"Is It Worth The Sacrifice?"
1 Corinthians 9:24-27
Fractured: How God Restores a Broken Church
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You're feeling a little "snacky." So, you walk into the kitchen and what options do you have?

Option 1: A soft & pillowy/fluffy/crispy & crackly/gooey & creamy _____ or,
Option 2: A sweet/tart, crunchy and firm _____.

- Which option will you choose?

For those who chose the _____... let's say that you're willing to give up donuts for 6 months to lose 30 pounds. *Yet, you resist giving up 30 minutes of entertainment each day to pursue a deeper relationship with Jesus?*

Why does losing 30 pounds seem worth the sacrifice, but growing spiritually sometimes doesn't?

Here's another way to put it. It's common to _____ & discipline ourselves for something that won't last 50 years.

- Getting up at 4:00 AM to go deer hunting, spending every weekend restoring an old muscle car, working a second job to pay off debt faster, spending months remodeling a kitchen or bathroom, saving for a fishing boat or camper, working extra shifts to afford a family vacation overseas, spending many hours maintaining a beautiful lawn, training for a competitive bowling league, spending weekends renovating a cabin up north…

And yet, why are we so reluctant to sacrifice and discipline ourselves for something that will last forever?

Here are some super relatable _____.

- □ **The Gym Membership –** Physical v. Spiritual Fitness
- □ **The Favorite TV Series** – Entertainment v. Scripture
- □ **The Overtime Shift –** Career Advancement v. Serving Jesus
- □ **The Diet –** Self-Control w/ Food v. Self-Control w/ Sin
- □ **The Packers Game –** Entertainment v. Worship
- □ **The Hunting Trip –** Preparation v. Prayer
- □ **The S Media Addiction –** Scrolling v. Seeking God
- □ **The Investment Sacrifice –** Retirement v. Eternity
- □ **The Home Improvement Project –** Maintaining Our House v. Maintaining Our Spiritual Life
- □ **The Grandkids -** Family Commitments v. Spiritual Commitments

Here's the deal. *Most of us don't have a problem with sacrifice and discipline. Rather, we have a problem with what's worth sacrificing for and being disciplined about.*

"Well, spell it out for me, Pastor. What IS worth sacrificing for and being disciplined about?" I have a simple answer for you. Things that last for _____.

- PEOPLE — Their souls are eternal. (Mt 25:46)
- GOD'S WORD — His truth endures forever. (1 Pe 1:25)
- ETERNAL REWARDS — What we faithfully do for Jesus has eternal significance. (1 Co 9:25)

Let's learn how to apply all of this biblical wisdom by exploring our main passage. *1 Corinthians 9:24-27.*

1. **V 24…** Paul uses the metaphor of being a _____ in a competitive race. (Col 3:1-2)
    - *The point?* Pursuing what matters for eternity (with the same determination you use to pursue earthly desires) will win you the prize!
    - *Ask yourself:* Am I pursuing the things of God with the same determination as earthly things?

2. **V 25…** If you decide to pursue what matters for eternity, you need to go into strict _____. (Heb 12:1)
    - *The point?* Strict training involves the following: BIBLE (2 Ti 3:16-17), PRAYER (1 Thes 5:17; Mt 6:6), FELLOWSHIP (Heb 10:24-25), AND WITNESS (Ac 1:8; Mt 5:14-16)
    - *Ask yourself:* Am I sacrificing 20 minutes a day to read and pray? Y/N Do I know how to "pray without ceasing"? Y/N Am I attending church consistently and faithfully? Y/N If not, why not? (Be specific in your answer.) Did I share my faith in some form or fashion in the last seven days? Y/N

3. **V 27…** Paul presents a new metaphor – beating yourself up! – to convey the _____ needed. (Ga 5:16; Ro 13:14)
    - *The point?* Paul is describing rigorous self-control over his bodily appetites, desires, and comforts.
    - *Ask yourself:* Are your legitimate earthly pleasures subordinate to your eternal calling to be a witness and a disciple-maker?

SUMMARY STATEMENT: We're often willing to make tremendous sacrifices for temporary accomplishments while resisting those same sacrifices for things that matter eternally. Let's flip that around.

CALLS TO ACTION

1. EXAMINE YOUR PRIORITIES. Identify where you're investing more discipline in temporary pursuits than eternal ones.
2. SACRIFICE SOMETHING. Give up 20 minutes of entertainment each day to spend time with Jesus.
3. COMMIT TO STRICT TRAINING. Establish a consistent routine of Bible, prayer, fellowship, and witnessing.
4. CONFRONT YOUR APPETITES. Identify one fleshly desire or habit that's controlling you, and begin exercising Spirit-empowered self-control.
5. INVEST IN ETERNITY. Intentionally sacrifice some time, money, or comfort this week to help advance the Gospel.
6. RUN WITH PURPOSE. Identify one specific area of spiritual weakness and establish a measurable plan to grow stronger.

GOING DEEPER

Go through this note sheet with your Growth Group and/or your family at the dinner table. Bring this note sheet to your work or school and discuss it with someone over lunch. Read the main passage and look up all of the supporting verses. Pray with one another.