

RUN TO WIN

A BIBLE STUDY FOR

JR. AND SR. HIGH STUDENTS

BASED ON 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-27

LEADER GUIDE

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A NOTE TO THE LEADERS:

Thank you so much for investing your time to teach students in Bible study. There is nothing more important than for students to learn early on how to build their lives on truth and live it out!

In **RUN TO WIN**, your students will focus on 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 in order to understand how God wants them to run the spiritual race - the pursuit of Jesus. By the end, students will know how to train, they will know more about the opponent and how to fight it, they will know what the prize is, and they will know if they are in the race or not.

Throughout this leader guide, you will notice some words that are in **bold and underlined**. Those words are used as fill-in-the-blanks in the student guide. *Questions in italics* are given to help you generate discussion with your group and get them thinking. Feel free to use some or all of them to enhance the learning experience.

All of the discussion questions as well as Scriptures needed for reading together are written in the student guide. This will help reduce the amount of time it takes to look up the passages and it will also help those students who really need to go back and look at what they learned once this study is over but would not likely look up the references on their own. For this reason, the gospel as presented in the last session is written out in the student guide as well. The student guide is not necessary, but since so many students may not take notes otherwise, it will give them a way to stay focused and interact with the study more.

The leader guide is written in such a way that you could teach straight from it - though studying ahead of time and being prepared is highly recommended as most students do not like to be read to. The activities included are a way for visual and

hands-on learners to connect, and a way for students to burn some energy before digging in. However, all activities are totally optional.

If you have feedback or need more resources, feel free to contact us by visiting www.kaleidoscope-curriculum.com.

Time to lace up your sneakers and hit the trail! We pray your students are blessed as they wrestle with truth and that they will learn to RUN TO WIN!

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STARTING BLOCKS

People that are really athletic are born with an athletic tendency in their blood. They have a natural ability to play sports and excel at it. They are coordinated with feet, hand, and eye movements. They can make tough plays with confidence and their timing is all too often impeccable. Real athletes are extremely competitive. They want to win every single time. On the occasions that they lose, it gets under their skin and makes them a little angry. This anger turns into motivation and they push themselves even harder.

Most of us, though, are not in the “natural athlete” category. We have two left feet. We drop things when standing still, let alone in motion. We sweat at the thought of having to run a mile, but we like to play sports. So we get on the team and we practice, practice, practice. Even then, we still get yelled at by the coach and we still make plenty of mistakes when under pressure. The anger from losing is just anger, it’s not a healthy motivator.

Whether you have a natural ability or not, there are several things in common among all athletes, be it in the pro’s or on a junior varsity team. One, everyone must learn the play-book and play by the same rules. Two, they must put all they have in to it. Three, they must listen to their coach.

Optional Activity: Since chariot races were part of the Isthmian Games, we are going to try the human version of chariot racing!

This will put everyone on the same level since no one has a natural ability in this sport! Divide your group into teams with 6-15 students on each team. Line teams up at one end of the room cleared of obstacles. Instruct students that three people from each team will be working together. Two people will need to face each other. Instruct these 2 students to place their left hand on their right arm at the elbow, but holding the right arm straight. Then, grab their teammate's left arm where it is bent. This will form a "chariot seat" for the third person to sit on. The chariot will then carry a third person, the rider, to the other end of the room or around it. Once the first chariot on a team reaches the finish line, the next chariot may begin. (Note: some people may need to go twice if the number of students on a team is not divisible by three.) Do not give teams a chance to strategize, start the activity quickly.

Obviously, there are some things about this activity that make it go smoother and give your team a better chance of winning. Most notably, the chariot proportions need to be right or the chariot falls apart. If you have a really tall person and a really short person forming the chariot, the rider has a tendency to fall off. *What else did you see in this activity that would make a difference in the outcome?*

In chariot races, or in the race we are in as Christ-followers, training and strategy make a huge difference. Part of our focus passage says, "everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training." Today we are going to take a look at what is necessary to train for the spiritual race so that we run it more effectively.

THE RACE IS ON!

