

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Run to Win!
1 Cor 9:24 – 10:13

Last time...the Apostle Paul's personal example of the Law of Love in action –
not wanting the weaker to stumble in their walk with the Lord by his exercising of his
Lawful "right" to receive material provision and support for his spiritual labor

This time...the appropriate *m.o.* in our walk with the Lord: Run to win!
With an example

1 Cor 9

v24-26 run in a race...for the mastery:

Either Paul was a sports fan or he is relating to people in an entertainment-crazed
Greco-Roman society

Ministry (we all have one, usually multiple) is likened to a foot race

Everyone runs but only one wins.

Some run...but not to finish.

Some run to finish...but not to win.

Few run to win!

"Run to win!"

Ministry is likened to a disciplined Greco-Roman wrestler training,
abstaining from things that hinder his performance in competition

Ministry requires focused determination and spiritual discipline

- the unwavering determination to finish AND win the race
- the Self-discipline to train and compete for a crown

As personal sacrifice is necessary to win a temporary corruptible crown,
so is personal sacrifice necessary for an eternal incorruptible crown

James 1:12 Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is
tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord
hath promised to them that love him

Rev 2:10 **Fear none of those things which thou** (Church at Smyrna,
the persecuted Church) **shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall**
cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye
shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death,
and I will give thee a crown of life.

1 Peter 5:4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away

The competition is inward:

As

- former enemies of God and children of wrath now given power to be the children of God
- people delivered from the power of darkness and being carried by Jesus Christ into the kingdom of Light
- formerly blind but now we see
- formerly dead in sin but now born-again of the Spirit of God by the will of God,

we are to follow and serve Jesus by living

- by faith and not by sight
- after the Spirit and not after the flesh

The race, the competition, is inward – Spirit vs flesh

Gal 5:16-17 Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

2 Cor 10:12b they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise

Phil 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus

2 Tim 4:7-8 I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Matt 25:21 *His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

The Apostle Paul, serving the Lord according to the Law of Love

- ran to win...at a target/prize, not aimlessly
- wrestled, not “shadow” wrestling practicing his moves or a VR game
- with Biblical hope (certainty, anchor of the soul), not worldly hope

v27 keep under my body...castaway:

To so run and to so wrestle, Paul subdued his body, which is the Lord's,
to keep the flesh in subjection to the will of the Holy Spirit

My will is this...

But You know everything so I submit my will to Yours.

His "fear", a healthy fear, is to preach the gospel only to be "disqualified" by the flesh, no longer useful to God in His work, due to the lack of spiritual discipline to finish well

The competition is spiritual and internal...Spirit vs flesh

Paul is not talking about losing his salvation

He is talking about finishing well, not stopping short of the Finish Line or stumbling across it due to

- sexual sin (Ch 5-7)
- unloving liberty (Ch 8-9)
- any lust or rebellion against God in his flesh

Christian service/ministry...serving and loving the Lord and others...is a

- race – time and effort are of the essence
- hard-fought wrestling match – resistance and the desire to stop/quit never cease

To win the competition (Spirit vs flesh), the servant of Christ needs the mind of Christ and the power of the Spirit of Christ to have the

- spiritual discipline to deny Self/flesh
- spiritual strength and endurance
- driving, sustaining motivation (Love of God and each other) to push thru the pain to the glory

So equipped, the servant of Christ will not quit or get off track but finish well

No one wants to train for a race and run the race...only to be disqualified at the end!

The most important part of running to win is finishing well

So...run to win!

If we are not finishing well (running to win), we must

- repent
- get back in the race with our eyes fixed on the prize at the Finish Line

Toward that end, the Holy Spirit thru the Apostle Paul now gives us instruction in righteousness by giving us an example of how to run the race

1 Cor 10

v1-4 not...be ignorant...all:

An example running to win: Israel

The Lord does not want us to be ignorant of, He wants us to know,
the history of Israel

The keyword is in “all our fathers”...all

All Israel was running the race, following the Lord out of the world

1. All were under the cloud...the Shekinah glory of God

Ex 13:21-22 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: **He took not away** the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, *from* before the people.

2. All passed thru the (Red) Sea...deliverance from bondage

Ex 14:13-31 ...Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea...But the children of Israel walked upon dry *land* in the midst of the sea; and the waters *were* a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus **the LORD saved Israel** that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw that **great work which the LORD did** upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and **believed the LORD**, and his servant Moses

3. All were baptized (immersed in a figurative sense) unto Moses...
bondage to the world broken, made free from captivity

- in the cloud
- in the Red Sea

4. All ate the same spiritual/supernatural/miraculous food (manna)...

Ex 16

John 6

I AM the Bread of Life

5. All drank the same spiritual/supernatural/miraculous drink...
Ex 17:1-6 the people murmured against Moses...
 smite the rock (of Horeb)...
 there shall water come out of it

- The Rock followed/accompanied them
- Christ...John 5:39
- Living water...John 7:37-38

The nation of Israel started well, right?

