

**May 2024**

You know the sayings which are meant to encourage in some way but end up being clichés: pressure makes diamonds, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger, practice makes perfect, never give up, when the going gets tough the tough get going, perfect practice makes perfect, etc...

Christians have something better than clichés. We have the Word of God for encouragement. In fact, the apostle Paul encourages Christians many times and he even uses athletic references often. Because we need encouragement. We need our efforts to be reorientated toward that which is good, right, and true. We need guidance for when the going does get tough, when our faith in Christ is attacked, when we are disheartened in the face of challenges in the Christian life.

When the apostle uses athletic references to compare the Christian life and confession, he isn't referring the casual athlete in the weekend co-ed softball league. He has in mind those who have sworn to train diligently in order to be their best. He has in mind those who have their sights set on the top of the podium, the heroic praise which will ensue for them, and the future they will thereby set up for themselves.



The contrast, however, is that their rewards will eventually rust, fade, and be forgotten about but the Christian's reward in Jesus is far superior and eternal. We have a greater purpose to strive for, to be diligent toward, and a greater future to behold. We are the redeemed in Christ. We are God's holy people. We can see through the temporal challenges toward the victory secured for us in heavenly places!

With this in mind, here are a few athletic references the apostle uses to encourage Christians fight the good fight, finish the race, and keep the faith (2 Timothy 4:7):

**1 Corinthians 9:24-27** 24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. 25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

**Hebrews 12:1-2** 1Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Philippians 3:12-14** 12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies

behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

**2 Timothy 2:3-5** 3 Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. 5 An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

In Christ,  
Pastor Suggitt

### LIFE QUOTE

Jesus became incarnate as embryo, fetus and teenager, infant and adult. In this way He consecrates humankind of all ages, appearances, and abilities. The Good Lord comes close in skin and bone, the same as ours. He remains near with muscle and blood like we have. He humbly bears these sicknesses and gently carries these sorrows of ours. Jesus has crucifix-ed God on you, ever the servant and once-for-all sacrifice. *A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • [lutheransforlife.org](http://lutheransforlife.org)*

### Baby Bottles to Support Positive Alternatives

Keep watch for the annual Baby Bottle Boomerang coming this month. Each family can take the baby bottle supplied, fill it with change or bills or check, and help support the pro-life work of Positive Alternatives located in Caro and Bad Axe.



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