**Sermon Title: The Discipline Necessary For Limiting Christian Liberty**

**Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to practice the discipline of an Olympic athlete.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 5 disciplines necessary when limiting sin and Christian liberty.**

**Introduction:** Corinth was known for the Isthmian Games which was second only to the Olympic games of the Grecian and Roman world. Paul’s point, we are to live a life just as disciplined as an Olympic athlete. The truth of the matter is that most of us as believers have no desire or commitment to discipline ourselves to achieve greatness for the Glory of God! No true believer or servant of Christ can approach the Christian race with an out of shape mindset. No true believer can indulge the body, mind, heart, soul and spirit in less effort, and expect to win the race and the incorruptible crown of the Christian life.

**I. The singleness of mind necessary to limit Christian liberty. v.24**

**II. The discipline necessary to limit Christian liberty. v.25a**

**III. The goal necessary to limit Christian liberty. v.25b**

**IV. The determination necessary to limit Christian liberty. V.26**

**V. The mastery necessary to limit Christian liberty. v.27**

**I. The singleness of mind necessary to limit Christian liberty. v.24**

* **Walking** fast is unacceptable
* **Jogging** is unacceptable
* **Lagging** behind is unacceptable
* Showing little concern for **training** and winning is unacceptable

 A. All participants must run. V.24a

 B. All participants run, but only one wins. V.24b

 C. All participants must run and train according to the rules. V.24c

 D. All participants run to win the prize. V.24d

 **Galatians 5:7** You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?

 **Philippians 2:16** holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

 **Philippians 3:14** I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

**II. The discipline necessary to limit Christian liberty. v.25a (strive = agonizomai)**

 **Hebrews 12:1** Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

 **2 Timothy 4:7-8** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. **8** Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

 1. The athlete disciplines their **body**. (**1 Corinthians 6:19-20**)

 **Proverbs 23:2** And put a knife to your throat If you *are* a man given to appetite.

 2. The athlete disciplines their **mind**.

 **Romans 8:5-7** For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. **6** For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. **7** Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

 3. The athlete disciplines their **thoughts**.

 **2 Corinthians 10:3-5** For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. **4** For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, **5** casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

 4. The athlete disciplines their inner man. (**Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Peter 2**)

 5. The athlete disciplines their exercise.

 **1 Corinthians 15:58** Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

 **Galatians 6:10** Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

 6. The athlete disciplines for the **contest**. (**Ephesians 6:10ff**)

**III. The goal necessary to limit Christian liberty. v.25b**

 A. The perishable crown motivates the **temporary** viewpoint of being temperate and prize oriented.

 (**exercises self-control**)

 B. The imperishable crown motivates the **eternal** viewpoint of being temperate and prize oriented.

 (**exercises self-control**)

 **2 Corinthians 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

 **2 Timothy 4:8** Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

 **James 1:12** Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

 **1 Peter 5:4** and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

 **Revelation 4:10** the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

**IV. The determination necessary to limit Christian liberty. V.26**

 A. The determination of **freedom** from uncertainty and distractions. V.26a

 Paul doesn’t run aimlessly. Every move made in training and in the course of the race was calculated to further his pursuit of the prize.

 **Philippians 3:13-14** Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, **14** I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

 B. The determination of **frequent** self-discipline and strict control. V.26b

 Literally: “I enslave my body,” “I hit myself under the eye.” (**Romans 6:15-22**)

 **2 Timothy 2:4-5** No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. **5** And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

 **1 Timothy 1:18** This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,

 **2 Corinthians 10:4** For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

 **Ephesians 6:12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

**V. The mastery necessary to limit Christian liberty. v.27**

 A. The **discipline** of the believer. V.27a

 B. The **subjection** of the believer. V.27b

 The idea is to start keeping it under control, and keep on keeping it under control. It is also the idea of bruising to beat back. Paul is literally saying, he beats back his body, through strict diet and training, so that he controls the cravings, and cravings don’t control him. The word subjection carries the idea (doulagogo) “to enslave, to lead about a slave.”

 **1 Corinthians 10:32-33** Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, **33** just as I also please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking my own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.

 C. The disqualification of the believer. V.27c

 “Disqualified” does not mean loss of salvation which Paul elsewhere said is impossible.

 (**Romans 8:38-39; John 10:28-30**)

 1. Paul possibly feared not fulfilling his God-given commission to evangelize the nation.

 (**Acts 9:15; 13:2**)

 2. Paul possibly feared that his life would not measure up to his preaching.

 3. Paul possibly feared judgment as the discipline of the Lord.

 “He feared the possibility of living a “cast away’ or “disqualified” (adokimos) means reproachable, rejected, disapproved, unfit, failing to stand the test.”

 [**The Preachers Outline and Sermon Bible, p.128**]

**Conclusion:** “Paul’s point is clear and easily seen: it is the minister or member of the church who is carnal, hypocritical, complacent, self-indulgent, fleshly, worldly, and prideful who has doubts and has to suppress and ignore his doubts. The believer who is assured of their salvation is constantly aware that the proof of his salvation or (validation) is fruit or good works. He knows that if his life and faith is not genuine, he or she is at risk of disqualification, counted useless, put on the shelf, and cast away.” [**Ibid., p.129**]

(**John 15:2; Matthew 7:16-17; James 2:24**)