



Champions:

☆ Champions never quit.

24 You've all been to the stadium and seen the athletes race. Everyone runs; one wins. Run to win.

25 All good athletes train hard. They do it for a gold medal that tarnishes and fades. You're after one that's gold eternally. *(Does not perish)*

26 I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got. No sloppy living for me!

27 I'm staying alert and in top condition. I'm not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it and then missing out myself. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (MSG)

- Don't just be a participant, be a pacesetter.

Paul is not saying: You have to come in first.

Paul is saying: Run with everything you have.

- Every athlete wants to win.

- Every champion wants to do their best.

1 ... since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. Hebrews 12:1 (NLT)

Definition: Perseverance

Steadfastness in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.

The Challenge of perseverance:

- Perseverance is developed through problems.

12 Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. James 1:12 (NIV)

3 ...we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance... Romans 5:3 (NIV)

Benefits of Perseverance:

- Develops strength for our future.
- Keep us from an mediocre life.

- Allow us to experience the rewards of life.

9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9 (NIV)

Perseverance is developed:

- When we focus on the goal ahead.

1 ... let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.

2 We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. Hebrews 12:1-2 (NIV)

- When we focus on Jesus.

2 We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Hebrews 12:1-2 (NIV)

3 Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up.

4 After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin. Hebrews 12:3-4 (NLT)

13 I can do everything through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13 (GWT)

What God is doing in you is more important
than what is happening to you.

11 We pray that you'll have the strength to stick it out over the long haul—not the grim strength of gritting your teeth but the glory-strength God gives. It is strength that endures the unendurable and spills over into joy,

12 thanking the Father who makes us strong enough to take part in everything bright and beautiful that he has for us. Colossians 1:11-12 (MSG)

Have Questions? Text them to: (559)464-5754

Here are some questions that can be used in Connection Groups:

These questions also work well for personal time with God.

- What spoke most to you from the Talk on Sunday?
- Why do you think champions never give up? It is stubbornness or something else?
- Do you think perseverance is important in life and in your faith? Explain.
- Are you someone that gives up easily? Explain
- Why are difficulties, and challenges, important to our future strength?
- How does perseverance keep us from a mediocre life?
- Rewards can motivate us to "stay the course"; what are the rewards that strengthen us for the spiritual race we are in?
- When you face challenges, how do you keep our eyes on Jesus? What does that mean?
- What would more perseverance look like in your life? How would it change you?

Connection Group Leaders: Remind your group of the following announcements:
Quest "After Hours" - March 5th