Yes...but why?

1 Sam 8:7-8 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

Jer 7:25-26 Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending *them*: Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers.

8x the Lord called His people “stiff-necked” in OT

When think of “Israel”, does the word “faithful” come to mind?

So why did Israel start well?

God is faithful...6x “for My name’s sake” in OT

The Lord God did v1-4 unto “all” Israel

The Lord was working Egypt out of them and working Himself into them

“All” started well

v5 But with many...not well-pleased:

In the wilderness, many were overthrown (Gr. word from which we get “catastrophe”)

The keyword is “many” (“major portion”)

i.e. all the adults except Joshua and Caleb

Many were displeasing to God...castaway, not useful for His purposes
Num 14:1-39

- evil report of 10 of the 12 spies
- murmuring against Moses, the servant of God
- murmuring against God
- “Let us return to Egypt.”
- not believe the Word of God...walking after the flesh and not after the Spirit

Heb 11:6

The many stopped short, willing to go only so far, refusing to walk by faith in the blessings of God unto the end of the journey.
Instead walked by sight and in fear

The many were not damned...the Lord never led them or let them go back to Egypt – they had been made free and stayed free

The many were still saved from bondage and captivity

Ps 106:7-8 Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt;
they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies;
but provoked *him* at the sea, *even* at the Red sea.
Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that
he might make his mighty power to be known.

Ps 106:13-15 They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his
counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness,
and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them
their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

The many squandered their inheritance (the land promised to AI&J) but
not their salvation or their sonship of the Father in heaven

Heb 4:2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto
them: but the word preached did not profit them, not
being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*.

Heb 4:6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter
therein, and they to whom it was first preached
entered not in because of unbelief:

The many stopped short of the fulness of the blessings of God by

- walking by sight and not by faith
- walking after the flesh and not after the Spirit

The many did not run to win.

v6 our examples...not lust:

Israel is our example of starting well on the journey with the Lord God but
stopping short along the way

Along the way Israel lusted/coveted/set their heart upon the things of this world
(worthless, harmful) rather than things of God (eternal value, blessings)

We are not to be ignorant, we are to know, so that we

- learn the easy way
 unlike most children who learn the hard way because they discount
 or reject the advice of their parents, who have much more
 experience than they
- do not repeat history

Israel as our example:

1. do not lust after evil things along the Way

v7 Neither...idolaters:

Ex 32:4-8...the golden calf

“Let’s party! Let’s indulge our flesh!”

By eyewitnesses of the Red Sea deliverance/salvation by the outstretched
arm of God Almighty!

That included Aaron, the 1st HP!

Ex 32:4 “These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up
out of the land of Egypt.”

Truly, Rom 7:18 and Rom 5:20

Israel as our example:

2. flee idolatry...Col 3:5 (covetousness)

v8 Neither...fornication:

Num 25

Balaam’s devilish counsel to Barak resulted in sexual sin at Baal-Peor
and a plague from the Lord took the fornicators

A truth about falling:

We are alert to cliffs as we walk with the Lord but we are not usually alert
to seemingly innocent little “mis-steps”

“Falling” is usually a slow step-by-step wandering away from the Lord

Israel as our example:

3. flee fornication...spiritual unfaithfulness

v9 Neither...tempt Christ:

Ex 17:7 they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not?
(Q: Was the cloud and pillar still there? Yes!)

Num 21 Approaching Edom, the people were discouraged
They spoke against God and Moses: "Brought us out of Egypt to
die in the wilderness? There is no bread (false!), neither is
there any water (false!), and our soul loathes this light
bread (Divinely provided manna)."
The Lord sent fiery serpents

Israel as our example:

4. do not test the Lord...
 - pushing the envelope regarding sin
 - searching for loopholes in the Law
 - doubting the Word of God that cannot fail
 - question His Person

v10 Neither murmur:

Many instances on the journey from Egypt to the Promised Land

Num 14	evil report of 10 spies
Num 16:41	Korah and Dathan
Num 17	Aaron's rod

Murmuring is

- whining, complaining, grumbling
- an attitude and condition of the heart
- a stench, not a sweet aroma
- annoying and irritating, like flies buzzing around one's face

