

August 17, 2014

Training.

1 Corinthians 9: 25 – Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

I love working out. Lifting weights gives me a rush. It's fun to go to the gym, sweat and know that I'm doing something healthy for my body. Not only that, but I am making myself stronger. But, I don't really get any long term benefits if I only go once in a while. I have to train consistently in order for my workouts to really help.

The same type of principle applies to all areas of life. If we want to get better at something we need to do it . . . a lot. Musicians practice for hours in order to be able to play complex and beautiful pieces. Some men and women go to college for years to be molded into business moguls or topnotch scientists. Athletes train for months and years to improve themselves in the hope of beating the competition. In order to be really good at something, people have to practice. People must train to be good. And in order to be great, we must have a teacher, coach or master guiding us and molding us and peers, co-workers or teammates to push us beyond what we thought we could do.

This is no different for Christians. Our Lord Jesus Christ poured hours and days and weeks and months and years into molding the disciples into Christians. Even after he ascended into heaven, Jesus gave the disciples the Holy



Spirit to continue to train and mold them. With the Spirit's help and the encouragement of one another, the disciples went on to

preach God's Kingdom and Christ's reign despite hardships, persecution and even execution. Through their own training, others were able to hear and be molded and trained by the Word of God.

This is the model they left for us. A model of discipline and hard work here in this world that we might be shaped into the image of Christ. As disciples of Christ, we are called to exercise self-control and discipline in our own lives, not only for ourselves but for the sake of others too. So, we train. We practice being good Christians. Not just for the perishable achievements of today, but for the imperishable glory that will be bestowed on us when Christ returns. And, not only for ourselves, but for those around us, so that they can see the difference Christ's training produces in us.

We know from experience that training of all kinds involves failure in various degrees. But, that is why we have church and each other. That is why our master gave himself up on the cross, so that we can be corrected and forgiven for the times we sin and to be encouraged by other disciples who struggle with us.

Dear God, train us to be the disciples you want us to be and help us encourage one another to the same. Amen.

Pastor Carl Jh

