

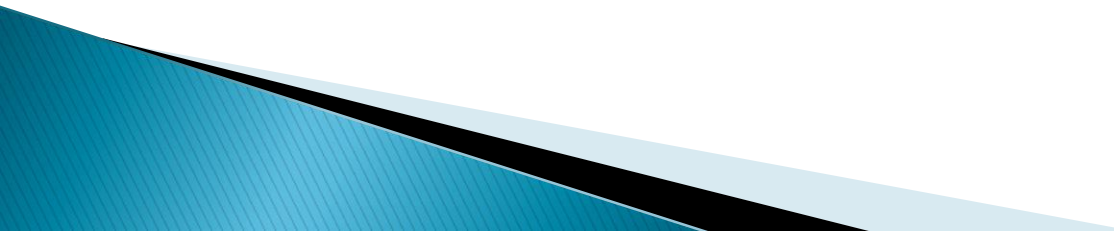
TRAPPINGS OF THE TROPHY
CULTURE

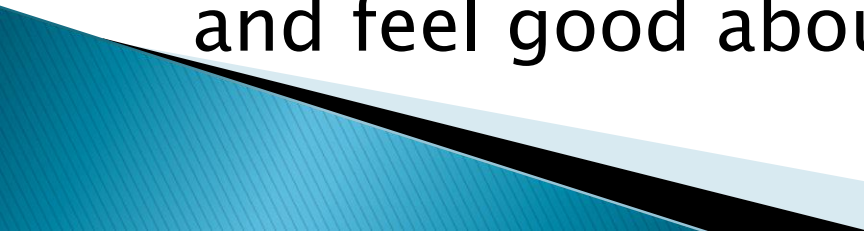
I Corinthians 9:24-27

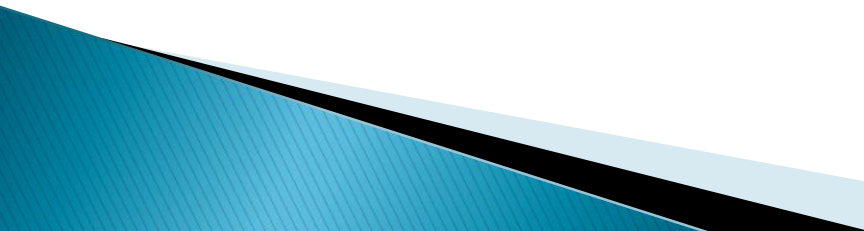
Woodland Park Church of Christ
8 November 2020

I CORINTHIANS 9:24-27

²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race **all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.** ²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. ²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. ²⁷ **But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection,** lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

- ▶ It is clear, simply running or participating (in the race) does not guarantee award, commendation or recognition.
 - ▶ There has to be more → adhering to the rules, producing tangible results, beating back and outperforming the competition, etc.
 - ▶ Robyn's first gymnastics competition (ribbons but no medals)
- 

- ▶ Many of us are familiar with the HBO series “Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel.”
 - ▶ Recent segment dealt with the current culture of handing out trophies to children just for participating – “The Trophy Generation” and the participation trophy -- and how this trend leads to damaging psychological effects.
 - ▶ If the child’s name is on the roster, s/he gets a trophy, even players who do not show up for practice.
 - ▶ In fact, some leagues now do not keep score – we just want everyone to have fun and feel good about themselves.
- 

- ▶ The notion originated from a movement in the late 20th century to push the importance of self-esteem in education.
 - ▶ Thought: If Children, especially those in struggling communities, were told they were great, they would believe it and achieve more because they were “certain” they were great – because they had demonstrated it, but because that’s what they had been told.
 - ▶ Researchers have found this initiative, albeit well-intending, leads to problems later in life.
 - ▶ For example, a third of college students say they deserve a B as long as they attend most of their classes. **Bernard Goldberg**
- 

Adverse Impact of Awarding a Trophy/Medal for Just Being There

- ▶ **Stifles productivity and ingenuity** – “I do not have to produce or come up with strategies to ‘WIN,’ improve the process or make the team better.”
- ▶ **Entrenches laziness and results in unfulfilled potential:** “If I am going to get what everyone else gets, why should I put forth any real effort or push myself.”
 - Dr. Robert Cloninger’s study with mice. Mice that were rewarded for simply making their way through the maze did not move as quickly. They were not fast runners and they quit easily the moment they were not getting rewarded.

▶ **Perpetuates an “Entitled” mentality**

- “Never mind how well I performed in comparison to others.”
- “It does not matter how much effort I made toward accomplishing the mission, I want my prize.”
- This attitude leads to people not being well-adjusted. The moment they do not receive the award, recognition, or accolades, they go to pieces and, in some instances, react violently.

