



STARTING BLOCKS

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, they must learn the _____.

TWO, they must put _____ they have in to it.

THREE, they must listen to their _____.

Have you ever participated in chariot races?

___ I am probably better than Pharaoh was in driving a chariot.

___ Chariots are just not my style.

___ If they had A/C and a good sound system, I'd get one!

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 in to strict training." Have you ever thought about what is necessary to train for the spiritual race so that you run it more effectively?

THE RACE IS ON!

"Train yourself to be GODLY. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come."

1 Timothy 4:7b-8

What does it mean to be GODLY?

GODLY describes someone who _____ in God and through _____ in their life you can tell that they love Him and strive to live their life for Him.

Here are three important components of training to be godly so that I can run to win as I follow Christ:

#1 Know the Play-Book

In order to know what is expected of me in my pursuit of Christ, I need to look in the

_____ (the Play-Book).

"If anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules."

2 Timothy 2:5

When I hear someone say I need to read my Bible, I think:

- Boring!
- I don't understand it!
- It's history and it doesn't relate to me
- What's the point in reading the Old Testament?
- I don't know where to start
- It's just a bunch of impossible rules

"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

How does God's Word come alive in me?

As I read my Bible the _____ helps me understand what it says. As I apply the truths and promises I understand, the Word comes to life in me!

DQ

When a runner breaks the rules and changes lanes too early in a distance race = DISQUALIFIED.

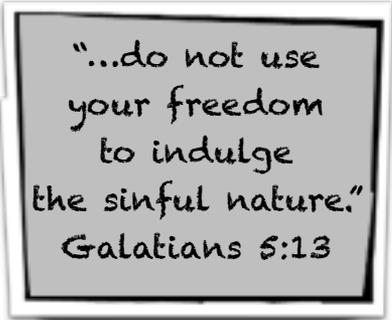
Q

When believers in the spiritual race go against the guidelines or commands of Scripture =
NOT DISQUALIFIED.

Why?

Because of _____
and _____.

HOWEVER, this does not give me a license to sin freely. When I love God with all my heart I will want to run the race the best I can because I understand I have been freed from sin.



"...do not use
your freedom
to indulge
the sinful nature."
Galatians 5:13

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

The guidelines God gives really are for my benefit and growth. Following Christ is not about following _____, it is about growing in _____ with Him and this is done by living according to His Word.

Things I need to think about:

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