

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"BETTER THAN GOLD" | 1 COR 9: 19-27 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What is your favorite event at the Olympics?

"Winning Souls" 1 Corinthians 9: 19-23

Paul repeats the phrase "that I might win" to explain why he acts around others in ways to share the gospel. **What are ways Christi followers flex too far to fit into the world? What are ways they are too rigid to share the gospel to the world?**

"Winning Your Race" 1 Corinthians 9: 24-29

Paul continues with his athlete analogy with explaining the importance of self-discipline for Christ followers to have so they can share the gospel effectively. **What is hard about self-discipline? Why is the goal or purpose so important for self-discipline?**

Paul wants to live and preach in a way so he's not "disqualified", meaning that he wouldn't be able to finish and obtain the "prize" of seeing someone else believe in Jesus. **If you take a close look at your lifestyle, what "prize" are you working towards?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Paul was following Christ who set the example of living His life with purpose, always focused on saving the world through His death on the cross in obedience to God. **How self-disciplined have you been lately? What change in mindset would help you live more for Jesus? Pray that God would renew your love for Him so you can live in a way that shows He is your prize.**

Better Than Gold

I. Announce:

- A. **Welcome:** *To those in the Fellowship hall and Online.*
- B. **Slide1** Join us this **Sat** March 16th from 5pm-6pm in the Learning Center for our next **Created** meeting. Our guest speaker *Pete Campbell from Moore Creatives* will be sharing with us. *Come and fellowship with us as we encourage one another in our creative community.*
- C. **Slide2** Fellowship time after service - Today we now have all the furniture set up in our courtyard **and** we invite you to **stop by our Cereal Bar**. Enjoy sitting & hanging out in your new courtyard.
- D. **Slide3** **H-People Night** - this Wed night we will be exploring **Calvary Murrieta's unique approach to missions** by learning more about **our other unreached people group**. We will highlight the H-People again through a panel format, that will explore why we chose the H-People, their history, where we find them, **and** the **challenges** we have encountered while seeking to reach them. You will have an opportunity to ask questions while we explore different topics. Come join us 7pm THIS Wed night.
- E. **Ramadan** starts today. It is observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting, prayer, reflection, and community. This is a perfect time for us to pray for them to seek out the *One, True, and Living God*.
- F. **Prayer:**

II. Slide4 Intro: Better Than Gold

- A. **Ready for the Summer Olympics Games in Paris?** July 26, 138 days away.
1. This will be the **1st game** to have the Opening Ceremony outside of a stadium, **instead**, the athletes will be in a **boat parade** with boats for each national delegation down *the famous Seine*^{/sin} **River**. **Following this**, the *swimming competitions* will also occur in the River.

2. **The Logo:** Described as the 'face' of the games. The emblem is a unity of **3 iconic symbols:** The gold medal, the flame, and Marianne (a cherished symbol of the revolution and the people of France).

B. When Paul wrote these words to the Corinthian Christians, assuming that they all knew about the games. The *Ancient Olympic Games* took place in Greece every 4 years without interruption from 776 BC until they were suppressed by the Emperor Theodosius in AD 393. That's 1,169 years.

1. **So** Paul didn't have to explain the games. Everybody was aware of the games, just as everyone is aware of the *modern Olympic games today*.¹

C. **Outline:** *Winning Souls* (19-23) & *Winning Your Race* (24-27)

III. Slide5 **WINNING SOULS (19-23)** *Read*

A. (19) **I have made myself a Servant** - though **free** from all men, he made himself a **slave** to all ... *that I may win more of them*. [win repeated 5 x's, + 1 *I might save some*]

B. (20a) **A Jew** – we saw this in **Acts 18:18**, when Paul had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow.

C. (20b) **One under the law** – not that Paul would place himself back under the law, **but that he wouldn't do anything to offend** those under the law.