Gives one an unrealistic view of the “Real World”



THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

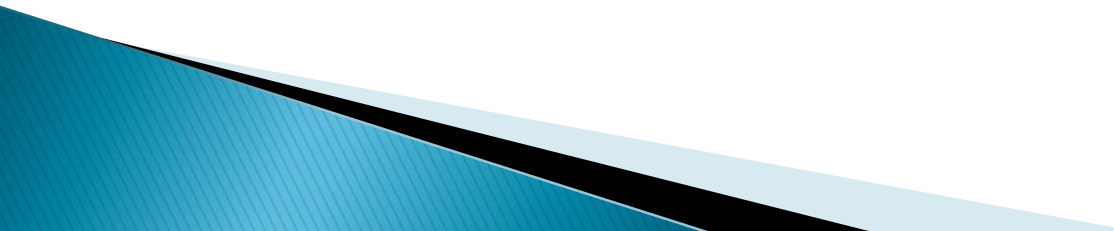
(Matt. 25:14–30)

- ▶ Another practical lesson to be taught and learned.
- ▶ Simply hanging on to the talent was not sufficient to merit reward; the master expected a return on his investment.
- ▶ Simply being chosen to participate guaranteed no prize or award.
- ▶ Notice the award came after accomplishment.
‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ Matthew 25:21,23

*Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our **common salvation**, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to **contend earnestly for the faith** which was once for all delivered to the saints. Jude 3*

- ▶ **With sincere and intense conviction.**
- ▶ Not just an onlooker or just along for the ride, but one who is actively engaged in running the race with a predetermined purpose -- a prize-driven outcome.
- ▶ Prize (salvation) is not automatic. Simply being in the body or having your name on the role does not in and of itself please the master.

*Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Philippians 2:12-13*



I. TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Athletes continue to train and develop in order to defeat the competition.

It is here where the prize is won; it's collected at the event.

The casual fan does not appreciate the grind and drudgery of training (countless hours of practice and preparation), winter workouts, etc.

The athlete has to be ready to face a foe that is intent on having him/her feel the agony of defeat.

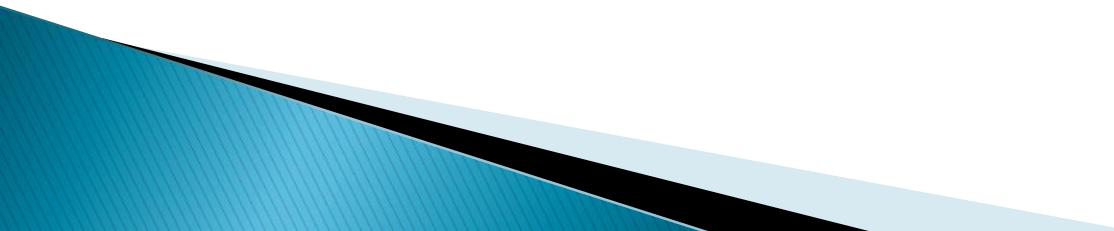
- ▶ The Christian prepares for a voracious and vengeful adversary. *See I Peter 5:8*

- ▶ But he can and must be defeated
 - *Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.* James 4:7

- ▶ We train for our confrontations with Satan through --
 - Study/meditation;
 - Prayer;
 - Exercise (by exhibiting **the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control** as opportunities are presented)

2. DISCIPLINE

- ▶ Paul: *“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection.”* 1 Cor. 9:27
- ▶ I know what I ought to do or am supposed to do – the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. **Matt. 26:41; also Romans 7:21–23**
- ▶ Flesh: May be prone to envy, predisposed to bias and prejudice, or given to lust
- ▶ Bring your members into subjection, even when it is uncomfortable, inconvenient or painful.
- ▶ Tough sometimes for the athlete in training to forego the banana pudding and eat the banana; tempting to settle for the blackberry cobbler

- ▶ In order to effectively contend for salvation, the Christian, like the athlete, must be disciplined --
 - Doing the right thing (without being always reminded)
 - At the appropriate time (without having to be watched)
 - For the prize-winning purpose.
- 

3. TIMELY PERFORMANCE & DEFEATING THE OPPOSITION

*Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth, ”for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. . . He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ **Those who are victorious will inherit all this**, and I will be their God and they will be my children. Revelation 21:1-2, 6-7 (NIV)*

Lord's Invitation Extended to All

- ▶ **Be added to the Lord's body**

Hear the gospel (Acts 15:7; I
Corinthians 15:1-4)

Believe (Acts 15:7; Rom. 10:17)

Repent (Acts 2:38)

Confess (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10)

Be baptized (Acts 2:38, 8:38)