

Run Your Race...Finish Well!

"Made For More" Series- Part 03

Share/Connect time: Can you recall a time when you began a project; made a significant investment of time, energy, and treasure; and then failed to see it to the end. You simply lost interest and nothing became of your investment. Today, do you feel regret...or was it the right thing to do? Why or why not?

An illustration for our life -

One of the biggest stories of the 1968 Olympics held in Mexico City was of someone who did not win the gold medal, but someone who came in last in his competition. While competing in the marathon, John Stephen Akhwari was jockeying for position between some runners and was hit. He fell badly, wounding his knee and dislocating that joint, plus his shoulder was severely injured when he hit hard against the pavement. Badly wounded and bleeding, he got up and continued running, finishing last among the 57 competitors who completed the race (18 other athletes would drop out) .

As John Stephen finally crossed the finish line, a cheer came from the small crowd that had stayed an hour after the first place winner had arrived. When interviewed later and asked why he continued running, he said, "My country did not send me 5,000 miles to start the race; they sent me 5,000 miles to finish the race."

What kind of medal should be given to such a man as John Stephen Akhwari?

How does his struggle and his completion of his race speak to your heart?

Book: I Corinthians 9:19-27

1Co 9:19 Even though I am a free man with no master, I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ.

1Co 9:20 When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When I was with those who follow the Jewish law, I too lived under that law. Even though I am not subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to Christ those who are under the law.

1Co 9:21 When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ.

1Co 9:22 When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some.

1Co 9:23 I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings.

1Co 9:24 Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win!

1Co 9:25 All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize.

1Co 9:26 So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing.

1Co 9:27 I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

Let's get into the Word:

In verse 19, what did Paul mean when he stated that he would be “*a slave to all people*”?

Please provide a modern day example of carrying out the following steps that Paul was willing to take to share the gospel:

1. When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew...
2. When with the Jews, I lived under the Jewish law....
3. When I am with the Gentiles, I do not follow the Jewish law...
4. I ignore the law of God, but I obey the law of Christ...
5. When I am with the weak, I share in their weakness...

It has been stated by some leaders that to not be a first place winner is to be failure. How do you feel about that belief? What do you suppose is Paul's expectation or challenge when he says “*Run to win*”?

In what ways has God designed your race that may be different from someone else's race?

What might be some of the shared goals that all Christians share, no matter the design of their racecourse?

In life there are temporal rewards for our successes. As we serve God and man during our race in this life, are there temporal rewards? What are they?

What is your understanding of the eternal reward(s) for those who complete their divinely created race?

Paul states that he disciplines his body, so as to complete his race. What training or exercise is lacking in your life today that may lead you to finish your race well?

What steps can you take this week, to insure that you will *run your race to win*?