

The Most Important Race Ever



Paul calls the Corinthians (and us) to live like training athletes who are focused on the goal of their efforts. He reminds them that the rewards are infinitely better than any competition, and the consequences more disastrous should we choose not to run the race.





²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. ²⁵ Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.



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In The Context...



...Of Chapters 8-9

- Chapter 8 Take care that the expressions of our freedom do not become stumbling blocks to other believers (8:9)
- Prioritize the spiritual health of others over your preferences



...Of Chapters 8-9

- Chapter 9 Paul says, that is the way I treated you. I chose not to ask you for money (though I had a right to) because I didn't want any doubt regarding my motives
- I prioritized your spiritual health over my right to be paid



He Describes The Process...



1 Corinthians 9:19-20

¹⁹ For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.

To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law.



²¹ **To those outside the law** I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. 23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.





Following Christ, sharing Christ



- Following Christ, sharing Christ
- Experiencing God's love and expressing it to others



- Following Christ, sharing Christ
- Experiencing God's love and expressing it to others
- Loving God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength and loving our neighbor as ourself



- Following Christ, sharing Christ
- Experiencing God's love and expressing it to others
- Loving God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength and loving our neighbor as ourself
- Enjoying God Together (and Inviting Others to Enjoy God With Us)



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What's the Goal?



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Paul is saying...

 You know that Olympians work hard even though only one wins the wreath

You know that we worked hard (Paul, Barnabas...)
that you might experience eternal life

You Corinthians...



Paul is saying...

 I want communicating Christ's love to be that Olympic race that you train for, work at, and focus your efforts on, so that...



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Paul is saying...

 I want communicating Christ's love to be that Olympic race that you train for, work at, and focus your efforts on, so that...



Paul is saying...

- I want communicating Christ's love to be that Olympic race that you train for, work at, and focus your efforts on, so that...
- Together we share in its eternal blessings and rewards

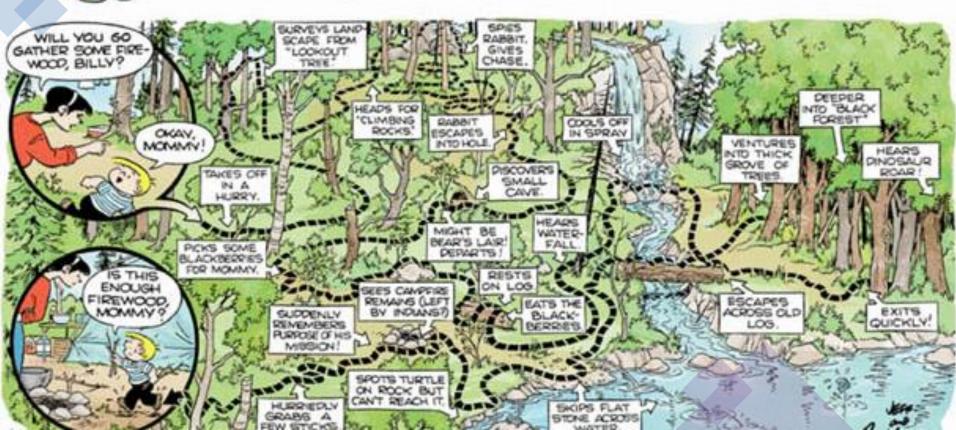


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BY BIL KEANE



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What's The Big Deal?



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What?

We know we're not saved by works or by effort –
so what could possibly disqualify him?



What's The Race

Love God with all our heart,
Love our neighbor as ourselves



Food Sacrificed to Idols



Food Sacrificed to Idols

Love God with all our heart (we know there's no other gods)

 Love our neighbor as ourselves (we don't care about the impact it has on others)



Food Sacrificed to Idols

We don't care about others ≠
 loving our neighbor as ourselves



1 John 4:20-21

²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.



John 13:35

³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.



1 Corinthians 9:19-20

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1 Corinthians 9:21-22

²¹ **To those outside the law** I became as one outside the law... ²² To the weak ... that I might win the weak. (I do my best to communicate Christ's love to them)...that by all means I might save some. (and if I would do all that for those who aren't yet my brothers and sisters...)



1 Corinthians 9:24-27

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What's The Big Deal?



Not loving our brothers and sisters in Christ-Is a really, really big (potentially disqualifying) deal





Love God & Love Those People



Live like Olympians



We All Need Trainers

