



The NIV version of the Bible is used for these questions.

1. Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. What do you think Paul is telling us in this passage? What did Paul say he doesn't do in his work for God? What did he say he does? Practically, what do you think this would look like in a person's life to live this way?
2. Is there an area of your life in which you feel you are winning? How do you define winning? How do you think God defines winning? Is there an area of life you feel you are not winning? Why do you feel that way? Do you think there would be a way for other Christians to help you in this area?
3. Pastor Rick said that to win in life you need to stop trying and start training, what do you think he meant? Aren't you trying if you train? If so, what is the difference?
4. How can you train to be successful spiritually? What would you need to do starting today?
5. Read Colossians 3:23,24. According to these verses, how do you make absolutely everything in your life into a training exercise? If you were to do this, what are the only things in your life that would not be spiritual training? What does this verse promise God will do if you do everything to the best of your ability as a way of serving God? Do you think this would even mean things like your job or doing your school work? What do you think this reward could be?

ANSWERS

- 1. In this passage Paul is telling us that living a life that pleases God is in a lot of ways just like competing in an athletic event, many of the elements to be successful athletically are the same to be successful spiritually. Paul said that he does not “run aimlessly” or “beat at the air”. He means that everything he did was intentional, he did not waste time or effort on things that did not move him toward his goal of winning the spiritual race we are in. You might want to read Hebrews 12:1 where Paul says we should put off anything that hinders us (sins and weights) from running efficiently. What he said he does is to beat his own body and make it his slave to do what needs to be done. This reflects the idea that because of our sinful nature, the greatest resistance to winning will come from within and it will take discipline to do the things necessary to train to win,. This is how living the Christian life is just like an athlete who trains his body to win.*
- 2. God’s definition of winning is very different from man’s definition of winning. The world teaches us that the one who dies with the most toys wins. God defines winning as living a life of eternal significance, that what we live for accomplishes eternal results. Success spiritually is not measured by how much we do but by how much we trust God and do his will.*
- 3. The difference between trying and training is one of effort and intentionality. He said that trying is an attempt to change with minimal commitment and no clear, defined path to success. Training is planned, you develop a plan to win. People do not usually plan to fail, they simply fail to plan. The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and then expecting different results. That is how we approach spiritual change many times. To train you must identify your weaknesses and develop a plan to obtain the skills necessary to allow God to turn your weaknesses into strengths. Paul explains this concept in 2 Corinthians 12:9,10.*
- 4. Identify the activities that would be part of training spiritually. Refer back to the need to develop “divine habits” that Pastor Rick described previously.*
- 5. This is an amazing passage because it says absolutely anything you do can be a way of serving God if you do it to the very best of your ability, committing your effort to God to bring Him glory. The only things that then would not be part of your spiritual life would be when we sin or disobey what God wants us to do. This does not mean that we should be the best drug dealer we could be. How does God reward us? In this life, he can bless everything we attempt because we are doing it for him. Our health, our family, our finances, etc. In eternity we are told God will reward us, but the Bible does not explicitly tell us what these rewards are. But knowing God, it will be something we will be extremely glad that we receive.*