

SUMMER OF Sports



WHETHER YOU'RE A SPORTS FAN OR NOT, THIS SUMMER THE EYES OF THE WORLD WILL BE FOCUSED ON SOME MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS...

THE WORLD CUP...WIMBLEDON...EUROPEAN ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS...THE GLASGOW COMMONWEALTH GAMES...

Sports was also culturally commonplace during the time of the New Testament writings with the Greeks and Romans holding massive athletic festivals, including the Olympic and Isthmian Games. And so it made sense that the Apostle Paul often used sporting imagery to challenge the believers - whether that was running races or boxing, training or competing to 'win the crown' - he drew on similarities to illustrate spiritual discipline and perseverance.

In this short series, we'll be focussing on four different aspects that Paul drew attention to, to encourage and challenge us in our own spiritual disciplines.

Let's be inspired this Summer of Sports to 'press on towards the goal'!



OASIS LIFE GROUP READING PLAN

“ Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus...”

HEBREWS 12:1-2

SESSION 01 TRAINING DAY THE ATHLETE'S DISCIPLINE

'I give all the glory to God. It's kind of a win-win situation. The glory goes up to Him, and the blessings fall down on me.'

Gabby Douglas (Professional Gymnast and Olympic Gold Medalist)

Great athletes aren't made on game day. They're formed through daily disciplines. The same is true of followers of Jesus.

Key Passages: 1 Timothy 4:7-8, 1 Corinthians 9:25

Starter Questions:

- What habits are shaping who I am becoming?
- What does Paul compare godliness to?
- Why does training require intentionality?
- What daily habits currently shape your life?
- What spiritual disciplines have been most transformative for you?
- Where is God inviting you to greater discipline?
- What comfort, distraction, or convenience may be holding back your spiritual growth?

Weekly Challenge:

Commit to one spiritual discipline every day this week.

SESSION 02 IN THE RING FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

'The word of God steadies me. He says your trials and tribulations make you who you are. So you can see my whole story in the way I endured and overcame some testing experiences.'

Evander Holyfield (Former Professional Boxer)

Faith requires 'fighting the good fight' that has true eternal value. That will require strength to persevere, with a sense of wisdom and purpose!

Key Passages: 1 Corinthians 9:26, 2 Timothy 4:7

Starter Questions:

- What does 'beating the air' mean?
- What is the difference between activity and effectiveness?
- Are you facing any spiritual battles right now?
- What distractions consume energy but produce little fruit?
- What lies or fears have you been fighting?
- What weapons has God given believers for spiritual victory?

Weekly Challenge:

Identify one recurring spiritual struggle and intentionally bring it to God every day.

SESSION 03 EYES ON THE GOAL PLAYING FOR THE PRIZE

'My faith is constantly being exercised when I'm put in different situations or I play in big football matches such as my England debut...I hold onto God's promises!'

Bukayo Saka (Professional Football player)

Championship teams play with a clear objective. Followers of Jesus must keep their eyes on God's purpose rather than life's distractions.

Key Passages: Philippians 3:13-14

Starter Questions:

- What goal am I truly pursuing?
- What is Paul striving toward and why must he 'forget what is behind'?
- What past successes or failures still influence you and how can we 'forget what is behind'?
- What goals dominate your thinking?
- What does living for an eternal prize look like in everyday life?

Weekly Challenge:

Choose one practical action that aligns your life with God's purpose.

SESSION 04 THE FINISH LINE RUNNING WITH ENDURANCE

'It has been a wonderful experience to compete in the Olympic Games and to bring home a gold medal. But since I have been a young lad, I have had my eyes on a different prize. You see, each one of us is in a greater race... and this race ends when God gives out the medals.'

Eric Liddell (Olympic gold medalist and Christian missionary)

The goal isn't simply starting well - it's finishing faithfully!

Key Passages: Hebrews 12:1-2, 2 Timothy 4:7-8

Starter Questions:

- What will it take to finish well?
- What 'weights' and sins does Hebrews tell us to lay aside?
- Why is Jesus the ultimate example of endurance?
- Who has modeled faithful endurance in your life?
- What currently threatens your perseverance or tempts you to give up?
- What would finishing well look like for your family, ministry, and relationships...what legacy of faith do you hope to leave?

Weekly Challenge:

Write a personal statement beginning: 'By God's grace, I want to finish my race by...'