

**Continue our Series: "Living Up In A Down World"**

All about making sure our priorities are in proper order IS VS SHOULD

We talked about Rest, Sabbath, Celebration:

Today: Fools Rush in Where Angels Fear to Tread!

What could more appropriate than talking about Making sure SPORTS is in it's proper place in our life, life of our families!!!

I saw a video that I thought was awesome, which I think will really set the stage for what I want to share today:

**VIDEO:**

- Amazing Parents: Obviously taught their child how to pray! Doesn't happen w/o them
- Not slamming them...but I heard something when I saw it first time that disturbed me
- She was alone...praying by herself that night...because they parents put her down and rushed to see playoff game!  
I hope they did pray with her...Probably Did: Maybe Alone because Stalling technique; Maybe Forgot that night...  
Perhaps it was one of those quick ones; and off they went: Commend them for teaching her...wonder if they missed

Either way, today I want to talk with you about the RIGHT place of Sports (Recreation) in the life of a Christian

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

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**1. Recognize that Sports (Recreation) Bring Some Amazing Blessings To Our Lives.**

- Recreation (Fun)                      Self Esteem
- Discipline                              How To Win
- Teamwork                              How to Lose

Don't be confused or misunderstand my sermon today. I am NOT anti-sports. I love them...In their proper place Here is the problem. If we aren't careful two things happen.

1. They quickly become more important than they really are! Take Over and Push other things out of place

I see this all the time *with students and children*. They love them...so much that lose balance and becomes all

2. They become a substitute or counterfeit for something that is MUCH more important!

This is what you see in the life of way too many men...and not a few women!

The positive benefits are so fulfilling and rewarding that they overtake appropriate boundaries and affect life!

Men especially GIVE themselves to Sports, Playing or Cheering, becomes a priority...while their wife/kids/church

What we WANT is to find the proper place for sports

**2. It Is OK To Compete With A Desire and Commitment To Win!**

Vs 24

This is the most extensive passage in the NT that reference sports.

~Some analogy to wrestling (prayer)

~Running Race: Journey of spiritual life

~Boxing (Spiritual warfare)

~One or two others

Here Paul is addressing the concept of sporting events (Olympics) Gives us some recommendations

- Run (Compete) in order to Win! Paul is ENDORSING a winning attitude!

**1 Cor 10:31:** "Whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God!"

- A Problem we have as Christians is we sometimes think we can't be competitive, like its bad

- Paul is telling us, "Listen, when you are on the sports field, go there to win!"

~Compete fairly, stay within the rules

~Win graciously...and LOSE graciously, but its OK to be competitive!

**Illus:** Often times the most difficult teams to play with are Christian teams...Bad attitude, not able to lose!

**3. Run With Focus and Discipline.**

Vs 26-27

Paul tells us, follow my example:

- Not *Aimless*:                      Running with no finish line in sight...No course to follow

Paul is telling us, Keep your eyes on the prize..the only one that truly matters...

Don't settle for something that is LESS than the very best that God has for you!

Don't just wander through life with no spiritual goal, no spiritual impact, no spiritual concern.

- Not *Disqualified*:              To not meet the test (metal, coin) In this case...to fail the drug test!

Paul says: Don't be disqualified...Don't wander off course...Don't allow some cheap substitute to take the place of Serving God with all your heart...Don't settle for a empty victory, Instead pursue victory that REALLY matters!

**Illus:** Husband: Loved hockey: Played on a men's league, Ice time is always late

Wife went into labor....1<sup>st</sup> child delivered FAST!

He Put her in the car...Drove her to the hospital...dropped her off...and went to the rink! For the game!!!!

He was willing to RISK being absent for the birth of his child..in order to play a hockey game!

