

## "SELF-DISCIPLINE"

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Lou Holtz: Without self-discipline, success is impossible, period. Jim Rohn: Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishments. Our text: Paul gives his key to success in life/ministry: Self-discipline.

### I. THE NEED FOR SELF-DISCIPLINE

A. Paul is speaking about his calling by God – all that he wants to achieve for God in life: To save some

1. For many men – they have a desire or a dream in life

a. It might be in life: Finances/business/house/career b. Relationships: To have a better marriage

c. Ministry: They can see themselves on stage at conference/in conference video/in the Trumpet

1. But desire is not enough! 2. Calling is not enough! **Matt 22:32** many are called, but few are chosen

B. The problem is that they lack self-control

1. Picture of athletic games – **your greatest competitor is yourself!** (Not the devil/wicked people)

a. Part of us wants to do what we shouldn't; Doesn't want to do what we should

2. Mark of our generation: No self-control **2 Tim 3:1/3** in the last days men will be ...incontinent/without self-control...

a. Incontinent: No government; Not outside – within: They can't rule themselves

1. Note: We use incontinence as unable to stop the flow of urine!

3. The answer is **self-discipline**: **V27** But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection...

a. Hit under the eye; Trip up your opponent & get on ground & make him surrender

4. Very simple truth about self-discipline; It is painful – it is not enjoyable! *Undisciplined do what they enjoy*

a. **The pain of not doing what you feel like doing**: I would rather be doing this or that...

1. **V25** And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Strength over yourself/to contain

a. Lust/anger/overspending/overeating (or eating unhealthy junk) b. Often based on emotions

b. **The pain of doing what you do not feel like doing**: **V27** But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection...

1. Getting out of bed/going to work/studying when you feel like playing/relaxing

### II. THE COST OF A LACK OF SELF-CONTROL

A. Paul tells of the cost of a lack of self-control: Being disqualified

1. **V27** I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

a. Disqualified: Herald called competitors to games & read rules – "Unapproved" not allowed to race!

2. Speaking of being unable to do what God called you to do – or what you would like to do/or be

a. You want financial success – no control; Good marriage – no control

b. Calling: You want to obey God/be used/be effective in winning souls

1. You can't – b/c you have no self-control 2. **Matt 22:32** many are called, but few are chosen

c. The pain of self-discipline will never be as great as the pain of regret

### III. GAINING SELF-CONTROL

A. The mistake is thinking it's a matter of either you have it or you don't

1. The devil will lie and say it is impossible for you to ever have self-control

a. That's a lie: Peter lacked self-control – but that changed!

2. Our text gives us a few clues as to heart issues that will help us gain self-control

a. We have to want to please God by self-control; So for many this begins with repenting of a lack

b. Then vision helps produce it – picture of what you want to be/want to achieve

1. **V24** the prize **V25** a crown; What do you want to achieve – to have/become/do?

a. When you want to do the opposite/don't want to do what need; The prize focuses us

b. Stories of men w/pics on mirror/in wallet to remind them of what they want

B. Practical beginnings of self-control

1. **Start small**: Many men discourage themselves b/c they set the bar too high *50 chaps a day! 100 lbs by Tues*

a. Start with small decisions you can keep doing b. KOG is progression: You can always increase later

1. Great power in continuing small actions – over time

2. **Have grace**: *Can't be unrealistic; Fail to take into account the realities of life: Emotion/tiredness/resistance/assault*

a. We view setbacks incorrectly: *All or nothing...if I miss a day, I am a failure – no point in going on*

1. You have to allow for the unexpected – and not let it become your whole identity

3. **Get encouragement**: Involve someone else in your decisions of self-control

a. Someone who will help you be accountable b. Someone who will encourage you

C. Self-control is not fun – but it is worth it!