

Called to Win

Key Verse: “*Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.*”
—*I Corinthians 9:24*

Selected Scripture:
I Corinthians 9:24–10:13

will be a group of faithful followers of Christ who will gain the “crown of life.”—Rev. 2:10

The *New American Standard* translation of the Key Verse clarifies the meaning of Paul’s words by stating the matter, “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.” In other words, it is not that only one will win the prize of the Christian race course, but it will be those who run as if there was only to be one winner—run ‘all out’—who will gain the ultimate victory. Nor are we to think of Paul’s words as implying, in any sense of the word, that we are to compete against our fellow brethren in this race. Indeed, in this race it is as we help and assist others along the way that we hasten our own progress toward an ultimate victory. All those who run in such a way will receive the

IN THE KEY VERSE OF THIS

lesson, the Apostle Paul likens the Christian life to a race course, and yet his words may be confusing at first glance. He says that in a race all run, but only one receives the prize, intimating by this that the racers are all in competition with each other to gain the prize held out to a single winner. This is true in the natural sense; however, the Scriptures are clear that there

prize of “glory and honour and immortality.”—Rom 2:7

Paul continues his lesson by pointing out to us that all who are running for the prize of the High Calling must exercise self-control in their life. They must also run with a sense of direction and purpose, not aimlessly. Additionally, they must keep their fleshly tendencies under control to the greatest extent possible. This is all necessary to be qualified as a winner of the race. He states the matter this way, “Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. . . Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.”—I Cor. 9:25-27, *NASB*

The nation of Israel, under God’s covenant arrangement during the Jewish Age, had previously been given the privilege of being his special people, the Law being their “schoolmaster” to bring them to Christ. (Gal. 3:24) Paul says they were “baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;” and were provided “spiritual meat” and “spiritual drink.” (I Cor. 10:2-4) However, due to their failure to follow God’s instructions, they were disqualified as a nation from the blessings they might have otherwise had. They desired after evil things, were idolaters, committed immoralities, tempted God, and murmured against the very God who had delivered them from the bondage of Egypt.

Paul concludes his lesson by calling our attention to the contrast between lawfully running the race, exemplified by Christ, and a failure to do so, as shown by Israel’s unfaithfulness. “These things occurred to them typically, and were written for our admonition, on whom the ends [purpose] of the ages have come. Wherefore, let him who is thinking that he has stood, take care lest he fall.”—I Cor 10:11,12, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott* ■