

WIN THE RACE!

LESSON 207 → Philippians 3:7-15

Self-discipline helps this runner.

He poised himself, ready to spring forward at the sound of the starting gun. Every muscle was in readiness. The long hours of training and discipline were behind him. Would this bring him first place in the race?

Concentrating on the track stretched out like a ribbon ahead of him, he was unaware of the noise from the spectators in the stands to his right. Through his mind flashed a replay of the

hours spent in preparation for this moment. He had run mile after mile every day, rain or shine. He had eaten the restricted meals that were part of his high-protein diet—no chocolate cake or glazed donuts! He had headed for bed at nine o'clock every night. He had done his exercising—lots of it. And, of course, all good runners must stay away from cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs.

It hadn't always been easy. An early bedtime didn't lend itself to going to the mall and





JESUS CAN HELP ME DO WHAT I SHOULD.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. — Romans 6:12

hanging out with the “in” crowd. And instead of standing in the halls after school, talking to the girls, he had to head right out to the track and run several miles before going home.

Had these sacrifices been worth it?

The starting gun sounded, and a split second later he was in motion. Disciplined muscles responded without hesitation. Months of rigorous training had prepared him for this effort, and within seconds his strides achieved a rhythm that he would maintain throughout the race.

Minutes later, the months of preparation proved out. Along with a few others he slowly began to pull ahead of the rest. Instinct urged him to strain to get in front of the runners near him. But, knowing that his strength would be needed later, he paced himself, purposefully conserving his energy.

He shut out all distractions—the crowd, the buildings, the other runners. He knew he had to concentrate on running this race and running it right. Time seemed to slip by quickly. He was still breathing evenly as he approached the final stretch.

Almost there! His training had prepared him for a powerful kick, the last burst of speed. One foot in front of the other, stride after stride—the finish line was just ahead! And there was no one in front of him!

Exhilaration swept over him as he realized the race was his. A split second later he leaned into the tape as it broke across his chest. The roar from the crowd echoed around him. He had done it! He had won the race!

Can you look back through our story and pick out one of the things which helped the runner most to win the race? He was self-disciplined.

Though his training had been rigorous and had required exercising restraint over things he might have wanted to do, he had put those

things aside because he had a goal in view—winning the race.

As Christians, we also have a goal in view—Heaven! And in order to be “winners,” we must exercise self-discipline.

How?

We must concentrate on what it means to be a fully-dedicated Christian. Everything we think and everything we do should agree with the Word of God. Our “training” will include daily Bible study and prayer, consecration, denying ourselves things that would distract us from living for the Lord. It might not always be easy, just as training wasn’t always easy for the runner. But if we do make that effort, we will be winners too!

TAKE CONTROL!

Have you ever visited a ghost town? That's about all it's good for . . . visiting, looking it over and seeing what was and what could have been. The verse below compares a city to a person's spirit. Use the code to fill in the verse. If you don't want a "ghost town spirit" you had better have some self-control!



25:28