

# Before and After

## Entering and Running the Christian Race

### I Corinthians 9:24-27

I once ran track—once upon a time, back in the day! To do this I first had to “make the team.” Following Coach Walls adding me to the team, there were a whole new set of responsibilities requiring my attention. Similarly, Paul’s remarks in our lesson text reflect the way in which running a race is not unlike the Christian life. There is a need to qualify, train, and run. Let us examine this process from the point of view of Christianity.

### Entering the Race

1. The Christian race is run within the context of being “in Christ” (Eph. 1:3; I Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-28).
2. The Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 well illustrates entry level necessities as well as pointing out continuing responsibilities.
3. Pentecost also illustrates the entry level aspect of Christianity (Acts 2:36-38).
4. Eventually, we fall from the safety of childhood and into the dangers of sin—we need to enter the race (Rom. 7:9)!

### Running the Christian Race

1. We live in an age where choices are often disassociated from responsibilities.
  - a. Ask the management at Hardees or McDonalds about employee job performance and retention rates.
  - b. Entitlements rather than earning through work have become the accepted way of viewing expectations.
2. As volunteers in the Lord’s spiritual army, we do have responsibilities we need to accept when we “sign on.”
  - a. Consider the regime of Ephesians 4:14-5:21 or the similar challenge of Colossians 3:1-17.
  - b. Simon Peter reinforces the idea in II Peter 1:5-11.
  - c. Examples of this principle fill the contents of Hebrews 11:1-12:2a.
3. As Christians we can, however, choose to quit the race (Gal. 5:4; I Cor. 15:2; Phil. 2:16, I Cor. 9:27).
  - a. Nevertheless, there is security for the believer (I Jn. 1:7; 5:13)
  - b. The possibility of apostasy does not mean the probability of apostasy.
  - c. Love is the strong key to winning the race (Jn. 14:15; I Cor. 13:13)

Love draws us to Christ and it motivates us to remain faithful to Him. We are graced to enter and run the race—to accept responsibility in response to our privilege. Let us run and run well.

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