

1 CORINTHIANS
CALLED OUT
SMALL GROUP CURRICULUM



Sermon: **Your Christian Walk is like a Cage Fight (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)**

Date: **November 6, 2016**

Athletics were an integral part of society and culture in first century Corinth. Greek athletics and pagan Greek religion were inseparably linked with one another. Religious festivals were held simultaneously with large athletic competitions. These competitions were held in order to honour various pagan gods. There were four major athletic competitions, the most renowned of which was the Olympics. The Isthmian games were second to the Olympics in terms of fame and popularity. These games were held every two years and so Paul's stay in Corinth likely would have overlapped with the games in either A.D. 49 or 51. In this week's text, Paul, being well aware of local customs, looks to the athlete as an example for the Christian life. An athlete disciplines their body, endures rigorous training, and competes at a high level. As we study this text, we will learn that just as an athlete physically disciplines himself to compete for the prize, we must spiritually discipline ourselves for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

What you need for this study: Bible, Notebook, Pen

Individual Bible Study

1. Please read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 and ensure that you've listened to Sunday's sermon.
 - a. Athletes compete for a prize that only one will receive (v. 24). How is our prize more sure?
 - b. How do we run so that we may obtain the prize (v. 24)?
 - c. What was so insignificant about the athletic reward given to victorious athletes in Corinth (v. 25)?
 - d. What is the imperishable reward that we are spiritually running for? Why is our prize of significant value?
 - e. Paul does not run aimlessly (v. 26a). He runs with focus. What are aimless pursuits that we might go after that distract us from the main course we are to be running?
 - f. Paul does not box as one who beats the air (v. 26b). What can we do to go on the offensive against the powers of hell? What are some ways we can hit the enemy with precision for the sake of the gospel?

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- g. What does Paul mean when he writes, “But I discipline my body,” (v. 27)?
- h. What can we do to train ourselves spiritually? What can we do privately? What can we do alongside of other believers?
- i. What does Paul mean when he writes, “lest after preaching to others I myself should be *disqualified*,” (v. 27)?
- j. How do we reconcile what Paul says at the end of verse 27 with our belief that God’s children will persevere to the end?

Group Discussion Questions

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the sermon and the Bible study this week?
2. Why should the Christian live like an athlete? What are some examples of aimless pursuits that might distract us from doing so?
3. What can we do to motivate ourselves to run with focus, precision, readiness, and discipline? How does the fact that we will receive an imperishable prize further motivate us to run well?
4. Spiritually speaking, we must live like athletes. What does this look like in your life? What must we do privately to train ourselves? What must we do corporately to train ourselves?
5. What is your biggest deterrent to the spiritual discipline of bible reading? Personal prayer? Scripture memory? Corporate worship? Corporate prayer? What can you do to overcome these deterrents?

Accountability Question

What is one discipline that you want us to hold you accountable to practice until we meet again? How often do you want to commit to practicing this discipline? Focus on one that you currently need to improve upon.