

A spot from the interim moderator

Going for Gold

BY DR PHIL PAUL

In the recent London Olympics, no-one who watched the individual events can forget the excitement of watching the Australian women swim the 4x100 freestyle relay and win the gold medal. Each of the women had to spend many hours of training in order to reach the standard where they could take out gold.

In the same way as these women pursued gold medals in the Olympics, the Bible encourages you to finish the race and 'go for gold' in regard to your faith and commitment to Christ. The Apostle Paul in his first letter to Timothy says "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award me on that day (2 Timothy 3:17)".

Certainly, the Bible states that all people, whatever their beliefs or way of life, have sinned and fallen short of the

glory of God (Romans 3:23). And so the starting point in the race is when you acknowledge your need to be reconciled to God by trusting in his Son, Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sin and then following him as your saviour and Lord. But then what?

Maybe you are a person who started well in the Christian faith. When you were younger, you may have accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord and been eager to serve him and grow in your walk with him. But over time, you may have lost your passion for the things of God because of family concerns, career, the pursuit of money or success, or have been disillusioned by chronic illness, suffering, hurts or disappointments. This is like beginning a race, but not having the stamina to reach the finish line. This was the case with some of the kings of Israel and Judah in the Old Testament such as Saul, Solomon, Joash or Uzziah who began their reigns by honouring God, but lat-

er in their lives became unfaithful, proud or wicked. Their example is a warning to us who live in the 21st Century about the dangers of going cold in our faith.

But it is not too late to say sorry to God, where you have fallen or stumbled, and then stand up and continue in the race. We can learn much from the Apostle Paul, who, in his second



letter to Timothy, describes how he 'went for gold' in his on-going relationship with Christ. He describes here how he was prepared to put in the 'hard yards' of being a top athlete. He mentions that he was a man of prayer and was obedient to God's word – the Bible (1:3; 3:16). He was led by God's Spirit (1:7) and he shared the good news about Jesus with others despite being persecuted for what he did (1:8). And he pursued the fruits of a genuine faith in Christ

which included the qualities of righteousness, faith, love, peace, patience and endurance (2:22; 3:10). Moreover, he knew the power of God which strengthened him in all situations despite having undergone severe suffer-

ing in his life (3:11).

May you not give up the race, but instead, continue to "go for gold" in your relationship with Jesus Christ. May you look forward to the rich reward of living with Him in eternity. ❧