1. **(i.e.)** He wouldn't eat pork in the face of one still under the Levitical law regarding no pork.

2. **Also**, w/Christians who are still *under some legalism or custom* you may have to submit to their moral standards **so** as to reach those around them

a) **(eg.)** Some mission trips we required ladies to wear long dresses & guys to wear ties to church service. **In India I was schooled on how to hold and place my bible.** (**not** on the floor. not under my armpit. **not** toss it on my chair)

3. **Because of Paul's restraint**, many under the Law were **brought above it** to enjoy the full knowledge of Christ.

¹ John Piper, message Olympic Spirituality, Beyond the Gold, August 2, 1992. (slightly modified: *ancient*, & *last sentence*)

D. (21) **One outside the Law** – Paul did this so well in all the Greek cities. He didn't use *Jewish* analogies, **but instead** spoke to their *Gentile-ness*.

1. Paul encourages us to be *mobile in method but not in morals*.

E. (22) **As weak** – they could be easily offended and slip back into sin.

1. We must restrain our liberties while we are w/them.

F. **Slide6a I have become all things to all people** (NLT, *I try to find common ground w/everyone*) – **doesn't mean** Paul had no convictions. It means *he used his convictions to **build bridges, not walls***.

1. **Bridges:** eg. **With** a Jehovah Witness - I could explain **we both believe in Jesus**, **but** can we both discuss who we think He is and why? **With** a young lady named Kim I met on plane flying to India to learn Yoga ... Wow, **we both are spiritual**, I'd like to hear about the spiritual side of what you'll be learning.

2. **Walls:** Can you think of **a wall** you erected while witnessing to someone **before?** (your preference in a specific church. your preference in a certain politician)

G. **Slide6b Paul is always about Contextualizing the gospel.**

1. **Syncretism** (together). It's when one places *culture above the gospel*. **Sadducees**. Let's blend all beliefs together.

2. **Sectarianism** (apart). Separating too far from the culture. Like the Pharisees, making **their religion above culture**.

3. **Contextualization** (fitted). it's about contextualizing **the gospel truth** into the culture of our day. ***"The Gospel never changes, yet it must be contextualized, or fitted, to the culture it is brought to."*** [Calvary Hawaiian Shirts/East]

H. **Slide6c We should witness with tact.** ***Tact is the art of making a point without making an enemy.*** Issac Newton

I. Paul would *come-alongside* **but not compromise**.

1. What **barriers** do you find difficult to cross, so as to win a friend of yours to Christ?

IV. Slide7 **WINNING YOUR RACE (24-27)** *Read*

A. A famous Columnist wrote in the San Francisco Chronicle: *"Every morning in Africa, a **gazelle** wakes up. It knows it must **run faster** than the fastest **lion** or it will be killed. Every morning **a lion** wakes up. It knows it must **outrun** the slowest **gazelle** or it will starve to death. It **doesn't matter** whether you are a **lion** or a **gazelle**; when the sun comes up, you'd better be running."* **Herb Caen**

1. We **run from** Satan the **lion** (1 Pet.5:8) **and** we **run toward** the **prize**.
2. **Slide8** Here is what I picture from 16 yrs ago on the internet. *Pixelated*

B. As we look forward to our Olympics this summer, let's listen to **our trainer Paul**, **and** follow his advice so we will one-day, **Stand as Victors**.

C. (24) **Note: we/I**. 24,25 focuses on the Corinthian believers race. 26,27 to Paul's race.

D. (25) All the endeavors of the athlete are **in vain** if he has not **trained his body and abstained** from all that might in any way harm his physical condition.

1. As they say, *Champions aren't born, they're made!* Made, via discipline, right training, desire and motivation, and goals.
2. **Slide9a** Our key phrase is **every athlete exercises self-control in all things**.
 - a) It means **strength within**. [it carries the idea of mastering yourself *instead of giving in* to impulse or overindulgence]
 - b) Is your **body** a slave to **you** **or** are **you** a slave to your **body**?
3. **Winners won** a lifetime exemption from paying taxes and serving in the military. Tuition free education. A *not-so-modest* statue of yourself erected along the roadway that led to the site of the games. But, the real prize was **the Crown**.
 - a) **Slide9b** The Isthmian Crown was *a wreath of wild celery*.

