



TRAINING FOR LIFE'S CHALLENGES

Just as soldiers and athletes train for the *physical* demands of their vocation, God's Word highlights how a foundation of *spiritual* training prepares us for the challenges we inevitably face in this life.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-26

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air.

QUESTIONS:

- Think about the training regime for a serious runner. What aspects of physical training can you apply to your spiritual life?
- What is the purpose of spiritual "training" from Paul's description here?

READ HEBREWS 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

QUESTIONS:

- What are some of the things in life that hinder or distract you in your spiritual race? How can you actively put these aside?
- The author of Hebrews calls us to consider the "great cloud of witnesses" and the example of Jesus. How do both of these help you personally to keep going in your spiritual life?

Near the end of his life and ministry, the apostle Paul has this to say about his race: *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith* (2 Timothy 4:7).

PRAY:

- Pray for people you know who are in the middle of the race and who are growing weary or distracted. Pray that they can stay focused on Jesus and His power and provision in their lives.