

²³ I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it. (share in its blessings)

Paul had the capacity to choose his methods, and his choices were of the highest order in terms of quality.

THE OBJECT OF SERVICE

that I may become a fellow partaker of it.

Being a partaker, in verse 23, is the joy of seeing souls saved, and being saved himself. Kelly

24 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 a worldly foot race only one person is the winner, but in the Christian race all believers are qualified by God to run and receive the prize.

All believers have the life from above which qualifies them to run.

The goal is the finish line. The finish line for the believer is the Gospel of the **Glory of Christ. Christlikeness**

²⁵ *Everyone who **competes** in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a **perishable wreath**, but we an imperishable.*

"Competes" is a translation of *agonidzomai* from which we get the English word **"agonizes."**

We may need to limit our liberty for a higher goal as spiritual athletes.

THE DIFFICULTY:

Physical Runner: COMPETES (STRENUOUS EXERTION) WITH PERSEVERANCE, STRIVING, STRUGGLING, AGONIZING, PHYSICALLY

Physical and Spiritual Runner: (STRENUOUS EXERTION) WITH PERSEVERANCE, STRIVING, STRUGGLING, AGONIZING, PHYSICALLY & **SPIRITUALLY**

Where does the power come from **TO COMPETE OR RUN?**

Exercising self-control for earthly race has its source from within = **self**

Exercising self-control for the **Christian walk** has its source from = **in Christ**:

Col. 1:29 (NASB) *For this purpose also I labor, striving according to **His power**, which mightily works within me.*

Philippians 4:13 (NASB) *I can do all things **through Him** who strengthens me.*

2 Corinthians 4:7 (NASB) *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of **the power will be of God** and not from ourselves.*

The victorious Christian's reward is imperishable

2 Timothy 4:8 (NASB) *in the future there is laid up for me **the crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to **all who have loved His appearing**.*

(2 Corinthians 4:17(NASB)) *For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of **glory far beyond all comparison**.*

Every believer will be rewarded an incorruptible crown.

*²⁶ Therefore I run in such a way, as **not without aim**; I box in such a way, as **not beating the air**;*

- In view of the comparative value of these rewards, Paul ran the Christian race purposefully, **not aimlessly** or halfheartedly.
- **He wanted to gain a prize: Christlikeness.**
- To use a different figure to make the same point, he did not shadowbox but wanted to make every punch **HIT THE TARGET**.
- **“not beating the air”** Paul is pointing to **efficiency in service**.

*²⁷ but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not **be disqualified**.*

Strong's Concordance to hit *under the eye* (*buffet* or *disable* an antagonist as a pugilist), to *tease* or *annoy* (into compliance), *subdue* (one's passions) : keep under, weary.

Paul shows in the closing verses that the path of service is one of self-denial.

Remember:

Exercising self-control for the **Christian walk**

Has its source from = in Christ

1 Timothy 4:8 (NASB) for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

Paul is referring to ascetic practices which took the form of physical exercise.

Paul is saying, “bodily discipline which took the form of physical exercise ‘profits little.’”

Godliness is profitable for all things. The word "godliness" is *eusebeia*, "reverence, respect, faithfulness toward God."

Godliness has promise for the present life *because* it has promise of the life which is to come. Only the life which is in Christ Jesus is *life indeed*.

*²⁷ but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not **be disqualified**.*

We must be careful not to confuse the fear of **disqualification** with the fear of damnation.

Paul shows the solemn danger and certain ruin of preaching without having a lifestyle according to it.

The cause of Christ is everything, and the honor and glory of the Lord is to be supreme in all that we do. **McCalley**

It is a path of self-reducement that I may win others. **Stoney**