

Pastors Jon Sibug and Shane Guy
1 CORINTHIANS
Part 9: Race to the Finish

[2 Timothy 4.7, NLT]

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful.

When serious runners run, they are trying to beat their personal best, not just the competition.

THERE IS NO RACE WITHOUT RESISTANCE.

[1 Corinthians 9.1-6, NLT]

Am I not as free as anyone else? Am I not an apostle? Haven't I seen Jesus our Lord with my own eyes? Isn't it because of my work that you belong to the Lord? Even if others think I am not an apostle, I certainly am to you. You yourselves are proof that I am the Lord's apostle. This is my answer to those who question my authority. Don't we have the right to live in your homes and share your meals? Don't we have the right to bring a believing wife with us as the other apostles and the Lord's brothers do, and as Peter does? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have to work to support ourselves?

At this point, the resistance took the form of: REJECTION. Run despite rejection!!

[1 Corinthians 9.8-10, NLT]

Am I expressing merely a human opinion, or does the law say the same thing? For the law of Moses says, “You must not muzzle an ox to keep it from eating as it treads out the grain.” Was God thinking only about oxen when he said this? Wasn’t he actually speaking to us? Yes, it was written for us, so that the one who plows and the one who threshes the grain might both expect a share of the harvest.

[1 Corinthians 9.14-15, NLT]

In the same way, the Lord ordered that those who preach the Good News should be supported by those who benefit from it.

*Paul faced resistance in the form of **INEQUITY**. In other words, he received unfair or unjust treatment, especially in light of his **labor and sacrifice**.*

[1 Corinthians 9.14-15, NLT]

Yet I have never used any of these rights. And I am not writing this to suggest that I want to start now. In fact, I would rather die than lose my right to boast about preaching without charge.

*Paul's dealings with the Corinthians illustrates one more type of resistance to his race: **A LACK OF OBVIOUS FRUIT**.*

Your life is the track that someone else will run on.

[1 Corinthians 9.22, NIV]

...I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.

[1 Corinthians 9.22, VOICE]

I've been *broken, lost, depressed, oppressed, and weak* that I might find favor and gain the weak. I'm *flexible, adaptable, and able* to do and be whatever is needed for all kinds of people so that in the end I can use every means at my disposal to offer them salvation.

[1 Corinthians 9.24, NLT]

Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize?

Application Points:

1. Get in the Race

You are never going to win the prize for your life from the "cheap seats."

[Philippians 3.14, NLT]

I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

[1 Corinthians 9.25 & 27, NLT]

All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize...I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should.

2. Train to Win

Discipline = *Hupopiazo* meaning to “beat black and blue and inflict agony”

Until you get a vision for your life, you'll never know how to train accordingly.

Areas We Might Need to Change:

Minds-bodies-character-appetites-speech-priorities

[Hebrews 12.1, NLT]

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.

In our Christian walk, it's easy to pick up some weights.

Weights We Might Need to Cast Off:

Entertainment patterns-secret sins-spiritual laziness-bitterness

3. Live with Purpose

A life without purpose is like a race without a finish line.

Vision is a clear and compelling portrait of a preferable future that produces passion in your life.

[1 Corinthians 9.26, NLT]

So I run with purpose in every step.

[Proverbs 29.18, MSG]

If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves.

[Acts 13.36, NLT]

Now when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep.

[2 Timothy 4.7-8, NLT]

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. And now the prize awaits me--the crown of righteousness.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1. What is something that you feel compelled by God to do?**
- 2. What training have I done? What needs to change to help me be a better steward of my God-given gifts? What will help me win the prize?**
- 3. What have I laid down as a sign of commitment to run my race?**
- 4. Articulate the win for your own race. What are you fighting for? What are you aiming for?**
- 5. What does your life say to others right now? What message are you sending? Consider David's epitaph in Acts 13.36**