

May Development Guide

SUBJECT: RUNNING TO WIN



Our key verse for this teaching is I Corinthians 9:24-27:

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run their very best to win, but only one receives the prize? Run (your race) in such a way that you may seize the prize and make it yours! Now every athlete who competes in the games goes into strict training and is disciplined and exercises self-control in all things. They do it to win a crown that withers, but as Christians we do it to receive an imperishable crown that will not wither. Therefore I do not run without a goal. I do not flail around like one beating the air just shadow boxing. But like a boxer I strictly discipline my body and make it my slave..."

Paul is encouraging us to run our race to win. To dedicate yourself like an athlete who wants to win a prize. He's saying an athlete trains to win a prize that won't last long, but as Christians the things we do will last forever.

Paul talked about how athletes go into strict training to be their best and win their prize. What is your game plan to feed your spirit and train your body and soul to be **THE BEST CHRISTIAN YOU CAN BE**? How are you setting yourself up to win your race as a follower of Jesus?

This teaching will give you a very practical plan to run your race to win. I will give you specific steps you can take to win your Christian race. Big caveat here. We don't take these steps or have this plan to earn God's Love. He Loves you, period.

7 Steps to win your race as a Believer:

1. **BAPTISM(S)** - The Bible tells us there are 3 baptisms we are to take. Even though there are 3, I'm counting them as one step in the area of Baptisms.
 - A. The first baptism is the **baptism into Jesus or salvation**. That was the step you took by making Jesus your Lord and Savior. When you did that your spirit came alive and you were made a new creation in Christ, in your spirit.
 - B. The second baptism is **water baptism**. We do this to make a public declaration of what has happened inwardly. This is a step that we are commanded to take as disciples of Jesus. Our old nature gets cut off when we take this step.
 - C. The third baptism is the **baptism of the Holy Spirit**. When you make Jesus your Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit comes to live on the inside of you, like water inside of a bottle. There's a subsequent experience with the Holy Spirit called the baptism of the Holy Spirit and that is like taking that same water bottle, which is filled with water on the inside, and then throwing into a pool of water. Now that water bottle is immersed in water. By taking this baptism step, you will be immersed in the Holy Spirit, giving you more power to live out your call as believer.

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In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was sometimes described as fire, oil, and a cloud. I Cor. 10:1-2 - *“for I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”*

They were all baptized into Moses (their type of Christ - Deliverer), in the cloud (represents the Holy Spirit) and in the sea (represents water baptism).

Note that all 3 baptisms are listed together. There are numerous scriptures that show this, but for the sake of time, we will focus on one. In the book of Acts, you can see how Christians received all 3 baptisms again and again through examples. When you get saved you become a new creation, when you get water baptized, your old nature gets cut off, and when you get baptized in the Spirit, you get power to walk in the new life.

2. WEEKEND SERVICES OR CORPORATE SERVICES - In scripture, we are told to gather together. We see the early church did this regularly. There are things God will do in a corporate environment of believers that you can't get anywhere else. The key is to do this consistently. Today the average believer attends church once every 5 weeks. That is not good. Go to church weekly and be consistent.

3. BE IN A SMALL GROUP OF BELIEVERS - we see the early church meet corporately and in small groups. Jesus was in a small group with the 12 disciples. In small groups, we find community, grow spiritually, and get the care we need. There are great small groups here at Victory. Here are some that we recommend:

Freedom Group, Essentials, Unconditional, Faith Life Training, marriage small groups and parenting small groups. There are many more, but if you haven't done one of these, that's a great next step to take.

4. DAILY TIME WITH GOD - If we are going to love God well, then we have to spend personal time with him consistently. There are 3 main elements to spending time with God. Worship, prayer, and His Word.

- By worshiping God, we are elevating Him in our life, we are making him pre-eminent.
- Prayer is talking to God and it's a 2-way conversation.
- Spending time in the Bible helps us to know him more, increases our faith, and helps us to walk in obedience. It's also our weapon against the Devil. Every time you face something in life, use a scripture as your offense or your Sword.
- If you don't have a consistent plan for your daily time with the Lord, here's a quick highlight of what this could look like. Start with 15 minutes a day.

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- A. **Spend 5 minutes in worship** - play your favorite worship song and worship the King of Kings.
 - B. **Spend 5 minutes in prayer** - Tell him how much you love Him, Thank Him for who He is and what he has done. Talk to him.
 - C. **Spend 5 minutes reading God's Word** - you can read a chapter in about 5 minutes. Some chapters are longer and you might only get through half a chapter. Start in the New Testament and try to read a chapter a day. You will get through the whole New Testament in less than a year by reading a chapter a day. Pick one verse that speaks to you and try to memorize it. Think on that verse the rest of your day. That's called meditating on God's word.
 - If you do this consistently it will change your life, and bless you immensely.
 - Weekend services, small groups, and your daily time with God all have 3 elements to them - **Worship, Prayer, and God's Word**.
 - We see in scripture that Satan tries to tempt us in 3 main areas: The **pride of life**, the **lust of the eyes**, and the **lust of the flesh**. He used these areas to tempt Eve and to tempt Jesus. Jesus' response and remedy to Satan's temptations were essentially all these elements - Worship God, Prayer, and God's Word.
5. **TITHING & GIVING** - tithing was a principle before the law was given, during the law, and after Jesus fulfilled the law. It's about putting God first with your money and watching Him bless the rest. It signifies your faith and trust in Him by putting Him first in this area. Every believer is called to tithe the first 10% of their income/increase. We are called to give offerings above that. In our context that is giving to Kingdom Builders. We are also called to give to the poor. The Bible says where your treasure (or money) is, there your heart will be also. Take steps towards God in this area and trust Him, you can't out give God.
 6. **SERVING** - this includes serving on the Dream Team and or in missions/outreach. You all serve; that is why you are getting this teaching. And you are all making a huge impact. Using your giftings and giving your time to impact others for Jesus is a call for every believer. Thank you again for your faithfulness in this area. One other aspect of serving and making an impact in our context is serving on a mission trip. This could be a trip in the United States, or a foreign trip. We offer a number of mission trips throughout the year. You can find out more information [here](#).
 7. **SHARING YOUR FAITH** - the people we come in contact with on a daily basis should know there is something different about us as believers. People should know that we are Christians by how we love one another. What are some examples of what it looks like to share our faith or to share our story as a Christ follower? Tell people about the goodness of God. Tell them your story and what God has done for you.

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Offer to pray for people when they are going through a tough time. Do all your work in excellence because you are doing it unto the Lord. Invite people to church. Help others take a next step in Christ. These are all examples of sharing your faith.

Application:

Here's your Application, your go and do. Take one of these steps that you aren't currently doing or aren't doing well and start doing it. Don't wait, start now - take massive action. It's not the person who knows the right thing to do that gets the blessing, but the person who acts on it. Also tell someone you trust that your taking this step.

Steps of obedience open up God's blessings on you. In Hebrews 11:6, it says that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Disciples of Jesus take steps towards Him and help others to do the same. Remember, these steps are a framework to help you run your race well as a Christian. It's not to earn God's love, it's in response to His love. This sets you up to stand before God in heaven and hear Him say "well done my good and faithful servant."

Reflection Questions:

1. Out of the 7 steps, which ones are you consistently doing?
2. Out of the 7 steps, which ones do you need to start doing or become consistent at doing?
3. What was your biggest takeaway from this teaching?