

## **SERMON: THERE'S A WINNER INSIDE OF YOU**

### **1st Corinthians 9:24-27**

**(24) Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. (25) And every man that striveth for mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. (26) I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: ( 27) But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.**

### **Introduction**

Michelangelo, the great, eccentric painter and sculptor, would look at a big block of marble and he would talk to it. He would in essence say, "There is a beautiful statue inside of you. I must use my chisel and hammer to free it. If I don't free it, the world will never see its beauty. So please endure the chipping and the noise of the chisel." To all of us, and especially to the youth, there is a winner inside of you and Jesus wants to free him or her. A winner is someone who has outperformed a competitor or an opponent. The competitor is not always another person. We compete against the flesh; we compete against negative ideas. We also compete against low self-esteem and even laziness. Remember, a winner out performs his or her opponents. In this Scripture Paul uses two athletic metaphors, track and boxing, to tell us what we must do to become winners for Christ.

### **Exposition**

#### **1. Become Results Orientated- Play The Game Of Life To Win.**

(So Run, That Ye May Obtain The Crown/Prize.)

(Make Your Time And Efforts Count.)

(All Activity Is Not Productivity.)

(Since You Are Required To Go To School You Might As Well Learn Something.)

#### **2. Develop Strict Discipline, Rigorous Training, Sacrifice And Self-Control.**

(Demonstrate Temperate/ Balanced In All Things.)

(Set Personal Deadline For Everything Important.)

### **3. Have A Plan And Stay Focused.**

(Not As Uncertainly.)

(Don't Break Training.)

(Ignore Distractions.)

(Quickly Expel Negative Thoughts and Ideas.)

(We Must Learn About the Horrors of History Without Becoming Hateful.)

(An Example: The Red Summer of 1919.)

(Hatred Is A Great Hindrance.)

### **4. Whoop Your Opponents –It's Just That Simple.**

(Knock Him Or Her Out.)

(So Fight I, Not As One That Beateth The Air.)

(Your Opponent/Competitor Is Not A Person.)

(Knock Out Bad Attitudes, Laziness, Disobedience, Low Self-Esteem, etc.)

### **5. Follow God's Rules And You Will Not Get Disqualified.**

(Lest, I Would Become A Castaway.)

(I Know, Sometimes You Feel Like Cheating When Others Cheat.)

(When We Follow God's Play Book, Victory Is Assured And Failure Is Impossible.)

### **Closing Thoughts**

Each of us is fearfully and wonderfully made. So, we are all potential winners. Just as no single athlete competes in all of the sports, we must find our purpose and give it our best effort. The Christian race is different from the Isthmian games in two ways. The crown that the Isthmian runners won were pine wreaths which would soon wilt, while the reward of the faithful Christian will last forever. Also, in the Isthmian races only one person could win, while in the kingdom of God every child of God has the potential for success. We do not compete against each other, but against the obstacles-spiritual, physical, and practical- that can hinder us. In a sense, every Christian runs his or her own race enabling each of us to be a winner. Give God glory! Give God all the glory!

### **Related Scriptures**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:5**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:8**

**James 1:12**

**1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:4**

**Revelation 2:10**

## **End Notes**

1. Corinth was the venue for the Isthmian games. These games were held on alternate summers and were second only to the Olympic games. These games were as familiar to Paul's readers as Falcon football is familiar to the people of Atlanta. It included six events: wrestling, jumping, javelin, discus, foot racing, and boxing. Contestants had rigorous training for ten months. The last month was spent at Corinth, with supervised daily workouts in the gymnasium and in the athletic fields.
2. Of the six events of the Isthmian games, boxing was the most brutal. The boxers wore gloves made of ox-hide bands covered with knots and nails and loaded with lead and iron. Perhaps Paul mentions this event and excluded others, because, even though he was referring to sports, he still wanted to convey the seriousness of our Christian commitment and how vicious our opponents can be.
3. At times a boxer punches but misses his opponent- beats the air- and thus exposes himself to a counterpunch that can be devastating.  
This is also true in a spiritual sense.
4. I am sensitive to the fact that some people have a problem with the sport of boxing. It is the only sport in which your objective is to injure your opponent. Players sustain injuries in all other sports, but you don't get points for hurting your opponent.
5. This is for all of the English teachers and scholars. Grammatically, it should be "inside you," not "inside of you." The latter just flows better when spoken. When grammar and scansion conflict I always side with scansion.

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