

Lessons We Can Learn From the Olympic Athlete

A. "Do you not know...?" (1 Cor 9:19-27)

1. When Paul wrote those words to the Christians in Corinth, he assumed that they all could understand the metaphor. It was a particularly appropriate metaphor in a letter to Corinth, which was the location of the biennial Isthmian Games--at that time second in fame only to the Olympic Games. Paul's stay in Corinth during his second missionary journey (*Acts 18*) very well may have overlapped with the games in either A.D. 49 or 51.
2. The Olympic Games had been taking place in Greece every four years since 776 B.C. Jeroboam was king of the northern kingdom of Israel and Azariah was king of Judah (*2 Kings 15:1*). It was the era of the prophet Jonah and about a year before the birth of the prophet Isaiah.

B. Everyone knew about the games, so Paul didn't have to explain them. Everybody was aware of the games then, so Paul used those games to draw the attention of Christians to a greater reality.

Following the same train of thought, what can we learn from the Olympic athlete?

1. _____ training is of some value, but training in _____ is of infinite value.
(1 Tim 4:1-16; 2 Tim 3:1-17; Titus 2:1-14)

2. _____ - _____ is a must.
(1 Cor 9:25a, 27)

3. An athlete is not crowned unless he or she competes according to the _____.
(2 Tim 2:1-7)

4. In order to reach the goal, the _____ must be left behind and focus must be on what lies ahead.
(Phil 3:1-15; 1 Cor 9:26)

5. Victory is experienced only by those who _____ participate.
(2 Tim 4:1-8)

6. Olympic glory _____ so very quickly, but the glory we are striving for is _____.
(1 Cor 9:25b; 2 Cor 4:16-18)