

Going For The Gold

Do you watch the Olympics? Even if you don't, you know the general premise of it. These champions strive to go for the gold and truly impress us. As Christians, we have to go for the gold! We're striving for Heaven and it is described in the book of Revelation as a city of gold (Revelation 21:8, 21). If we are going to be a child of God and win the gold, what is necessary for us to do and to have?

First, we need to have desire. The athletes of the Olympic games have a strong desire and they are going for the gold. Our burning and consuming desire must be Heaven! One can only go to Heaven when he has a strong desire to go! Paul talks about this strong desire in Philippians 1:23. Paul says, "But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better." In Hebrews 11:16, the Hebrew says, "But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them." We should desire the sincere milk of the word as Paul tells in Peter in 1 Peter 2:2. The Hebrew writer tells us in Hebrews in Hebrews 6:19, "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil." Our desire to go to Heaven to be our anchor and never wavering.

Second, we need to have a strong commitment. Commitment is essential to the athletes of the Olympic games. Our commitment to God and our Lord Jesus Christ must be real. In 1 Timothy 1:12, Paul tells Timothy, "For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day." We see this commitment in the early Christians in Acts 2:42, 46; 4:32 and 8:4. We have to be committed! Nothing else will substitute for it!

Third, there has to be involvement. The athletes of the Olympic games are involved. As God's children, we must be involved as we go for the gold! We sing, "There is much to do, there is work on every hand; Jesus calls for reapers, I must active be, What wilt Thou, O Master? Here am I, send me." Also, "Oh, things we may do, you and I, you and I; Oh, the love we can give if we try; Just a word or a song as we're passing along, They will count in the great by and by." There have been some that were so involved that they had to give their lives. In Philippians 2:30, Paul tells us about a brother named Epaphroditus that nearly lost his life. He says, "Because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me." We must be "constantly being in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father" (1 Thessalonians 1:3). As we go for the gold, we must be involved and stay involved!

Fourth, there has to be sacrifice. Athletes of the Olympic games know what sacrifice is. They buffet their bodies daily and put themselves through intense training. As we go for the gold, we have to make sacrifices as well. Paul tells us in Philippians 2:17, "But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all." He also tells us in Romans 12:1, "Therefore I

urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” In 1 Corinthians 9:25-27, “Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.” We must deny ourselves of many things as we continue to strive for the gold.

Finally, we must have endurance. Athletes of the Olympics know about endurance all too well. As Christians, we must endure to the end. James tells us in James 5:11, “We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.” Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 2:3, “Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.” In Mark 13:13 the scripture says, “You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.” As we go for the gold, may we strive diligently so as to be able to hear these words in Matthew 25:21 which says, “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’”

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