

I Corinthians 9:24-27

Spiritual Race

Introduction:

The champion race car driver, Mario Andretti is considered one of the world's greatest. He won the Dayton 500, The Indiana 500 and several other competitions driving everything from midget cars to powerful Ferrari which could excel over 200 miles an hour. He was determined to be a winner from his earliest days as a child. A reporter once asked him, 'race car driving must take a lot of skill? He replied, 'its not all that hard, you just go straight and turn left.'

Racing completions come up in various forms just as athletic racing in the Olympics takes on various forms, but in all racing it's done for the sake of winning the prize.

The apostle Paul compares athletic racing within the Christian life. There are interesting parallels; for instance the Christian life is well thought out with prayer, meditation and seizing the opportunity to teach the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation – Rom. 1:16

I. The Imagery of the Race – v.24-26

A. Illustrations to remember – Geek Isthmian (ismean) games

1. The trophy was pine wreath
2. Winning is persevering

B. Exhortation – v.24

1. Only one receives the prize – (metaphor)
2. The measure of exertion – v.25 “competes” is the word Gk. agonizomai – (agony)

C. Self-Control

1. No room for flabby Christian souls – I Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:14
2. Running to the goal – II Tim. 2:5

D. Imperishable wreath

1. Crowns of immaterial – II Tim. 4:8; Jam. 1:12; I Pet. 5:4; Rev. 2:10)
2. The greatest reward is to see God – Matt. 5:8
3. Jonathan Edwards and Thomas Goodwin - The beatific vision
4. Paul's summary statement – v.26 Turn To: Philippians 3:10-14

II. The Dread of Being Disqualified – v.27

A. Strenuous discipline

1. Paul's black eye – “I buffet”
2. Luther's self-afflicting wound – II Cor. 11:23-25

B. The preacher's greatest fear – “disqualified” I Cor. 3:15

Conclusion:

1. *The Text serves as a warning for all of us. Note. Paul's use of the personal pronoun “I” and then the plural pronoun “we” refers to all of us, we must labor together for the salvation of souls and the edification of saints.*
2. *We should all dread being disqualified, not to be in the visible church and serving the Lord is shameful and dishonoring to the Lord of the church. – Phil. 2:12*

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