

Striving for a Crown

Barry G. Johnson, Sr. / www.BarrysBureau.com

The Incredible Race / Strive; Crown; Race (Competition) / 1 Corinthians 9:24–27

The Crown of Eternal Life is achieved by effort, self-control, and self-examination, with tests allowing all participants the prize.



1 Corinthians 9:24–27 ESV

²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. ²⁵ Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Point One: Making the Effort Needed to Win the Prize

Philippians 3:14 ESV

¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 2:5 ESV

Striving for a Crown

⁵ An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

Point Two: The Importance of Self-Control

Galatians 5:22–23 ESV

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

2 Peter 1:6 ESV

⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,

Point Three: The Dangers of Disqualification

Hebrews 12:1 ESV

¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 Corinthians 13:5 ESV

⁵ Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

James 1:12 ESV

¹² Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

QR Code for Digital Form for Study Questions:

<https://form.jotform.com/231626444816054>



Study Question #1: What types of effort are needed to gain the goal - the eternal prize?

Study Question Answer #1: The types of effort needed to gain the eternal prize are: _____

_____.

Striving for a Crown

Study Question #2: What are the purposes of rules when participating in a race?

Study Question Answer #2: The purpose of rules when participating in a race is _____.

Study Question #3: What areas do we need to demonstrate self-control?

Study Question Answer #3: We need self-control in our _____.

Study Question #4: Where does one get self-control from?

Study Question Answer #4: Self-Control that aids in achieving the crown of life can only be found in _____.

Study Question #5: What is the danger of doing life according to your desires and rules?

Study Question Answer #5: The biggest danger in doing things according to your rules and desires is _____.

Study Question #6: What is the benefit of examining yourself, and what is the purpose of a test?

Study Question Answer #6: The benefit of examining yourself is _____, and tests _____.

Notes:

Striving for a Crown

God's Plan of Salvation

HEAR

Romans 10:14, 17; Luke 6:47-49

Hearing is essential to initial salvation. One cannot be saved without faith in Jesus (John 3:16; Hebrews 11:6) and one cannot gain faith without hearing the gospel. If not a sinner, then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17; cf. 1 Corinthians 13:7-18; Hebrews 4:2; Hebrews 3:20-22; Revelation 2:7). Paul wrote, "holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain" (Philippians 2:16).

We will not learn what God wants us to do in any way other than simply opening up the holy Bible and starting to read it again. In spite of all else, a Christian will help us in our understanding and obeying the Bible (Acts 8:30-31; Mark 16:15), but it is God's Word that saves us.

Responsibility falls from preacher to listener during a sermon. God does not let it, we become responsible for doing it. James says, "So be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22).

BELIEVE

Hebrews 11:6; Mark 16:16; James 2:24

First, verses giving some basic facts about the eternal God and Jesus of Nazareth, a man who lived about two thousand years ago. We must be convinced of these basic facts:

God—To believe in the Son of God, the most first believe in God (Hebrews 11:6). We must believe in God's existence, and in God's benevolent character—He loves us and rewards those that seek Him.

Jesus—One needs to know enough of the details of Jesus' life (birth, teachings, miracles, character, death, resurrection) to be fully convinced of who He was. This knowledge is gained only by studying the Bible, especially Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (Romans 10:17).

The Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)—Just before His return to heaven, the Master said, "So I will go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes in me and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). All one needs to know is found in one book, the Bible.

REPENT

Acts 2:38; 17:30; 26:20

Repentance is (1) a change of mind (2) produced by godly sorrow (3) resulting in a new way of life. Since actions are prompted by thoughts and behavior by decisions (Proverbs 18:21), the process of repenting thoughts in the heart. An unrepentant man must forsake his thoughts (Proverbs 23:7). The Bible sometimes calls this process dying to self (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:3-4).

Repentance culminates in reformation of life. We cannot turn back the clock and relive a single day. We must turn our minds to God and our hearts to Him. However, we have some control over our bodies and our minds. It can be very difficult to give up. But the grace of God (Hebrews 4:16-17; Matthew 19:16-17; Luke 10:2-10; Matthew 18:1-4) and His love (1 Peter 1:3-4) will help us. Repentance is required (Luke 13:3; Romans 2:4). A man who does not repent will be condemned (Luke 13:3; Romans 2:4) and will be judged according to his works (Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:47-48). God's grace (Galatians 3:26) will help us. Remember, He that comes to Him (John 6:35) will not be judged (John 5:24). Remember, He that comes to Him (John 6:35) will not be judged (John 5:24).

Repentance is required (Luke 13:3; Romans 2:4). A man who does not repent will be condemned (Luke 13:3; Romans 2:4) and will be judged according to his works (Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:47-48). God's grace (Galatians 3:26) will help us. Remember, He that comes to Him (John 6:35) will not be judged (John 5:24).

CONFESS

Romans 10:9-10; 1 Timothy 6:12; Matthew 10:32-33

Romans 10:9 says the one who confesses "the Lord Jesus" (cf. John 20:28) by doing so, one has affirmed what he believes, that Jesus is the living (Hebrew) Son of God (Mark 16:7) and Master (Mark 16:7).

Of course, Jesus has all authority over us whether we admit it or not (Matthew 28:18), but if we submit to Him now, He blesses us with wisdom. Today, "every knee should bow" and "every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philippians 2:10-11; Romans 10:10). If we have not yet confessed Him here, if we do not confess to Him into salvation, we will be confessing Him to condemnation (2 Timothy 2:12; cf. Matthew 25:10-13).

The true confession God is looking for is the one that recognizes Him as God (Acts 8:37). God wants to hear from every mouth. He ever made, including yours and mine (cf. Isaiah 45:1).

BE BAPTIZED

(Immersed in water as a believer)

Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Peter 3:21

According to the Scriptures, baptism:

- Saves (Mark 16:16)
- Puts one into the kingdom (John 3:3-5)
- Confirms the remission of sins (Acts 2:38)
- Brings the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)
- Results in rejoicing (Acts 8:38-39; 16:33-34)
- Fulfills a command (Acts 10:48)
- Washes away sin (Acts 22:16)
- Puts one into Christ's death, thus into His blood (Romans 6:3-4; Revelation 1:5)
- Makes one with Christ to walk in a new life (Colossians 2:12)
- Puts one into Christ as "put Christ on" (Galatians 3:27)
- Saves (1 Peter 3:21)

If you have never been baptized in compliance with the New Testament, ask yourself, "What did I hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36). Do not let any circumstance, any person, or any emotion stand between you and praising God. "Why tarry ye? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sin, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

REMAIN FAITHFUL

Galatians 5:4; 1 Corinthians 10:12

Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" (Luke 9:23-24).

We must deny ourself. Christ. The second rule that we must not forget is, "If we deny him, he also will deny us" (2 Timothy 2:12). After the disciples were baptized, they were to be denied entry into heaven (Luke 13:27). It is possible to deny Him with words (Mark 14:68), works (1 Peter 1:5), and life (2 Timothy 4:18).

We must surrender to Jesus' will (Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34). To deny self is to refuse to fulfill our own personal agenda, our own interests, or even consider our own welfare ahead of others. This is first tested by our willingness to obey the word of Christ and follow God's plan of salvation.

Man's Need

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

The erring Christian can be restored by repentance and prayer: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22).

The One Baptism

Immersion in Water (Ephesians 4:5)

Observe

- Requires water (Acts 10:47).
- Much water (John 3:23).
- Going to water (Acts 8:36).
- Going down into the water (Acts 8:38).
- Dual (Romans 6:4).
- Coming up out of the water (Acts 8:39).
- Resurrection (Romans 6:4-5).
- Birth (John 3:3-5).

Pattern of Salvation throughout the Bible

SUBJECT OF GOD'S GRACE	GRACE EXTENDED (NBS 2:11-12)	GRACE OBTAINED	OBEEDIENCE REWARDED
Nash Genesis 6:11-22	Build an ark Genesis 6:14-21	Command obeyed Genesis 6:22	Saved Hebrews 11:7
Abraham Genesis 12:3-4	Promise of God Genesis 12:2	Obedience of faith Hebrews 11:8-10	Justified James 2:21-24
Israelites Exodus 14-15	Word delivered by Moses Exodus 14:13	Obedience of faith 1 Corinthians 10:1-4	Delivered Exodus 14:30
Naaman 2 Kings 5:1-15	Word delivered through Elisha 2 Kings 5:10	Obedience of faith 2 Kings 5:14	Cleansed Luke 4:27
Blind Man John 9:1-11	Word of Jesus John 9:7	Obedience of faith John 9:7	Healed John 9:11
Ethiopian Acts 8:26-40	Preaching of Philip Acts 8:35	Obedience of faith Acts 8:37-38	Saved Acts 8:39
Mankind today Romans 3:23	Through hearing the Word Romans 10:17	Obedience of faith (baptism for the remission of sins) Acts 22:16	Saved Acts 2:41, 47; 1 Peter 3:21

Throughout the Bible we see the pattern of man's sin, God's grace, man's faith, and man's obedience. This pattern is always repeated when God saves people. God requires obedient faith (Romans 16:26).