Ask a volunteer to read 1 Timothy 4:7b-8. *According to these verses, what does it take to be godly? Training. What does "godly" mean? Godly describes someone who **believes** in God and through **evidence** in their life you can tell that they love Him and strive to live their life for Him. If the Bible is instructing us to train for*

godliness, then we know that godliness does not come naturally. Too many people think that once they accept Christ they can live their faith with minimal effort and they are godly enough. They live a casual Christian life going to church once a week, reading the Bible while there and memorizing John 3:16. They believe in prayer and the Bible, but they do not spend much time praying or reading the Bible. The reason many people think this is enough is because so many people in the world today live out their faith like this. Christ says no to that; that is not running to win. As young people, if you begin training for godliness now, the way Christ wants you to train, and the way Paul is encouraging, you will excel in the race. It is going to take time, attention, and hard work. It is a rigorous discipline when we follow Christ the way He desires us to, but it is the right way and worth it all.

Have you ever known an athlete that really wants to win only put a little time into training and show up for a race just hoping they win? No! A real athlete trains with intensity and shows up for the race with fierce determination to win. Christ wants no less from those on His team. Let's look at some of the necessary components of our training regimen, so that we may run to win as we follow Christ.

#1 - Know the Play-Book

A large part of any race is knowing the rules. You can run your heart out and finish in record time, but if you do not follow the rules you are disqualified. Athletes must know all the rules, and more than that, they must abide by them. It is to their advantage to learn all the rules because it will help them stay in the game. Athletes who love being part of a race are not going to fret over learning all the rules because they know their knowledge will help them excel and ultimately win.

2 Timothy 2:5 says, "If anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules." We need to know what is expected of us in our pursuit of Christ as well. *Where do we look to know what is expected of us? In the **Bible**.* Some people think of the Bible as a list of rules. A list

of do this and don't do that. They see it as a huge negative. Ask, *what comes to mind when you hear, "Read your Bible?"*

- Are you bored with it?
- Do you understand it?
- Do you see it as history, nothing relevant?
- Why read the Old Testament?
- Do you have trouble figuring out where to start?
- Is it just a bunch of impossible rules?

Gauge where your students are with their view of the Bible. If they do not understand how the Bible can help them in the race, they will have little motivation to get in to it.

Ask someone to read Hebrews 4:12. "The Word of God is living and active." Ask, *how can these words be alive?* They are inspired by the Holy Spirit. This is God's message to you. If you are a follower of Christ then you have the Holy Spirit in you. As you read the Bible the **Holy Spirit** helps you understand what it says. As you understand and apply the truths and promises, the Word comes alive in you.

God has given us His word. It is alive and active. There is no other book written under the inspiration of the Spirit. There is no other book that can change your life for eternity. There is no other book that can help you know your Heavenly Father better or gain His wisdom. The Bible is a huge treasure! When we love God and really want to excel at living our life for Him, we are going to desire to spend time daily learning this Play-Book that has been preserved for our spiritual growth. When we live according to what we learn, we will do better at staying on course in the race.

When a runner breaks the rules and changes lanes too early in a distance race, they are disqualified. When believers in the spiritual race go against the guidelines or commands of Scripture, they are *not* disqualified. *Why?* Because of **grace** and **love**. This does not mean you can take advantage and run the spiritual race breaking every rule (sin) and think you are fine. No! It means

that God loves you enough and He knows you are not perfect and you will mess up. He is a God who will give you many chances to get back in the race when you get off course. When you love God with all your heart you will want to run the race the best you can because you understand you have been freed from sin. Do not use that freedom to run however you please, use it to honor the One who gave His life and allowed you to be in the race (Galatians 5:13). Use your freedom to study and live by the Play-Book and run to win!

- Do you ever think because the Bible has SO MANY guidelines, you will never run effectively? Or, you've already messed up so bad that you think you might as well give up?

You may not believe it, but guidelines really are for your benefit. The guidelines God gives are for your good and growth. They are given out of love by God who loves you deeply and His wisdom is absolutely best. If the guidelines in the Bible did not aid you, they would just be rules. Following Christ is not about following **rules**, it is about growing in **relationship** with Him and this is done by living according to His Word.

- How are you doing at learning the Play-Book, the Bible? Is it so overwhelming that you don't give it a chance? Do you memorize verses? Do you open it when you are looking for answers? Do you read it frequently?

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