

# POWER HOUR

6/8/2025

Lesson Text:  
1 Corinthians 9:24 -10:13

Background Scripture:  
Exodus 32:1-10, Numbers 16:1-50,  
21:4-9, 25:1-15

Devotional Reading:  
Psalms 78:9-39

“LEARN FROM BAD EXAMPLES”

NLT TRANSLATION

**Golden Text:** These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age. **1 Corinthians 10:11 NLT**

**Time:** about A.D. 55

**Place:** Ephesus

## 1 Corinthians 9:24 – 10:13 NLT

<sup>24</sup> Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! <sup>25</sup> All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. <sup>26</sup> So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. <sup>27</sup> I 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.

<sup>1</sup> I don't want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters, about our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. All of them were guided by a cloud that moved ahead of them, and all of them walked through the sea on dry ground. <sup>2</sup> In the cloud and in the sea, all of them were baptized as followers of Moses. <sup>3</sup> All of them ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup> and all of them drank the same spiritual water. For they drank from the spiritual rock that traveled with them, and that rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup> Yet God was not pleased with most of them, and their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. <sup>6</sup> These things happened as a warning to us, so that we would not crave evil things as they did, <sup>7</sup> or worship idols as some of them did. As the Scriptures say, “The people celebrated with feasting and drinking, and they indulged in pagan revelry.” <sup>8</sup> And we must not engage in sexual immorality as some of them did, causing 23,000 of them to die in one day. <sup>9</sup> Nor should we put Christ to the test, as some of them did and then died from snakebites. <sup>10</sup> And don't grumble as some of them did, and then were destroyed by the

angel of death. <sup>11</sup> These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age. <sup>12</sup> If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. <sup>13</sup> The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

## **INTRODUCTION**

At the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, John Stephen Akhwari, a runner from Tanzania, was injured in the marathon. Akhwari hobbled on a dislocated knee into the nearly empty stadium an hour after the last runner.

The filmmaker Bud Greenspan asked the athlete why he bothered to finish the race. Akhwari replied, "My country did not send me 5000 miles to start the race. They sent me to finish it!" (Roper, *Out of the Ordinary*, Discovery House).

When we trusted in Christ, we began the Christian race. Like the African runner, we entered the race not merely to begin it but to finish it! It is imperative that we persevere to the end. The Christian life is not a quick sprint but a long-distance marathon! To successfully finish, we must "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and . . . run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1).

**1. Present running (1 Cor. 9:24-27).** Picture a mass of runners at the starting line of a marathon. Many will start, many will finish, but only one will win the race. The goal of some runners is merely to finish. Note that Paul's admonition is that we run to win. Do we know what running to win means? And if so are we running to win? Explain the meaning of "temperate" (vs. 25). Temperance is self-control, a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23). Self-control is the opposite of self-indulgence. What constitutes a self-indulgent lifestyle, and how is such a lifestyle detrimental to running the successful Christian race? Christians who do not discipline themselves and bring their lives under control will not be "winners," and they will not receive the blessing of God's full reward.

Paul stated that he did not run "uncertainly" (1 Cor. 9:26). What did he mean by this? The runner who is serious about winning stays focused on winning, as is anyone seriously committed to something (cf. 2 Tim. 2:4). Switching to a boxing metaphor (1 Cor. 9:26), Paul stated that he did not merely shadowbox. His fight was real. We are to keep our bodies under control? Paul was determined not to be disqualified

from obtaining the crown of God's approval.

**2. Past runners (1 Cor. 10:1-13).** Paul used the experiences of Israel during and after the Exodus to reinforce his teaching. Read verses 1-4 and list the advantages Israel had. They included: (1) God's guidance, (2) deliverance, (3) unity with Moses, their spiritual head, (4) spiritual food, and (5) spiritual drink. How did the Corinthian believers' experience parallel that of Israel? How does this parallel our experience today?

Although Israel had been blessed by numerous advantages, the time in the wilderness had also included God's judgment for certain transgressions they committed. Read verses 5-11, where Paul warned his readers to avoid similar errors and similar consequences. The five transgressions are: (1) lust, (2) idolatry, (3) fornication, (4) tempting Christ, and (5) murmuring. We read of the corresponding punishments.

Verse 11 tells Corinthian Christians and modern-day Christians that we should learn from Israel's example. We are wise if we can learn from the mistakes of others.

Verse 12 is a timeless, universal warning. After all, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). Christians who assume that their status as believers immunizes them to the consequences of sin are seriously deluded. God hates sin, and He lovingly disciplines His children when necessary (Heb. 12:5-6).

1 Corinthians 10:13 is one of the Bible's great promises. The Greek word translated "temptation" can also be translated "trial." How can the fact that others have faced the same kind of trials and temptations be helpful to anyone fighting with a specific temptation or undergoing a trial?

What does this verse promise? Many seek ways of escape from unpleasant situations; is this what God promises? What "way to escape" does God promise to provide?

## **POINTS TO PONDER**

We must show self-control if we are to succeed in the Christian life (1 Cor. 9:24-27).

Past divine blessing does not guarantee future spiritual success (10:1-5).

Sin often has serious consequences (vss. 6-8).

Grave sins are commonly overlooked and excused (vss. 9-10).

The Bible gives strong warnings against pride (vss. 11-12).

God's faithfulness leaves no excuse for giving in to temptation (vs. 13).

## CONCLUSION

There are a lot of runners but few winners. In this text, Paul admonished Christians to pursue the goal of Christ's approval with the intensity of a champion runner. The undisciplined runner will lose the race; likewise, the Christian who is out of control will not win God's approval of his life.

The experiences of Israel in the wilderness should serve as warnings for Christians today. We need to avoid the pitfalls they fell victim to and remember that God always provides a way of escape for us.

## QUESTION(S)

1. What two athletic illustrations did Paul use for the Christian life?
2. How was an ancient athlete "temperate" (1 Cor. 9:25)?
3. What did Paul mean when he said he wanted to avoid being a "castaway" (vs. 27)?
4. How was Israel "baptized unto Moses" (10:2)? How does this relate to Christian baptism?
5. Who was the "spiritual Rock" (vs. 4) that accompanied Israel in the wilderness?
6. What four examples did Paul give from the wilderness journey?
7. What is a biblical "type"?
8. Why did Paul warn the Corinthians about falling?
9. Are the temptations that people face unique? How are temptations both similar and different?
10. How is God faithful to us when we are experiencing temptation?

## ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

Next week's lesson is *"Seek Godly Wisdom"*

Lesson Text: *Proverbs 4:10-15, 20-27*

**Union Gospel Press**