

HOW TO BE A WINNER IN THE GAME OF THE XN LIFE

1 Cor. 9:24-27

P often used athletics to illus Xn life. P concerned about self running race well, Gal 2:2; Phil 2:16; Acts 20:24; 2 Tim 4:7-8. Others, Gal 5:7; 2 Tim 2:5. Wrestling, Eph 6:12; boxing, 1 Cor 9:26, prize, crown, goal, Phil 3:14, Judge.

Background of 1 Cor 9 is Isthmian games near Corinth (narrow strip of land connecting 2 larger lands Athens&Corinth, N&S Amer-isthmus of Panama.)). But Olympic Games better known.Began 776BC every 4 years. In 472 extended to 5 days. Day 1-sacrifices to gods and oaths. Day 2-Herald announces contestants, chariot & horse races, pentathlon. Day 3-boys' contests. Day 4-Men's running, wresting, boxing. Day 5-sacrifices and banquet. Pythian, Nemean, Panathenaeon games.

I.The Race Course, 9:24.

A.It is a definite race. Not same for everyone bec diff length of lives. Isthmian every other year.1000s of people, athletes, spectators, vendors, prostitutes. Games like Olympics plus discus and javelin throwing. In April & early May weather cool and windy. Tents for shelter and Paul, Aquila and Pris. P there c. 50 for 18 mo. Games in 49 &51. Races in enclosure 600' in length (200 yards). Race of single length 192.28 meters=210.97 yards. 2x=420. 24x=2.86 miles. Pillars at end of straight track for runners to keep eyes on.

B. It is a demanding race.To be won, thus run as if only 1 secures (katalambano) prize tho all will have some reward. 1 Cor. 4:5. Competition brings better race.

To lose disgrace. And if no excuse then whipped.All in public before citizens of place. 1 gets prize. Competing with world, flesh, devil..

II. The Rules & Restrictions

Xn life has rules which have to be followed if win. Jn 14:21,23;1 Jn 3:24. Love is motive, obedience result. Rules re body & race. Note P's rights in 9:4-11, then v.12-not use exousia, lest hinder gospel (hapax). Meant incision, break, interruption.

A. Condition (train) the body, 25a, Agonize, struggle, fight in all things. Full exertion and rigid denial (middle voice) resulting in self-control, not withdrawal but active. 10 months before games runners trained on oath incl diet. "Way I'm wired" Rewire! In genes but so is ability to control. Pine wreath of victory = Rev. 5:10 (stephanos, not diadema).

Rejoicing, 1 Th 2:19 (for people won); Rtness, 2 Tim 4:8; love Him, Jas 1:12 (life); elders as examples, 1 Pet 5:4 (glory); Rev 2:10 life for faithful to death (Smyrna); 3:11 take away, 2 Jn 8.

B. Control (aim) the body. Runner who does not aim for pillars at end of stadium. Have goals for life, yr, month. Get time down. Learn to pace. Boxer who plants his blows, not an air-boxer. Goals can change. Boxing most injurious of all sports. No rounds for rest. Often disfigured Of one boxer written "he used to have nose, chin, forehead, ears, eyelids." Xn life earnest and any sacrifice. 2 Tim. 2:5 wrestler.

C. Control (enslave) body, 27a. Body not an enemy but can be a master; so enslave it. Discipline of a boxer. Beat body black & blue, Lk 18:5 (widow). Slave to rtness (Rom 6:18) and to God (v.22). Strict, stern, self discipline.

III. The Reward, 24b, 27b

A. Prize in 24 included crowns, money, oil, barley, certain rights in home city, on same level as gods. On last day

victors, judges, spectators, others paraded to temple. Judge in purple robe presented crowns.

- B. Herald, 27. He announced games beforehand in cities. At games he announced the rules, names and countries of contestants. Then said "go." Paul as preacher was like herald but he was also a competitor.
- C. Be afraid of being disqualified, 27. Two requirements—10 months of obeying all training and oath at games that no cheating. If broke these rules then disqualified. Rom 14:18 "approved" in context.

Works of gold, not wood. Active & lawful deeds of sanctification.

"If you want to win at the games you will have to obey instructions, eat acc to the regulations, keep away from desserts, exercise on a fixed schedule at definite hours, in both heat and cold; you must not drink cold water nor can you have a drink of wine whenever you want. You must hand yourself over to your coach exactly as you would to a doctor." Epictetus (c. 50-c.130).

Live the Xn life with more skill, strength, discipline, purpose and love for your Lord whom you serve than with any game you ever played.