4. I don't think Paul's race analogy is referring to his own salvation here, **but** about **witness/testimony/sharing the good news** (7x's) **soul winning** (5x's) **preaching to others** (vs.27).

E. Paul wants us running to the finish line of life, with our sites on winning. Not just on finishing the race. (that's all I wanted to do in track)

1. **Except one race, I felt great, I was going for it.** The race, the 880 yrd dash. 1st lap, I was smoking. The 2nd lap started, not so much. **I hit the wall so hard! WHY? Lack of discipline** ... on our long run days I'd talk my friends into running to my house and going swimming, or trampoline-ing.

a) *If you want to **perform like a champion**, you must **practice like one**.*

F. (25b) Since **these athletes** disciplined themselves so strenuously **for a wilting wreath**, how much more should **we** train to win **a continuing crown**.

G. **Slide10a** (27) **I discipline my body and keep it under control**, lest after preaching to others **I myself should be disqualified** - This phrase continues Paul's sports metaphor **and refers to one whose athletic preparation does not allow him or her to finish the competition or withstand the test.**

1. For Paul, this manifested as **ineffective proclamation**, **resulting in people not coming to faith in Christ because of his preaching** (*preaching to others*).

a) Given his rigorous *self-discipline*, Paul considered such results **to be unacceptable**.

2. Paul's one great desire was **to win the lost**, **and that** governed his every decision.

3. **Slide10b** **Finishing the race is a community project.** The point is not that there is only one winner. **The point is: run the way the winner runs.**

a) **How does the winner run? He runs hard. He gives the race everything they have. They are disciplined, they show self-restraint and self-control.** It's about intensity, movement, and mindset.

b) **When I was dating Kelly I not only called her a Jogger once, but also bought her a long sleeve tee-shirt that said Jogger on the sleeves. When you're a competitive runner that's not a compliment. As technically it is different in ...**

(1) **Intensity**: Running is more intense than jogging. **Movement**: running is faster than jogging. **Mindset**: Jogging is seen as more casual and is done once in a while for fun or to complement other workouts, while running is more serious and requires stamina and endurance.

c) That's what Paul is saying, *the Christian life and witness* has to do with *Intensity, Movement, and Mindset* ... all the time.

H. **Wrap Up: Paul** was so *saturated with Christ and the gospel*, that he couldn't see anything without thinking of **how** it related to eternity, **and** the important issues of the Christian life.

1. **Corinthian believers**, watch how the Olympic games are played at such a **level of intensity**. They **run** at this level. They **box** at this level. They **train** and **practice** and **deny themselves** at this level. They set their sites on **gold!**

2. **Slide10c Calvary Murrieta believers**, watch how the *Paris Olympic games* are played this summer, at such a level of intensity. **Transpose** what you **see** and **hear** of these athlete's stories, levels of discipline, victories, and even injuries that they had to work through. **Then** raise it to a whole other level of spiritual life **and** eternity with God. **And** don't miss seeing the smiles and happy tears of **a medal** being placed around their necks. **Then** picture *another kind of prize!* [*Better Than Gold*]

I. **So** what are you going to strive for? *Winning your **rights** or winning your **race**?*

J. **Also** watch the speed of your race. So you don't either **burn out** or **stall out**.

K. **CM**, we exist **for** *those not yet saved*. We want more of them to become more of us, **so that** there are more of us to reach more of them.

L. **Prayer**:

M. *Remember to stop by our *Cereal Bar* & enjoy just sitting & hanging out in our courtyard, *meet some of your church family!*

N. Keywords: