

THE IMPERISHABLE CROWN

Scripture Reading: 1Corinthians 9:24-27

Introduction:

1. Athletes train vigorously for a perishable crown; we should be zealous for the imperishable crown!
2. We must never take the pursuit of the imperishable crown lightly.
3. How do we pursue with absolute passion and persistence?
4. We can pursue the imperishable crown successfully by acknowledging...

I. THE VALUE OF THE IMPERISHABLE CROWN

A. EVERYTHING ELSE PALES IN COMPARISON

1. Consider the athletes in the text -9:25
 - a. They are temperate in all things
 - b. All their effort is for a crown that will perish
2. Jesus asks, "What will a man give in exchange for his soul?" -Mk 8:37
 - a. "...cares, riches, and pleasures of life..." -Lk 8:14
 - 1) Cares -E.g. Martha and Mary -Lk 10:38-42
 - 2) Riches -Rich young ruler -Lk 18:18-23
 - 3) Pleasure -Herod's unlawful wife -Mk 6:18
 - b. Prestige -Jn 12:42-43

B. KNOWING ITS VALUE

1. Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us -Jn 14:1-6
2. It is our inheritance -1Pe 1:3-5, Ro 8:16-17

II. THE CERTAINTY OF THE IMPERISHABLE CROWN

A. PAUL KNEW OF HIS SALVATION -9:26

1. Paul moved ahead with certainty
 - a. He knew the Lord whom he believed in -2Ti 1:12
 - b. He remembered the transformation found in Jesus -1Ti 1:12-15
2. Paul moved ahead toward the goal -Ph 3:12-14

B. WE TOO KNOW OF THE CERTAINTY OF THE CROWN

1. This promise is from Jesus -Re 2:10, 2Ti 4:8
2. John wrote so Christians could have certainty in their faith -1Jn 5:13, Jn 20:31

III. THE YEARNING OF THE IMPERISHABLE CROWN

A. PAUL EXERCISES SELF-CONTROL -9:27

1. He disciplines his body to bring it under control
 - a. This is not abuse toward the body -Co 2:23
 - b. This is pattern of self-denial -Mt 16:24, Ro 6:11
2. The yearning for the crown motivates him to keep himself in check
 - a. E.g. Athletes will keep record of progress
 - b. We measure ourselves by the spiritual mirror; the word of God -Ja 1:23-25, 2Co 3:18

B. WE TOO EXERCISE SELF-CONTROL

1. We must not be satisfied, but continue to grow spiritually
2. Consider the Lukewarm church -Re 3:15-17
3. We exercise self-control:
 - a. To abstain from sin
 - b. To continually grow before the Lord -2Pe 3:18

Conclusion:

1. As we live the Christian life, we should strive to keep our eyes on the crown that is in store for the faithful
2. When the crown is ever before our eyes, we will find the strength we need to endure to the very end.