

October 7, 2022

The Lord wants you to experience real and abundant life:

1 Cor. 9:24-27 *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; be we do it to get a crown that will last forever.* (NIV)

Now this is something worth writing down, storing it in your memory files, posting it on your bathroom mirror; whatever or wherever you need to put this to see it regularly. This is key to our abiding in the Father's presence. Paul calls it strict training. We perhaps have all trained for something, whether physical achievements or academic tests, we train to be ready. In 1974, I was given an opportunity to try out for the Dallas Cowboys. Having played football all of my life to this point, I could have just gone to the try-out 'as is.' But instead, I trained every day and worked as hard as I could to be at my peak when that day came. I made it through the cuts and was offered a place on the practice team. This was an exciting time for me and yet I knew in my heart that playing football had once had its place in my life, but God had called me to the ministry, and I needed to focus on that. So, after much prayer and a knee that had been worked on twice, I decided to continue my studies in Seminary. And I'm glad I followed the LORD's direction because the NFL draft number one pick for the Cowboys was for the same position that I was trying out for. This was a great confirmation to me. The bottom line here is strict training in our walk with Christ will lead to living in His will. He will guide us in the way that we should go. It won't always be easy, in fact, sometimes it will be very difficult. **Heb. 12:11** *No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.* (NIV)

Playing for a football team can be fun and make you feel good for a while (until those injuries and joints start acting up), but running the race for the Master's will, brings joy unspeakable and full of glory. You are living for Him instead of for yourself. This allows Him to flow in you and through you. As the old commercial for ABC's Wide World Of Sports used to say: "The thrill of victory, and the agony of defeat" will become "the thrill of serving Him and hearing Him say, 'well done, thou good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things; enter into the joy of the LORD.'"

Dear LORD, help us to strictly train ourselves to focus on walking and abiding in Your will and Your way. Give us Your power and Your directives. In Jesus Name, Amen