

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **1Corinthians 9:23-27**.
- B. The most important thing in the entire world is going to heaven. We need to keep this foremost on our hearts and minds.
- C. Therefore, what we do, plan for, and think about should all be contingent on how to further progress the gospel.
- D. Paul said that he does all things for the gospel. He wants to make sure that he goes to heaven and that all who will listen and obey God go to heaven.

I. WE'RE TALKING ABOUT WINNING.

- A. Scripture text: 1Cor. 9:24.
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.
- B. The question Paul asks answers itself. Only one can be a winner in a race. No one runs just for the sake of running when we have such a prize for winning. We are to run to win.
- C. One way to run to win is to run according to the rules. Those who do not compete according to the rules are disqualified (2Tim. 2:5).
And also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.
- D. Another way to run to win, is to run a smart race. In the story of the turtle and the hare; the hare did not run a smart race.

II. TRAINING IS ALL IMPORTANT.

- A. Scripture text: 1Cor. 9:25.
And 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.
- B. No athlete goes out to compete without first engaging in training to ready himself. Athletes spend a lot of time even in warm up before the game to make sure they are ready for the task.
- C. Athletes also go back to training during the season to keep skills sharp and learn new and better ways of doing things.
- D. A Xian should always be on the lookout for Satan. The more equipped he/she is with the word of God the better he/she can do right (2Tim. 3:16; 2:15).
(2Tim 2:15) Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.
(2Tim 3:16) All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;
- E. Self-control says that one will not get involved in things he shouldn't and will keep things in proper perspective.

III. GET RID OF UNPROFITABLE THINGS.

- A. Scripture text: 1Cor. 9:26.
Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;
- B. When in doubt--throw it out.
- C. Too many people spend time in doing things that avail nothing. Wasting time is so easy that we often do it, and not even realize we are.
- D. We need to decide if we are going to focus our lives in going to heaven or we are going to do something else. If we decide to go to heaven let's stop wasting time doing things that slow us down (2Tim. 2:6).
The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops.

IV. **DON'T BE HYPOCRITICAL.**

- A. Scripture text: 1Cor. 9:27.
[but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.](#)
- B. Paul gives a stinging rebuke to the Jews in Rom. 2 about being hypocrites. They say and do just the opposite.
- C. In our text, Paul says that he beats his body and keeps it in subjection so that he will not be disqualified. We need to learn to preach to ourselves.
- D. We need to learn to study the Bible in such a way that it changes our lives, not just lessons for others.
- E. It is possible to know the truth, preach it, but not live it.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Remember the most important thing in your life is going to heaven.
- B. We need to follow this good advice from Paul:
 - 1. Run as if to win (be smart).
 - 2. Training is all important (know what to do).
 - 3. Get rid of unprofitable things.
 - 4. Don't be hypocritical in life.
- C. The prize is an imperishable one (1Cor. 9:25b).
[They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.](#)
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring-Xians.