12} “*Press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.*”

Their *run* for the gold, is our *race* for the *prize* of Paradise! We train and practice every day by meeting every situation and person and difficulty in a scriptural manner with God’s help.

² *1 Timothy 4:7* “*I have gone through the glorious contest; I have run the race; I have guarded the faith. ⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous*

judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” If we love His appearing, we will walk in His Truth.

Faith to *trust* God is by the *Spirit* of God—Who *inspires* us to believe God and *empowers* us to get *around* any obstacle; get *over* any hurdle; and make it *through* any temptation—without giving in to the discouragements, the deceptions, and the lies of the devil along the way. It takes us back to 1 Corinthians 9:24 “*Run in such a way as to get the prize*”—which is always by *faith* in God.

The *Olympian* starts the day with a *purpose*—keeping an eye on the *goal*; thinking that all the training, the energy, and the sacrifices are worth it to obtain a *bronze*; a *silver*; or a *gold medal*. 1 Corinthians 9:25 “*Everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.*”

The *believer* begins the day with *purpose*—keeping our eyes on the *goal* and knowing that all the *learning*; the *tests*; the *difficulties*, or *trials* along the way, will be worth all the *training* and *learning*—because 1 Corinthians 9:25 “*We do it to get a crown that will last forever.*”

Olympic athletes *prepare* for the games with many years of intense, physical, and mental training with a coach—who determines the ideal *plan* to reach the desired *goal*—an Olympic Gold Medal—but a prize that will eventually be left behind to gather dust—along with everything else accumulated along life’s path.

The *believer* also *prepares* for a life of faith by committing to many years of training—always depending on the Holy Spirit to *guide* us, *coach* us, and *train* us along the way. He reminds us always of the *plan* to follow to reach the desired goal—God’s kingdom. It is a plan of continual faith and trust in God to keep us in the race and holding to our faith in Him.

Running the race of life is being aware of the opponent we face. 1 Corinthians 9:26 “*Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*”

Anyone can be *disqualified* by lack of discipline; too little training; not keeping their eye on the goal; or simply by refusing to *learn* from the challenges presented—challenges like tough *tests* we face; the *insults* we hear; and the *difficulties* we encounter—we often *trip* over them rather than *learn* from them. 1 Corinthians 10:31 “*Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*”

It is to the glory of God to meet a difficult test in a scriptural way—asking Him for the strength and ability to respond in a way that is in line with His Word—often-times reacting to insults in silence as Jesus did. It is facing every situation in dependence on divine power to help us respond in a way that always gives glory to God.

For Olympic-level performance and energy, they eat nourishing foods. Genesis 1:29 “*God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for [food].*”

There is no need to hire a nutritionist since the Bible has already given a perfect plan and diet—fruits and vegetables. We just need to *read* it and *follow* it.

Proper sleep; daily exercise; mental preparation; training and focusing on the eventual goal is the plan of the Olympian—and it is the plan for the believer. God gives this promise Psalm 4:8 “*I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.*”

Being mentally ready to face every battle with the enemy, is a correct way to begin the race;

1 Timothy 6:12 “*Fight the good fight for what we believe. Hold tightly to the eternal life that God has given you, which you have confessed so well before many witnesses.*” Philippians 3:14 “*I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*”

The athlete hires a *coach* to write out a plan—the believer calls on *God* to help them follow His written plan by the power of His Spirit; Ephesians 1:13 “*In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*”

Believers in the Bible rose early in the morning to face an assortment of challenges—facing them always by faith and trust on God. Responding to difficult situations as the Word explains—which produces spiritual fruit of righteousness. Hebrews 12:11 “*No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*”

The One to whom we must give *account* of our *training* program and *exercise* regime, is our Coach, our Guide, and the Savior of our soul! Hebrews 4:13 “*Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*”

It is worth it all in the final analysis—it is an eternal crown of Eternal life—1 Corinthians 9:24 “***So run, that ye may obtain***”—something ***Far Greater than Gold!***



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