

LIGHTHOUSE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
RUNNING THE RACE
1 CORINTHIANS 9:19-27

OBJECTIVE: To do whatever it takes to serve and win souls while running our own race to win an incorruptible crown.

In the Olympics, there are basically two types of races: the sprint and the long distance. The sprinter goes all out for a short length and burns out. The long distance runner runs a much slower pace for a longer length. But this doesn't mean he runs casually. He runs as fast as he can without burning himself out so that he may finish and hopefully obtain the prize. Both compete for a prize or reward of some sort. They train vigorously, go on a strict diet, get proper rest, obtain the best trainer, and perhaps even isolate themselves to concentrate better. They do this day in and day out. It's their life, from a desire that comes from deep within. The runner does not train to come in second or last. While running, their focus is on the finish line with only one thing in mind, TO WIN! The runners push their bodies to the brink of exhaustion, exerting themselves to the utmost, ALL WHILE STAYING WITHIN THE RULES OF THE RACE lest they get DISQUALIFIED. Then all the training in the world won't mean a thing. So because of their lack of discipline, they lose what is MOST PRECIOUS to them all while in front of an audience. While training, the runner must not cut any corners, try his very best, and must DISCIPLINE himself to follow the rules so that if he does come in first in the race, the JUDGE may declare him the winner.

INTRODUCTION: In the following study, we will discuss a little on how to win souls while winning our own crown that is indestructible in this righteous race that is set before us. Many things can hinder us in this life that can throw us off course and be disqualified. Fleshly desires and worldly attractions can make their way in our hearts and minds and block out THE WORD OF GOD AND HIS PURPOSE FOR OUR LIVES, thus corrupting THE HOUSE OF GOD. A place where saints can go to for refuge from the sins of this world and hear from GOD and fellowship with the saints with no fear of harm. Unfortunately, the church of Corinth was being corrupted. Idolatry and sexual immorality among other sins were widely practiced in this city in Greece. It was very prosperous with loose morals. Paul had to

deal with division in the church, lawsuits between brethren, fornication, marriage issues, divorce issues, food for idols, wearing of the veil, THE LORD'S SUPPER, and spiritual gifts. It got so bad that letters were sent to him at various times and therefore prompted Paul to send Timothy and his first letter to The Corinthian church in order to bring correction and guidance, to tell them how to properly live this born again life for GOD and to focus on the lost and to serve them to the utmost to save as many as they can.

*****NOTE:** There is no right or wrong answers to many of these questions and they are intended to be discussed in a group setting that allows people to answer what they think.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did Paul mean by winning the more in v.19?
He meant winning souls to CHRIST. He made himself a servant to GOD; therefore, he made himself a servant to man to the extent that he would lead a lost soul to CHRIST. Because GOD cares for us so much, HE sends people our way to witness the good news in JESUS, thus we as GOD'S children should do the same. WIN SOULS!
2. In v. 19, do you think Paul was forced to serve other men and if not, Explain?
No because it states that he "made" himself a servant, nobody made Him do anything. GOD wants people to willingly serve HIM and serve others. HE doesn't want robots. HE wants us out of the gratitude of our hearts for the shedding of HIS SON'S blood for us to be willing to make a sacrifice of love towards our fellow man.
3. In v.20-22, what did Paul mean by "becoming a Jew" or "becoming one without law" or "become as weak"?
To be like minded, to relate, or to find common ground in order to connect with the lost so that he would be able to witness THE GOSPEL. Whether to dress like them, eat what they eat, enjoy Certain activities that the lost would enjoy, share the same struggles

perhaps, etc. Anything to break the ice and make a connection so that ultimately, they can be told about JESUS CHRIST. All while NOT sinning against GOD, that is the key.

4. What length would Paul go just to win a soul in v.22?
Without violating GOD'S WORD, he'll use any means to save some. He would go to any length for a lost soul, just like CHRIST who made the ultimate sacrifice for us.
5. According to v.24, what type of race are we running and how should we run it?
It is a spiritual race we are in; meaning this life we are living is figuratively a race. And like a race ran in life, you can win or lose. That's why Paul says "run in such a way that you may obtain it", that only one wins the race. In this case, we are running our own race competing against ourselves, our sinful fleshly desires and not other saints. We must win our own race by our self, nobody can run it for us. Yes, we have GOD'S help through prayer and HIS WORD, THE HOLY GHOST, THE CHURCH (fellow believers). But we are responsible for our own salvation. We as saints of THE LORD MUST STRUGGLE against our flesh to the point of an honest spiritual choke hold or grabbing hold of with intense force which is basically what "obtain" means here in the NKJV that I'm using. There will and must be a fight but we have GOD'S help and we are more than conquerors in CHRIST who strengthens us. We win by practicing self-control of our fleshly desires according to THE WORD OF GOD and nothing else.
6. What is meant by an imperishable crown?
A crown that we are rewarded with. Not eternal life which we have by grace. In the end the saints will be judged for their good works. Whether they had good motives, actions, etc and for our sacrifice unto THE LORD. The imperishable crown will fall in line somewhere in this category.
7. In v.26, what is your opinion of not running with uncertainty?
Basically we're running to get to Heaven to get to JESUS CHRIST. We know what we are doing and we know where we are headed
8. What is v.27 trying to tell us and what could be some of the

consequences of it?

We had better discipline our bodies (live a holy life) lest we disqualify ourselves of this race we're called to run. Disqualified meaning rejected in the Greek. Rejected by who, by GOD. It could mean losing credibility if one does repent of their sins but could not preach or witness again with the same effectiveness as he once did, people might not see the person in the same light, etc. But ultimately, losing ones own soul if there is no getting right with GOD in the end, not just losing the imperishable crown or other rewards.

SUMMARY: As we come to the end of this bible study, we see that we are to do whatever it takes to win a lost soul, to become a servant to them, to administer THE GOSPEL to them. It could be by just being there for them at a time of trouble, fulfilling a need of some sort, praying for them on the spot or just remembering them in our own time, etc. Ask God for insight on how to serve. He just wants a willing heart and HE'LL help us so don't be afraid. Act in faith because it pleases our GOD. But while we win souls to CHRIST, let us remember to practice self-control over our flesh, to do whatever it takes to live a holy life unto GOD. Whether it's more prayer, reading THE WORD, asking for prayer, fasting, singing unto THE LORD because GOD dwells in the praises of HIS people which the devil hates, surrounding ourselves with GODLY people, etc. We MUST control our flesh and subdue it, to conquer it in order to win this race for eternity. Let's press forward for THE LORD IN ALL HOLINESS AND TELL SOMEBODY HOW AWESOME THE ONE TRUE LIVING GOD REALLY IS and let nothing move us out of HIS will. GOD BLESS BRETHERN AND ALL GLORY BE TO GOD FOREVER AND EVER, AMEN AND AMEN!