Israel as our example:

5. do not murmur

v11 written for our admonition:

Those 5 things happened to Israel

1. lusting after evil things...and being overthrown in the wilderness
(not useful between the world and The Promised Land)
2. idolatry...indulging the flesh and coveting the things of the world
3. fornication...unfaithfulness and fell away along the Way
4. testing the Lord...and destroyed by snakes
5. murmuring...and destroyed by the devil

for an example to us, the followers of Jesus

The history of Israel is written as a warning to us:
We cannot do the same things on our journey from Egypt/world to the
Promised Land/inheritance and expect any different results!
God is not a respecter of persons

We, the Church, to whom the ends/conclusion of the world is come are not to be
ignorant of these things

Saved by God, all Israel started well, but many stopped short along the Way

v12 let him that thinks...take heed:
Here is the warning, the admonition:

Any person who thinks he stands by himself

- and cannot be moved
- “I’ve got this!”
- “I’ve arrived!”
- “I would never do what Israel did!”

is thinking

- pridefully, more highly of themselves than they should
Dan 5:20 mind hardened by pride
- self-righteously

is to beware, warned, lest they fall as did Israel
Prov 16:18

To think one can stand against the world and the god of this world without

- every day humbling himself before God
- asking for God’s help and strength

is foolish!

James 4:6 God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble

1 Peter 5:5-6 be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth
grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the
mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

Eph 6:10-13 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his
might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to
stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against
flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against
the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual
wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole
armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day,
and having done all, to stand.

Think instead

Rom 5:1-2 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God

1 Cor 2:5 our faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Purpose to

- start well
- not stop short
- finish well

the race...by the grace and help of God!

v13 God is faithful:

On this race/course we are running
from (away from) Egypt/the world
to the Promised Land/our inheritance
are many trials, tribulations, and troubles

None are to cause us to stop short on the Way, as Israel did

There are no unique temptations/"experiences"!
All temptations/experiences are common to man

None of us
are going thru
have gone thru
will go thru
anything unique.

There is nothing new under the sun since the fall of man in this cursed world
corrupted by sin

But God...is faithful
Who said, "Consider My servant Job..."
Who was with Daniel, SM&A, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, etc (James 5:17a)

Our God will not permit us to be tried by an experience that is more than we can
endure

Even losing a child?
Even losing a spouse?
Even losing an arm or leg or eyes?

Ok, perhaps not unique, even common to man, but not more than I can
bear?!

How is that possible?

Because God always provides a way of escape with the experience so that we can
bear/endure it

The Lord does not take away the trial/tribulation/trouble/experience...
He adds His strength (All-mighty) to it!

Therefore, the converse is also true:

I can bear the temptations/experiences facing me!

Look for Jesus Christ, the Living Word of God, Who is always our Way of
escape!

He is our refuge (17x in Psalms)!

He is our strength!

He is the Rock that cannot be moved and that accompanies us

Deut 33:27a	The eternal God <i>is thy</i> refuge, and underneath <i>are</i> the everlasting arms
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Ps 121:2, 7-8	My help <i>cometh</i> from the LORD, which made heaven and earth...The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.
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Dan 6:26-27	Darius' testimony: "...the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom <i>that</i> which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion <i>shall be even</i> unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions."
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Heb 13:5, 8

Phil 1:6

Phil 4:13

1 Peter 5:7

1 Thes 5:23-24	And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and <i>I pray God</i> your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful <i>is</i> he that calleth you, who also will do <i>it</i> .
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Jude 24-25

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Application

We live in perilous times, spiritually fierce times near the end of our race!

2 Tim 3:1-5

The world is crumbling and falling apart
This nation is unravelling

Be not ignorant, know:

All things are actually falling into place!
God loves you!
Jesus purchased you!
He did not lead you out into the wilderness to abandon you
He is strong!
He is faithful!
He has saved us

So we are exhorted to

- learn the easy way
- not repeat the history of Israel
- finish well!
- run to win!

How to “Finish Well” and “Run to win”:

- never rely on your own strength, rely on the Lord’s strength.
- abide in Christ (John 15:1-10)
- follow Jesus’ example...how did He fight the temptations by Satan?
Directly, with the Word of God, the Sword of the Spirit (Eph 6:17)
In the Word is what to do in every situation in life
Allow the Word to perform heart surgery (Heb 4:12)
- humble yourself and submit to God and resist the devil as you walk by faith
- Watch, pray, and look up in these Days of Noah and Days of Lot!
Luke 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man