

Sermon Title: 1 Corinthians 9, Sports and our Spiritual lives

I love Sports! Some Pictures

Most non-sports players don't realize that the games only make up 25% of a week in football, or less.

In our passage today Paul uses sports and competition as an analogy for our faith, and this is a principle that I believe will help us to think clearer about our faith and our life.

1 Corinthians 9. 1-4, 13-15, 19-27.

This chapter is broken into 4 different sections, and I encourage you to read through the whole chapter this week, but they are

- 1) Paul is an Apostle, that's why they should listen to him,
- 2) Apostles have the right to get paid from the offerings of the people
- 3) Paul has chosen to give up that right to further advance the gospel
- 4) Practice self-discipline so that your witness can be healthy and that you may receive eternal rewards.

Paul is an apostle:

- This is coming off of last chapter's point that Paul made when he said that he doesn't want his freedom to be a stumbling block to any other brother or sister.
- Paul reminded them of his 18 months that he spent in Corinth, founding the Church there, and pastoring them out of all of their old pagan ways.

Paul answers the question asked to him by the Corinthians:

Should we pay our pastor?

- They are asking, because when Paul was in Corinth leading them, he also worked during the week as a tentmaker, so they didn't have to pay him.
- Paul continues in verse 13 by answering their question with more questions, but that was a round-about way of answering yes.
- Verse 14 - "In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel."

Paul says: even though something may be your right, sometimes it is better to forfeit those rights to win someone else to Christ.

- We must remember that Corinth was a rich city, lavish, and a huge hub of trade in the Roman Empire, which meant a lot of people lived comfortably.
- It was a better witness to this city, to show them that he was serving the Lord and doing it for free.
- But to make his point even clearer, that its not just about money, he gives more examples of giving things up for the non-believer.
- Verse 20 - *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.*
 - Now Paul not only believed this, he also backed it up.
 - **Acts 16:3**
- Verses 22-23 - *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.*

Paul uses sports as a metaphor

- There were games held in Corinth called the Isthmian games. So the readers would have been familiar with Paul's metaphor.
- "I've just told you to give up your rights for the gospel, to become whatever you need to become to gain people to Christ, and now I want you to make a competition out of it, try to win the race by giving up the most!"
- Confession time, I, even as a pastor, have never punished myself for the sake of the gospel.
- I've trained for sports, but we all need to break a spiritual sweat.
 - Disciplines of a Godly Man (woman) R. Kent Hughes

Challenges

- 1) What spiritual disciplines can you start this week?
 - a. And most importantly don't put this off, start something this week, whether it's reading the book or reading the Bible, or praying daily, start it this week, don't wait.
 - 2) Ask yourself "Who has God placed on your heart to reach out to lately?"
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- 3) Think about who you might need to become to reach them for the gospel.

Don't just randomly give up your freedoms, but do it with a purpose, for someone else, so that they can see Jesus Christ in you.

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Scripture passages to go up on the Screen:

1 Corinthians 9. 1-4, 13-15, 19-27 - Am I not free? Am I not an apostle?

Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? ² If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. ³ This is my defense to those who would examine me. ⁴ Do we not have the right to eat and drink?

¹³ Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? ¹⁴ In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel. ¹⁵ But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision. For I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting.

¹⁹ For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. ²⁰ 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.

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.

Acts 16:3 - Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.