Our youth Pastor at the time, Paul Crouthamel, got in his car, went to the rink, grabbed him brought him back

#### 4. Be Sure You Are Competing For the RIGHT Prize!

Vs 25

Paul compares and contrasts two entirely different kinds of prizes here, he calls them "Crowns"

- Not last: *Perishable*: A crown that will fade away (Corruptible, Perishable, Decaying)  
Different geographic areas had different crowns  
~Laurel      ~Celery      ~Pine      ~Olive  
Wreath or "Crown" was woven...But reality...as SOON as it was made...it was already starting to fade!  
All the glory, all the splendor, all the acclaim, all the accolades...quickly faded away!

Illus: Brian Sipe (1980)      Larry Brown (1972)      Y. A. Tittle (1963) NFL  
Jim Rice (1978)      Dick Allen (1972)      Nellie Fox (1959) Baseball MVP Amer  
All of the "Glory" They received...faded away....Gave their lives to this...reached the peak. Barely remembered

- Lasts: *Non-perishable*      Never fades      (NOT Corruptible, Perishable, Decaying)  
The "Crowns" We receive as faithful followers of Jesus will NEVER fade! They are ETERNAL  
~Incorruptible: Faithfully running the race of the spiritual life  
~Rejoicing: Faithful witnesses      1 Thess 2:19  
~Life: Endure Trials      James 1:12  
~Righteousness Faithful expectation      2Tim 4:8  
~Glory Faithful feeding      1 Tim 5:1-4 (shepherding God's people SS teachers etc)

Here is the key: We Go after the WRONG ONE!!! All too often we are pursuing the WRONG Crown  
We go after perishable: Cheap Plastic and Wood

I know man after man after man that is giving his life to pursue something that will NEVER last!  
Sometimes it is a CHRISTIAN Man! Gives his LIFE...the best of his time, energy, effort...for a game!

The allure of temporary fame, and applause, recognition, calls to them.  
As men, we WANT to win, We WANT to compete, We WANT to carry the day  
But we don't feel *comfortable*, or *competent*, or *capable* of doing spiritual things...so we SETTLE for something less!  
Give our life to Sports; or Work; or Recreation; ...When all the time the most exciting, challenging,

Jesus KNEW what he was doing when He called the first disciples...He ELEVATED their vision!

Illus: Matthew/Mark: Jesus sees Peter, Andrew, James and John Follow me and I will make you fishers of men!  
If you think it is exciting to catch FISH You haven't seen anything yet!

- People healed, Lame walked, Deaf heard, Blind saw!
- Miracles beyond imagination, Calm the Sea, Walk on Water, Water into Wine, Raise Lazarus
- First hand view of man lowered from ceiling, Loaves and fish multiplied, fig tree cursed
- Heard the Sermon on the Mount from the lips of Jesus!

Who would trade that for all the fame and acclaim of winning the Olympic games..then or now (If so...Fool!)

#### CONCL:

I want to issue a challenge today: God is doing a GREAT Work at RTBC right now! Amazing Opportunity!  
If you want to get in a game that COUNTS! Get in THIS game!

- Last Sunday, Girl that was 13, first to join RTBC after I came, told me...My son wants to be baptized
- A couple of weeks ago a man I have been loving, praying for, sharing with for 25 years...sat office accepted Jesus
- Watching as a young man from the ministry of this church used by God to give birth to a new church!
- At dinner had a two little boys, barely old enough to talk come and share with me about AWANA Mr Buddy
- We got emails from two other families telling us how their kids LOVE coming to church Wed night
- Larry Fee told me yesterday the Student ministry has a prayer group for friends at school
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Eternity is being TOUCHED and CHANGED...and you tell me you want to trade that for a trophy!  
KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE TRUE PRIZE...THE ONE THAT MATTERS...THE ONE THAT LASTS!

Which Crown do you want? One day you are going to stand before Jesus...

- ~Incorruptible: Faithfully running the race of the spiritual life
- ~Rejoicing: Faithful witnesses      Share your faith, invite to church
- ~Life: Endure Trials
- ~Righteousness Faithful expectation
- ~Glory Faithful feeding      ABS, Small Group, Teach Children

Will you RECEIVE one of those? Or will you walk away empty handed...because YOU pursued something less?