

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

May 29

2022

Winning The Race

Watching athletes compete in a contest of physical strength, endurance, skill or speed should impress the observer with many lessons for life. This was assuredly the case for Paul. When he wrote to the Corinthians, he remembered those races and competitions that he had either seen himself or heard about. It was more than just a memory, though. It was an education, a training ground for spiritual success. He admired some aspects of athletic prowess and ventured even to recommend them to Christians: “Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run; that ye may attain. And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected” (1 Cor. 9:24-27).

We are brought to appreciate many facets of the athlete by this text. We are also challenged to apply some of the lessons he may teach us:

1. Dedication. The years of training and practice, the many hours or special preparation, the sacrifices made all these things spell out one essential: dedication. Without it they would not have spent the time or made the preparation or sacrifice as they have. The more dedicated they are, the greater their chances for success – and they know it. Seldom are they just “lucky” or “unlucky.” When they win and the more decidedly they win, it is usually to be explained in terms of their dedication. “I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air,”

writes the apostle. He has his goal before him. He has made it his aim and he had dedicated himself to attaining it. Nothing can stand in his way. Nothing else is so important. Can the Christian do less than the athlete? With heaven as our goal and an eternal crown as our prize, can we manifest an attitude that is short on dedication and still hope to reach that goal? “They do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.”

2. Self-control. “Every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things,” he further says. Athletes watch their diet and make sure they have sufficient rest. They try to balance proper nutrition and exercise with the right amount of sleep. Likewise, the child of God will try to spend time with the Scriptures in study, time with people in trying to bring them to Christ, time with their families in carrying out their responsibilities there. In short, the Christian will try to balance his responsibilities and control himself and his time. He will not allow his habits to control him: “I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage.”

3. Training and Practice. Pity the poor contestant who has been injured and cannot practice for a prolonged period of time. He gets “rusty” and does not perform well. He needs practice. The Christian who leaves the race and finds himself “out of duty” will soon awaken to a multitude of evils in his life. One needs the association with other Christians and the constant practice that derives from living the godly life on a day-to-day basis. If one does not watch it, he is soon completely out of the race, for good and forever!

4. Few Actually Win the Prize. Most people these days go about their religion as though everyone was somehow guaranteed a win. That is not what Paul says: “Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?” He assumes that, for lack of dedication or practice or whatever, there are some who will not complete the race, or will finish it too late to gain the victory.

How much does heaven mean to us? It is certainly worth the effort. But will we be willing to put forth those energies essential to gaining the prize? “Even so run; that ye may attain!”

✍ Daniel H. King

Flee Sexual Immorality

In 1 Corinthians 6:18, Paul instructed the Corinthians to, “Flee sexual immorality (i.e. fornication).” You see, throughout the centuries sexual immorality has been a problem, and unfortunately our society today is likewise plagued by sexual immorality. For instance, many of our teenagers today are actively engaged in pre-marital sex (i.e. fornication), many so-called couples today are choosing to shack-up together, have sexual relations (i.e. fornicate), and forgo marriage, many today are also happily practicing homosexuality, and sadly there are many marriages today that are being destroyed because of adultery (i.e. fornication with someone besides the marriage partner).

So, you see, sexual immorality is very prevalent in our society, and is sadly often overlooked by many. However, it is extremely important that we all understand the dangers of sexual immorality. For, we must acknowledge the fact that sexual immorality is sin (1 Corinthians 6:18), no if’s, and’s, or but’s about it. We must understand that sin will separate one from God (Isaiah 59:2), we must know that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), and because of that, if one is sexually immoral and they do not repent (i.e. turn from their wickedness), they will be among those who shall someday have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 21:8).

Now, my friends, that is serious. So, with those vivid and sobering thoughts in mind, let’s all be one who takes heed to the warning given by the inspired apostle Paul, “*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God*” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). You see, God’s all inspired word makes it perfectly clear to us that those who are guilty of sexual immorality (i.e. fornicators, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites) will not be among those who will inherit heaven.

So, knowing that, my friends, we need to be a people who abstain from sexual immorality (1 Thessalonians 4:3), we need to frequently warn others about the dangers of sexual immorality (Proverbs 5:1-23; Galatians 5:19-21), and we must never be one who approves of those who practice sexual immorality. For, as Paul informed, not only are those who practice sexual immorality deserving of death, but also those who approve of those who practice it are deserving of death (Romans 1:28-32). Therefore, let’s all be one who not only disapproves of sexual immorality, but let’s also be one who flees and abstains from sexual immorality.

✍ Brad Phillips

Mark Your Calender

Our Upcoming Gospel Meeting Is: June 12-17

Preacher: James Hahn

**Meeting During Regular Service Times On Sunday
Meeting At 7pm Monday-Friday**

Plan To Attend Every Service and Bring A Friend!

Belleville church of Christ

5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258

www.bellevillechurch.net

Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

Evangelist

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