



Mustard Seed Children's Lesson for July 16, 2006
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"Called to Be a Winner"

GOLDEN TEXT: - "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain" (1 Corinthians 9:24).

NOTES ON THE LESSON

Sporting events were a familiar sight in Corinth. When Paul likened living the Christian life to running a race, he chose an illustration the church there well understood.

He emphasized putting effort into their spiritual race, just as dedicated athletes strove to earn the winner's crown (in those days a wreath that would soon wilt). Paul's plea was that they do their best.

Paul wanted them to say no to sin, and he used the Israelites in the wilderness as a negative example. The Israelites lusted "after evil things" (1 Cor. 10:6), displeased God, and were overthrown. They lost the race, as it were.

Paul then gave an encouraging word. God has made a way for His people to win over temptation. Elsewhere, Scripture says that way is ongoing recognition of our oneness with Christ (John 15:4; Col. 3:3).

THE OBJECT IN VIEW:

Teach that God wants His children to win the race of living for Jesus and has made provision for our success.

TRUTHS TO STRESS:

1. Pleasing Jesus throughout our lives is like running a race.
2. There will be rewards for all who run Jesus' race well.
3. God has made a way for His children to run a successful race.

PLANNING VISUAL AIDS

For **Telling the Lesson**, take a picture of racing athletes, a picture of nutritious food, a sample badge from Helping to Remember (coming up), a picture showing a large crowd of Israelites, and a sign printed "God's Way."

For **Helping to Remember**, for each child draw a wavy-edged badge on yellow construction paper. Each student will need scissors, transparent tape, and a 6-inch length of blue ribbon. Bring safety pins. You can also use the internet for picture.

BEGINNING THE LESSON

Have you ever run in a race? Why did you run? You wanted to win, right? Who wins? The one who gets to the finish line first wins. Sometimes the winner gets a prize. The Bible talks about running a different kind of race.

TELLING THE LESSON

Paul talked about this different kind of racing when he wrote to his church friends in Corinth. He said living to please Jesus is like running a race. You will be glad to know you can be a winner in this kind of race.

Think first about what runners do to get themselves ready to run a race. (Show athletes.) Do they sit in front of the television all day because they feel like doing that? No, they work to make themselves the best runners they can be. They think about the race. They practice. They exercise. They do not eat just candy. They eat foods that make their bodies strong. (Show food.) They do those things because each one wants to win.

If we want to be good runners in the living-for-Jesus kind of race, we will not just do what we feel like doing, either. We will think about how to please Him. We will exercise by doing what He tells us in His Book (The Holy Bible). We will feed our minds by listening to the Bible. Thinking, doing, feeding-those things help make us ready to live our lives for Jesus.

When our race is over and we are done living on this earth, there will be prizes. In this kind of race, we do not need to beat somebody else to win. In the living-for-Jesus race, every one of God's children who has lived to please Him will get a reward. If you please the Lord Jesus, you will get a reward.

Sometimes the winner of a race at school gets a blue ribbon as a prize. (Show badge.) In Bible times the winner got a crown of leaves to wear. That does not sound important to us, but it was important to the people then. Wearing one of those crowns meant, "I am a winner!"

The Bible says that if you please Jesus, you will get a crown too-but not a leafy one. We do not know exactly what His crown will be like, but if Jesus gives it, it will be something good!

The sad news is that not everyone will get a crown. They will not get a reward because they did not run the living-for-Jesus race according to the rules. They were not winners.

STORY:

Long ago the Lord set the people of Israel free from a king who was treating them badly. (Show Israelites.) After that, however, many of the people did not listen to what God told them. Some forgot about Him. They even made an idol to bow down to. They pleased only themselves. Did these people run their race well? No. God was not pleased with them. They were not winners.

You do not have to be like them. There is a way for you to be a winner in the living-for-Jesus race. (Point to 1 Corinthians 10:13 in your Bible.) God has made a way for

you to do what you should do and to say no to what you should not do. (Display "God's Way.") That way is Jesus.

TELLING HOW TO LIVE

When you first believed in Jesus, God somehow put you *in* Him (cf. Eph. 1:6). That is hard to understand, but God says it is so, and He knows. It is a little like being safe inside a house. What good news that is! If you have asked Jesus to be your Saviour, you are in Him, and all His strength is right there too.

You will never be strong enough to do right all by yourself. God's way is to keep remembering where you are-in Jesus-and choosing to do what He wants. His strongness will then make you strong enough to do what you should, and you will be a winner.

HELPING TO REMEMBER

Let the children write "Winner" on their badges and then cut them out. Tape a blue ribbon to each child's badge, and pin to their clothing (and watch the smiles light up the place).

EXPLAINING THE GOLDEN TEXT

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain" (1 Corinthians 9:24).

Running to win is important to racers. They do their best to win the prize. Jesus wants His people to do their best to please Him. The things you can do to help you be a winner are daily Bible reading, constant prayer, regular attendance at church to worship, and courageous witnessing. That kind of living will be rewarded.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it." 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24

RUNNING THE RACE QUESTIONS

CIRCLE THE CORRECT WORD:

1. "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but (ALL, ONE) receives the prize?..." 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24

TRUE OR FALSE:

2. "...Run in such a way that you may obtain it." 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24
TRUE OR FALSE

CIRCLE THE CORRECT WORD:

3. "And everyone who competes for the (FUN, PRIZE) is temperate in all things..." 1 CORINTHIANS 9:25

TRUE OR FALSE:

4. "...Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, be we for an imperishable crown." 1 CORINTHIANS 9:25

TRUE OR FALSE

CIRCLE THE CORRECT WORDS:

5. "Therefore I run thus: not with (CERTAINTY, UNCERTAINTY)..." 1 CORINTHIANS 9:26

6. "...Thus I fight: not as one who beats the (AIR, CARPET)." 1 CORINTHIANS 9:26

TRUE OR FALSE:

7. "I discipline my body and bring it into subjection..." 1 CORINTHIANS 9:27

TRUE OR FALSE

CIRCLE THE CORRECT WORD:

8. "...lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become (QUALIFIED, DISQUALIFIED)." 1 CORINTHIANS 9:27

RUNNING THE RACE PUZZLE

**DISQUALIFIEDVJG
BISEPJKNUIUFSBS
EASIJEGIW RGYURQ
HDMCMYRHOOMHBUU
TDUSIPPILWR TTNM
LWBNMPEHSGFCHJJ
UTSAGR LRCHOWUHQ
WLCIOKEIIAAUQTL
QAOHV PSCNSEBTJJ
NOMTSGOJEEHRLYT
IAPNPPTDOIEAPEW
SPEITRARUTVGBRK
VATR WIIAIKPEPLM
UDEOBZRCIWKHSDE
UYSCHEWEBIJB LCL**

**AIR
DISQUALIFIED
PRIZE
COMPETES
FIGHT
RACE
CORINTHIANS
IMPERISHABLE
RECEIVES
CROWN
PERISHABLE
RUN
DISCIPLINE
PREACH**

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