

The Potter's Christian Life Center

SERMON NOTES
with Pastor Greg Formey



Getting Ahead Of God

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

October 23, 2016

The need to know our speed applies to many areas of life. We humans always want to know how far, how fast, how big, and how much; especially compared to the other guy. But there is one dimension of speed that is even more important than your miles per hour. It is the speed of your life. There are two times in which going too fast can be dangerous:

- **When there is urgent challenge.**
- **When there is desperate need**

AT TIMES OF SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE

The Olympics are a beautiful display of the highest physical achievements for mankind. but what is even more beautiful is the fact that in the spiritual life, winning does not depend upon someone else losing. It is not based upon who ran the fastest, jumped the highest, lifted the most weight, or was the most precise in execution. We race, not against opponents, but against ourselves. The prize is given because we became spiritual champions, sold out to Jesus. And with a steady pace, we become more like Him everyday. We win when we become more Christian today than yesterday, and more devoted tomorrow than today. The goal is not perfection, but progress.

1 Corinthians 9:24-25

^{24a}Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize?

Almost every event in the Olympics has a speed component to it. Almost every athlete must consider pace and quickness if they want to have a chance of winning.

Pace in life is determined by:

- The distance you must go
- The time frame based on the history of your competition
- Your storehouse of physical, mental, and emotional resources

^{25a}All athletes are disciplined in their training.

Discipline, or proceeding at a designed speed, is always the rule in training and in final execution.

^{25b}They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize.

AT TIMES OF DESPERATE NEED

One of our big problems is that of overreacting when the pressure is on. The greater our sense of need, the more anxious we tend to become, and the more tempted to proceed recklessly to satisfy it. The problem is that this can end in personal disaster.

Questions:

- Is there an area in your life in which you are sure that God wants you to be patient, but you're not confident that He will show up on time?
- Have you assumed that He would be present at a certain point, but the deadline has passed
- How did things work out for you?

There is a crucial episode in the life of ancient Israel Remember King Saul. His anxiety over the looming threat built up to the point where he disobeyed a word from God. This altered life, not only for him, but for the entire future of his family.

1 Samuel 13:5-14

⁵The Philistines mustered a mighty army of 3,000 chariots, 6,000 charioteers, and as many warriors as the grains of sand on the seashore! They camped at Micmash east of Beth-aven. ⁶The men of Israel saw what a tight spot they were in; and because they were hard pressed by the enemy, they tried to hide in caves, thickets, rocks, holes, and cisterns. ⁷Some of them crossed the Jordan River and escaped into the land of Gad and Gilead. Meanwhile, Saul stayed at Gilgal, and his men were trembling with fear. ⁸Saul waited there seven days for Samuel, as Samuel had instructed him earlier, but Samuel still didn't come. Saul realized that his troops were rapidly slipping away. ⁹So he demanded, "Bring me the burnt offering and the peace offerings!" And Saul sacrificed the burnt offering himself. ¹⁰Just as Saul was finishing with the burnt offering, Samuel arrived. Saul went out to meet and welcome him, ¹¹but Samuel said, "What is this you have done?" Saul replied, "I saw my men scattering from me, and you didn't arrive when you said you would, and the Philistines are at Micmash ready for battle. ¹²So I said, 'The Philistines are ready to march against us at Gilgal, and I haven't even asked for the Lord's help!' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering myself before you came." ¹³"How foolish!" Samuel exclaimed. "You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. Had you kept it, the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. ¹⁴But now your kingdom must end, for the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart. The Lord has already appointed him to be the leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command."

How will you know if you are getting ahead of yourself?

- You are speeding up because of anxiety
- You are determined to do things your way
- You forget or ignore lessons from the past.
- You just do not like God's plan and pace

Have you short-circuited your blessings because you went out ahead of God?

We must constantly compare our speed to the intensity of our need, and at the same time not rush ahead because of intimidation.

1 Corinthians 9:26-27

²⁶So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. ²⁷I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

Conclusion

1 Corinthians 9:24b commands us, "**So run to win!**"

What is the perfect speed for a healthy and balanced spiritual life? There is no universal number, but there are signposts: joyful contentment, growth in living like Christ Jesus, increasing knowledge of God's Word, serving God everyday by serving people, a vibrant, up-to-date testimony, and fruitful relationships with your family and friends.

We avoid running too fast when we are not tempted by need or by challenge.