

# Racing To Win

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Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.

~1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9:24 (NASB)

## **1) An Apostle Who Deserves Support, And Yet...**

- A) Previously, Paul has asserted his own apostleship and proper right to be able to collect support from his work for the church in communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9:1-18).
  
- B) Despite Paul's high rank of apostleship in the church (9:2), and his right to collect funds for gospel preaching (9:14), he shuns both "rank & rights" for the sake of the unencumbered communication of the gospel (9:15-18).
  
- C) Paul uses these important illustrations from his own life to develop the concept of "loving restraint," the sacrifice of one's rights for the sake of communicating the gospel.
  
- D) It is critically important to recognize that our "loving restraint" is meant to preserve the communication of the gospel message! Our discussion should not be about food or drink, but about the transmission of the gospel!

## **2) Giving Our All For The Sake Of The Gospel**

- A) Despite being a man of high rank with all the rights that come along with his high position (“free from all men,” 9:19), Paul chooses “slavery” for the sake of the gospel.
- B) To Jews and those who were Jewish converts (those under the Law), Paul relates the gospel of Jesus Christ in language, practices, and manners which make cultural sense and do not distract (9:20).
- C) In the same way, Paul relates the gospel to those who were “without the Law” in language, practices, and manners which make cultural sense to “Gentiles” (9:21).
- D) Finally, Paul notes that to those who are weak, he becomes weak (9:22), a further illustration of relating the gospel to all men in every possible manner (“all things to all men”).
- E) In communicating the gospel to so many while adding/ subtracting non-essential cultural and traditional practices when the situation demanded, Paul got to enjoy the benefits of both the message of the gospel and its transforming power in so many people (9:23).

## **3) Race To Win**

- A) Since the message of the gospel is so critical, we are all encouraged to “win” the race (9:24), and “win” an eternal crown (9:25). In other words, live in such a way as to always direct others (through words & actions) toward the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as Savior & Lord!
- B) Finally, Paul encourages followers of Christ to remain disciplined (a spiritual workout regimen), so we will not become a distraction from the gospel (9:26-27).