



*(Last devotion of the regular season –it’s important to have pencils & 3x5 cards ready)*

**Week 15: To the winner goes the Prize. (1 Corinthians 9: 24-27)**

I Cor. 9: 24-27 says; “24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. 25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control,[a] lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”

**Questions:**

1. What does it mean that athletes compete to win a perishable crown?
2. How can we avoid being disqualified?
3. What disciplines do we practice to win in wrestling?
4. What are the disciplines necessary to follow Christ?
5. What is the imperishable crown Paul is referring to?

**Important Conclusion to the regular season (this is when you share the Gospel message):**

As we end the team devotions for the regular season, there is one final / compelling question: “Will you appear someday at God’s “Judgement Seat”, (His “Great White Throne”) and have your hand raised in victory, and receive His imperishable crown?” Or, will you go down in defeat, to an eternity separated from God and His Kingdom of Heaven? If you want to know for sure that you are on God’s team, and a champion in His eyes, there are 4 points you must know and apply:

**1. God created you for an eternal purpose, and He loves you.** John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have eternal life.” God made you (Gen. 1:27); He loves you (John 3:16); and He wants to have a personal relationship with you (John 15:13; Rom.5:1, 10).

**2. Although God created us for a relationship with Him, all of us have rebelled against Him,** and gone our own independent way (at times) with our lives. The Bible

calls this attitude “sin”. Rom. 3:23 says “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Sadly, Scripture goes on to say, “The wages (penalty) of sin is death... (Rom. 6:23)”. Death here does not just refer to physical death, but to spiritual death, to spiritual separation from God for all eternity.

**3. The “Good News” is that Jesus came to die on the Cross in our place.** Rom. 5:8 says, “But God demonstrated His love toward us, in that we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” And not only did Jesus take our sin penalty upon Himself, but He conquered death when He rose from the grave on the third day (I Cor. 15: 3-7). Jesus Christ is God’s solution to our problem of sin. Jesus Himself said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and Life, no man comes to the Father, but through Me.” (John 14:6).

**4. The key to joining God’s Team, is turning to God, repenting of our sins (turning from our sin to God), and receiving Jesus Christ into our heart as Lord and Savior.** It is not good enough to just agree intellectually with the first 3 points. We must turn to God and surrender our hearts to Christ. John 1:12 says, “As many as received Him (Christ), to them He gave the right to become children of God.” Jesus Christ is knocking at the door of your heart today (Rev.3:20). Will you open the door, turn from your sin, and ask Him to be the Lord of your life?

**Close in a word of prayer, giving all the wrestlers a chance to pray and ask Christ into their lives.** An appropriate prayer may sound something like this:

***Sample “Salvation Prayer”:***

***“Father in Heaven, I know have sinned against you. Thank you for sending Jesus Christ to die on the Cross for my sins. I ask You to forgive me of my sins. I now ask Jesus to come into my heart, and be my Lord and Savior. Please help me Lord to become the kind of man (person) that You want me to be. In Christ’s Name, Amen!”***

**CONCLUSION OF SEASON – GET THE FEEDBACK:**

Ask all the wrestlers to fill out a 3x5 card on this last devotional session. Ask them for their names, contact info (if necessary), their feedback on the season devotions, and what kind of decisions (if any) that they made for Christ. Specifically ask them to write down in their own words what the devotions meant to them, if they received Christ for the first time, or if they may have ‘re-committed’ their lives to the Lord.