THE RACE WE MUST WIN

Philippians 3

You know, when you are training, you have to discipline yourself. You have to watch what you eat. You have to practice. You have to get enough sleep so you will do well in the race. In the same way, we are all runners in a spiritual race and this is a race we must win because it is the race of life. I want to talk to you about how to win the race.

PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES

1. Get rid of extra weight and the things that hinder you. As Hebrews 12 says, “Lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us.” These weights could be the things that we do or the people we hang out with. Do these things speed you on your way, or do they slow you down? Is it a wing or a weight?

2. Run with the right motive. In the Olympics, you don’t run to get the bronze or the silver. You run for the gold. We aren’t running the race of life for man’s approval or applause. We do it for God’s approval. We do it because He has called us to.

3. Have a clear focus. As David said in Psalm 27:4, “One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” We must look to Jesus. He is our focus.

4. Don’t look back. Many a race has been lost because the runner in first position has glanced over his shoulder to see where the competition was. When you look back, you break your stride. So “forget the things that are behind,” which means you should no longer be influenced or affected by them. There is a place for remembering things of the past, in the sense that we glorify God for what He has done, but we should not be dwelling in the past.

5. Press on, even when it gets hard. Don’t give up!

RELEVANT REMINDERS

• Running the race is not just running to what is right. It is also running from what is wrong.
• Don’t ask if something is merely permissible. Ask if it is edifying. Not “Is it allowed?” but “Is it going to build me up?” Just because something is allowed doesn’t mean you ought to do it.
• We are not competing one with another. Our opponents in this race are the world, the flesh, and the devil. That is who we are competing with.

APPLICABLE ACTIONS

How do we overcome fear and worry? Right praying, right thinking, and right living. And we need to pray that God will give us the power to live the life He has called us to live.