

"Going for the Gold!"

Paul Martin; January 29, 2014



SUMMARY:

The Apostle Paul was very familiar with the Olympic games held in Athens, Greece as well as the Isthmian Games held in Corinth. Throughout his letters he uses athletic imagery to portray living our Christian faith. Beginning February the 6th, the 'eyes of the world' will be focused on Sochi, Russia as athletes gather from around the world to compete in the Winter Olympics. They will be going for medals: Gold, Silver or Bronze. Borrowing from this athletic imagery Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth: "Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it!" (1 Corinthians 9:24).

APPLICATION:

All Athletes who train for the Olympics are doing so to 'compete' not 'grandstand' or 'spectate.' Paul postulates that every believer (who is saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ) will 'compete' by serving the Lord Jesus Christ and His Kingdom (Ephesians 2:8-10). One day, we will all stand before the Lord Jesus Christ at the Bema Seat of Judgement and give account to Him of what we did to serve Him (see 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:12). We will possibly receive 'rewards' or lose them based on the nature of our service and the motivation of our hearts in doing so (see 1 Corinthians 4:5). There are Five Crowns that believers might receive as possible rewards which the New Testament speaks about. These crowns are called, Stephanos, in the Greek, whereas the Crowns Jesus will wear when He comes back are called the Diadema (see Revelation 19:12; Hymn: Crown Him With Many Crowns)
The Five Crowns are:

- I. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)
- II. (Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:19-20)
- III. (2 Timothy 4:7-8)
- IV. (James 1:12)
- V. (1 Peter 5:1-4)

DISCUSSION POINTS:

- ❖ Looking at your overall 'service for the Lord' what do you think Jesus will say to you on Judgment Day?
- ❖ What can you do differently to serve the Lord and His Kingdom, so that He will say, "Well done thou good and faithful servant!"?
- ❖ Of those Five Crowns which one speaks to you personally? Why?
- ❖ What is one thing that you can begin to do to serve our Lord that might make an impact on others for eternity?
- ❖ Has God ever 'spoken to you' about something and you have 'put it off' or just simply 'neglected' to do it? Can you share it with your table?
- ❖ Take time to pray for one another about serving our Lord and the tremendous difference that your life of service can make for all of eternity!

ON YOUR OWN...

Scripture Verses:

1 Corinthians 3:11-15
2 Corinthians 5:10
Philippians 4:1
2 Timothy 4:7-8

1 Corinthians 9:24-27
Ephesians 2:8-10
1 Thessalonians 2:19-20
1 Peter 5:1-4

NOTES: