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CHURCH OF CHRIST

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The Spiritual Race

by **Mark J. Ward**

The life of a Christian is compared to a soldier, a traveler, a way, and many other things which we can easily relate to. In I Corinthians 9:24-26, Paul compares the life of a Christian to that of a race. As in any race, the participants must qualify, run, obey the rules by running the prescribed course, put aside all weights and hinderances, and finish by running the entire race. All this is involved in successfully running the spiritual race.

In this article we shall look at the first step of the Christian's race...qualifying. In future articles, the Lord willing, we plan to look at the other aspects of the race in the order mentioned above.

To qualify for any race the runners must meet the requirements. God has given man all things that he needs to know in order to please Him (2 Peter 1:3). We can learn, for example, in the Word of God what we must do to become children of the Lord (Rom.10:17; Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:10; I Peter 3:21). Just as high schoolers participate in high school track meets, only Christians can run in the spiritual race. Anyone who tries to run the spiritual race and is not a Christian, is not qualified.

It is very important that we make sure that we qualify before we begin to run our race. How silly it would seem for a runner to run a 26-mile marathon, win the race, and find out that he could not receive the crown because he did not qualify for the race! It is to no avail if we run the spiritual race and do not qualify.

Many people think they are Christians and qualified to run the race, when really, they are not. Too many people in the religious world today overlook the Word of God and substitute man's wisdom. The Bible teaches that the wisdom of man is not as great as the foolishness of God (I Cor. 1:25). We cannot belong to any man-made religious institution that stands on a creed developed by uninspired men and be a child of God. If we are not truly a child of God, we do not qualify for the Christian's race. Obviously, if we do not qualify for the race, we cannot expect to receive a crown.

We must obey God to be well-pleasing in his sight. In order to run the race that we might receive the crown, we must first qualify. We cannot take away or add to the instruction of God on the requirements. Many people seem to be religious and appear to be running the race, when in reality, they have not yet qualified. We must meet the initial requirements of God in order to become a Christian and then proceed to strive lawfully for the crown (2 Timothy 2:5).

- by *Mark J. Ward, taken from The Religious Instructor, April 1998 issue*

Times of Services

Sundays - 2:00 pm Bible class, 3:00 pm Assembly Wednesdays - 6:30 pm Bible class

The Spiritual Race

- *Become a Christian to enter the race.*
- *Must run according to God's rules.*
- *It is not a sprint; its a marathon. Run for life.*
- *We are judged fairly according to God's Word.*

Upcoming Lessons....

"Sins of the Tongue"

September 9th

"TULIP - An Overview of Calvinism"

September 16th

"BAPTISM - A Word Study"

September 23th

"Lessons from Jericho"

September 30th

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Editor's Note: If you would like a Home Bible Study in the privacy of your home, or would like to study further over the phone, or by computer (email), please feel free to contact us: Mark J. Ward, 445 Touchstone Parkway, Brunswick, Georgia 31525, (912) 265-6936 - markjward@yahoo.com

If we were on trial for being a Christian,
would there be enough
evidence to convict us?

