

The Victor's Crown

Written by George Stover, Jr.

There are rules to every game and disciplines to every endeavor of man. Whether you are engaged in competitive sports or the arena of business enterprise, the spiritual principle of "playing by the rules" is absolute.

One cannot stand in the winner's circle and receive a victor's crown unless he is willing to follow the rules of the game.

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

(1 Cor. 9:24-25 KJV) Christians are expected to "play by the rules" in the Kingdom of God while living in this natural realm as well. We are in the world but not of it (John 15:19).

One of the rules of the Kingdom is to pursue holiness. God, Himself said, "Be ye holy; for I am holy."

But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

(1 Peter 1:15-16 KJV) Holiness is enabled by the anointing of the Anointed One but each individual believer has to exercise the same discipline that is required of an athlete who plans to win in his field of endeavor.

"And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.... I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:25-27 KJV).

The Will of God

The Victor's Crown is the will of God for each and every human being on the planet. However, the will of God will not mandate the will of man.

In other words, each of us chooses what we will, or will not do. Even after we have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, we determine in our soul—the seat of our will—to obey the rules of the game or to set them aside.

Unfortunately, many of our brothers and sisters of faith want all the benefits of the Kingdom but are unwilling to discipline themselves to strive for the mastery by being temperate in all things.

Temperance means restraint, abstaining from excess, moderation, in other words, discipline.

Those who would win the Crown of Righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8), the Crown of Glory (1 Peter 5:2), and/or the Crown of Life (James 1:12) must be disciples (disciplined ones).

It is true that we cannot run, let alone finish, the race and say with Paul, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14 KJV) without the anointing of the Spirit of Grace.

Neither will we join him in saying, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7 KJV) without the daily exercise of faith in our lives.

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May we discipline our thoughts by renewing our minds in the Word of God's love, moderate our speech by making that Word the thing most precious in our hearts (out of the heart, the mouth speaks), and train our bodies to abstain from excess of any kind.

Let us, as a people, finish our course, having kept the faith, and let us win the Victor's Crown.

Wellspring Ministries

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