

Run for the Prize

I Corinthians 9:1-27

7/22/01

Intro

- Pray for the Africa team
- Pastor Steve already there

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In this chapter, Paul continues to answer the question we discussed last week regarding meat sacrificed to idols. As we said last week this is very practical for us because there are so many *gray* areas for a Christian. Do these become causes for division, or do we love each other through them?

There are many things I don't do. The reason I don't do them is that I don't want to offend or trip up a brother who is growing in the Lord.

In chapter 9 Paul gives an example from his own life. He takes great pains to prove that he has a right to receive money, financial support, from the church in Corinth, but refuses to do so because he doesn't want to offend anyone who may disagree.

He then teaches us *how* to love others this way.

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

I. Be a servant to all.

Vs 19-22

A. Paul became all things to all people, in order to win them to Christ.

- We may have rights, but we don't have to insist on our rights.
- The emphasis should not be whether something is right or wrong (lawful), but rather whether it's a loving thing to do.

Illus- There is no law that says I can't drink, or do Halloween, or whatever it may be; and there is no law that says women can't dress immodestly. The question is not whether it's lawful, but whether it's loving.

Vs 23

B. Paul says, "I do all things for the sake of the gospel."

- The question here is **what role does our faith have in our lives?**
- Is it just something you acknowledge, or is it the driving force of your life?

II. Live Your Life in Such a Way as to Win the Prize.

A. All run the race called life, Paul says to go all out for Jesus.

Illus – Eric Liddell is an example of a man who not only ran, but also understood how to run for Christ.

Vs 26

- Run in such a way, as not without aim!!!

B. What is your ambition in life?

- In II Corinthians 5:9 Paul says that our singular ambition should be to be pleasing to the Lord.

III. **Make *Your* Body Your Servant.**

A. If an athlete is willing to discipline himself to an extreme degree, how much more should we do so spiritually?

Illus- When I was in college, I became very serious about getting in shape.

B. They do it to receive a crown that perishes, but we are going for an imperishable crown.

C. Paul says, "I beat my body to make it my slave.

- The question is whether we allow the drives and desires of the flesh to control how we live.

Conclusion

There is a war that rages inside of every person. The question that becomes most important is what motivates us.