

Being a Godly Athlete

By

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In recent months we have learned of attacks on Athletes who were stabbed in the back and hit in the knees with pipes just because they posed a threat to an opposing team. We have even heard of mothers who have planned the death of a competitor of their daughter in school. There has also been the death of athletes in airplanes crashes, auto accidents, and self-inflicted suicides. Still others have had their bodies severely broken in accidents. One could well ask the question, does it pay to be an athlete?

In thinking about athletics, it is very interesting to see how the Apostle Paul wrote about athletic performances. He talked about running a race, the rewards of the Olympic events, of fighting a good fight and etc.

1 Tim. 6:12, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." NKJV

2 Tim. 4:7-8, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." NKJV

1 Cor. 9:24-27, "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." NKJV

Heb. 12:1-2, "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." NKJV

In Hebrews 12:1,2 God exhorts us to lay aside every weight and the sin that does so easily beset us and then exhorts us to run with patience the race that is set before us. This means the believer should clean out of his own life whatever might hinder him from being a godly and effective witness of the power of the gospel.

A legend tells of an eastern prince whose son was disgracing the family through reckless living. The father reminded him of his high birth and impressed upon him the need of setting a good example. His son responded, "The straight and narrow path is too restrictive and it is impossible for me to change my ways." The prince of course knew better, so he ordered his son to carry a shell filled with oil through the city streets while two slaves walked beside him with drawn swords. His father told him that if he spilled even just one drop of oil, he would be executed on the spot. When this young man had completed the long course, his father inquired, "What did you see?" "Nothing but that shell of oil he replied." "Didn't

the marketplace and the festival attract you,” He asked. The son replied, “No, I just kept my eyes on the oil. I knew that if I didn’t, I might lose my life.”

Hebrew 12:1, 2 commands us to run the race of life while keeping our eyes of Jesus. It is wonderful to be saved and to know the Lord, but we are responsible to keep our heart warm towards the Lord at all times and to govern what we do, where we go, how we think and speak by looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith. Are you looking only unto Jesus, dear friend?