

What You Really Need is..... The Athlete's Integrity

2 Timothy 2:3-7

³Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. ⁵Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

1 Corinthians 9:24, 27

²⁴Do 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. ²⁷but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

If Christ has paid it all for me, and I cannot earn His grace, why is God's Word asking me to work to try to win the prize?

Olympics story

God is helping us understand a simple truth: Christ paid it all and that work is complete, but sin will ruin it all!

Sin stops the flow of the vast river of grace and provision that was bought for us at the cross.

Isaiah 59:1-2

Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear. ²But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden *His* face from you so that He does not hear.

It matters very much to God how we live under grace! But how can we know where the boundary lines are?

James 2:12

¹²So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by *the* law of liberty.

Competing according to the rules: working out our salvation according to commands, convictions, and compulsions.

Commands are those things God has directed us to do through a personal word from God, or in his written Word. They are governed by the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:18-21

¹⁸and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

¹⁹So we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. ²⁰But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one's own interpretation, ²¹for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Hebrews 2:1-4

2 For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away *from it*. ² For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, ³ how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, ⁴ God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

Convictions are the specific things we feel we must do or not do. They are governed by faith through our conscience.

1 Timothy 1:19

¹⁹ keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

Romans 14:22-23

²² The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. ²³ But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *his eating is* not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

Romans 14:16

¹⁶ Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil

Compulsions are those things that the child of God believes would please the Father, and does with or without a command. They are governed by our personal knowledge of God.

1 Corinthians 9:16

¹⁶ For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.

John 8:29

²⁹ And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”

Reward?

Revelation 22:12

¹² “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

1904 Olympics- Marathon

Although there were no specific rules against using performance enhancing substances back then, there were rules in place against the use of magic to “curse” or otherwise unnerve an opponent. In other words- in the ancient Olympics, you were free to use anything you wished to improve your own performance, but you weren’t allowed to try and negatively impact the performance of others. As far as we can tell, this didn’t actually stop people from doing such things.

For example, Thomas Hicks, the winner of the 1904 Olympic Marathon was given [doses of strychnine](#) and shots of brandy *in the middle of the race* by his trainers in full view of gathered crowds and officials.

You see, while his trainers were willing to give him, essentially, rat poison and brandy, they refused to give him any water despite the sweltering Missouri summer heat. By the end of the race, Hicks was delusional and had to more or less be carried to and over the finish line as he was too weak to remain upright on his own. He immediately passed out upon finishing and the doctor was unable to revive him for almost a full hour. Despite not being able to finish the race without help, he was nevertheless declared the victor.

One person had finished ahead of him, however; American Fred Lorz.

Frederick Lorz was a contender for one of the top spots early on in the race, but he suffered from severe cramps and at nine miles was unable to continue. He decided to hitch a ride in one of the cars back to the stadium, but the car broke down before arriving at its destination. Feeling refreshed, Lorz started running again. When he entered the stadium three hours after the start of the race, the crowd erupted in applause for the “winner.” Unable to resist the crowd, Lorz went along with the facade, racing toward the finish line and basking in the limelight. Perhaps he really was trying to take the credit for the win, or perhaps he was in it for the fun and games like he later claimed. Either way, when it was quickly noted by certain spectators that Lorz had been seen riding in a car during the race, the officials saw no humor in his prank and banned Lorz for life from participating in amateur races. However, less than a year later, the ban was lifted after Lorz apologized for his stunt; he went on to take first in the 1905 Boston marathon.