

GOSPEL of Grace FELLOWSHIP

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Run the Race With Self-Control

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Run to Make the Prize Yours

1 Corinthians 9:24 (LEB)

Do you not know that those who run in the stadium all run, but one receives the prize? **Run in such a way that you may win.**

- The famous Isthmian Games were held every other year in Corinth
- The third use of "run" here is imperative
- The prize for us is eschatological glory

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1

A Lesser to Greater Argument

1 Corinthians 9:25 (LEB)

And everyone who competes exercises **self-control in all things**. Thus those do so in order that **they may receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one.**

- Self-control is necessary to win the prize
- Contrast: perishable versus imperishable
- For them only one wins; all Christians run to participate in imperishable glory

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Paul Keeps His Eye on the Goal

1 Corinthians 9:26 (LEB)

Therefore I run in this way, **not as running aimlessly**; I box in this way, not as beating the air.

- Paul goes from the plural (vss 24, 25) to the singular (26, 27): his own example
- By analogy, he focuses on being disciplined in his aim of obtaining the eschatological reward

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Discipline for Gospel Purposes

1 Corinthians 9:27 (LEB)

But **I discipline my body** and subjugate it, lest somehow after preaching to others, I myself should become disqualified.

- "Disqualified" should be seen in light of the warnings in chapters 8 and 10
- The body is not in itself the center of sin
- The whole person is subject to temptation

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4

Implications and Applications

- The one prize for Christians is the inheritance of eschatological glory
- We must focus on the eternal goal throughout our lives in Christ and never give up.
- We must reject the values of the pagan world which would take our eyes off of the goal

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Present Joy & Future Glory

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 (NASB)

For who is our **hope or joy** or **crown** of exultation? Is it not **even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?** For you are our **glory and joy**.

- Paul mentions the "crown" which here denotes the victor's wreath
- Hope in this context is certain due to God's promises
- Present joy also anticipates the parousia

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Focus on the Eternal Goal

Philippians 3:13-14 (NASB)

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, **I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**

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Reject False Eschatology

2 Timothy 2:19 (NASB)

Nevertheless, **the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal,** "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to **abstain from wickedness.**"

- Context: Hymenaeus and Philetus heresy
- Paul alludes to Numbers 16:5; 26ff where Korah and company were judged
- The solid foundation is revealed truth

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Believe God's Future Promises

2 Timothy 4:8 (NASB)

...in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

- Believing literal eschatological promises is mocked by many popular preachers
- Loving His appearing is a virtue, not a failure!

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9