



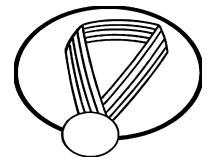
January, 2017

**FROM PASTOR CHAMBERS:** I cannot believe 2016 has quickly passed us by and we are entering into another new year! I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year! This year, my goal is to write this monthly newsletter for the sole purpose of effective communication. I truly believe that without communication, the devil can work in our church, thus I desire for us all to be on the same page as we journey into 2017. I am truly excited about what the Lord has been doing in our church over the past 15 months since I became your pastor. We have had 24 new members join our church family as well as several others have been visiting. We also have had a new ministry started with Mom's Group as well as a Hope Mission Outreach ministry where we helped several families last summer during the flooding that occurred in West Virginia. We also have had 11 people baptized. The Lord is truly working. My prayer and hope for our church family as we go into 2017 is that we will continue to see more people join our church family; we see more people accept Christ as Savior and be baptized; we see more people get involved in our ministries; we see these new ministries begin to grow; we see people disciplined; we work on becoming more of a visitor friendly church; and most importantly that we impact our surrounding community for the Lord Jesus Christ! Please know that if Stephanie and I can help you in any way, feel free to contact us - we are never too busy to help people! My challenge is to always be "Servant Hearted, Kingdom Minded, and Christ Focused" as we journey into 2017. I personally want to thank all of our church family who are involved and do their part week after week to serve the Lord and get the gospel out. Blessings to you and your family this year.



**ARE YOU STRIVING FOR THE PRIZE?** 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 says, *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it unto subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.* Looking at this passage of scripture, I want to point out 3 major elements from a cultural perspective of that day...

1. **The PROMISE** - of a new season, a new race, etc. In the passage, Paul draws on the Corinthians' knowledge of the Isthmian games, held every two years in Corinth. In a race, they all run, but one receives the prize. In a new race, a new season, everyone has the promise of a new beginning - the promise that if I am good enough, I can win. However, in a race, in a season, in a game, only one person or one team can receive the prize. Therefore they run to obtain that prize...
2. **The PROCESS** - self-discipline, temperance. An athlete must be disciplined if he is to win the race. Discipline means giving up the good and the better for the best. The athlete must watch his diet as well as his time, because they will interfere with their highest goals, which is striving for mastery in their particular sport. Only citizens were allowed to participate in the games, and they had to obey the rules both in their training and in their performing. Keeping the rules without penalty also takes discipline and temperance (governing yourself in private and in public...)
3. **The PRIZE** - A corruptible crown. When the games were all over the runners, wrestlers, and successful contestants assembled before the "Bema," or Judges' stand, which was an elevated seat on which the Umpire sat, and the winners received a crown or laurel leaves. The crown, or "stephanos," (means "to twine or wreath") was a badge of royalty or a prize in the public games or even a symbol of honor. Some had no reward, they had lost the "victor's crown." But while there was no reward there was no punishment, they were not cast out. However, because these crowns of laurel leaves would decay, they were considered by the Apostle Paul as "corruptible crowns." We have all competed in one form or another in order to achieve mastery in our particular sport in order to win the trophy, certificate, ribbon, etc. The crown is a symbol of victory and reward, yet were corruptible crowns.



The Corinthian church that Paul was speaking to in this passage were believers in Jesus Christ yet acting in many aspects very worldly - being known as "carnal Christians." Therefore, in our lives, as we struggle between the "flesh" and the "Spirit," we have the same three elements in our Spiritual lives as well...

1. **The PROMISE** - of a new life in Christ. The analogy used here is these Greek and Roman games. Understand that the Christian does not run the race in order to get to heaven. The Christian is in the race because he has been saved by grace through faith in

Jesus Christ. We are in the race and are given the tools and resources to run our race in life, to “play our game” so to speak. Our Time, Talents, Treasure, and Temple of our bodies are given to us by the Lord to use for His glory, not ours. They are given by us to do His will - to spread the gospel - the good news about Him to others...

2. **The PROCESS - self-discipline and temperance in the Christian life.** Paul says in verse 26, *I therefore run, not as uncertainly* (not aimlessly, for I have a GOAL for which to run, I don't wander). Paul also says in the same verse, *so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.* This refers to wild misses during an actual boxing match. Paul says in order to fight the good fight of faith you must hit something - not miss the mark due to sin or not being self-disciplined. About 10 years ago, we witnessed the steroid controversy in baseball as well as in the Olympics, for any contestant found breaking the training rules were automatically disqualified. There are many baseball “heroes” from the 1990s who probably will not go into the Hall of Fame, because they “cheated the game.” In his own life, in order to give up his rights and have the joy of seeing a lost soul won to Jesus Christ, Paul had to discipline himself. **That is the emphasis of this passage - Authority or rights MUST BE BALANCED by discipline!** If we want to serve the Lord and win His reward and approval, we must pay the price. This incorruptible crown is for those Christians who do not yield to their fleshly lusts, just as athletes keep their bodies under subjection. Those who do not permit themselves to be diverted from the Master's work by worldly amusements and pleasure, nor saturate their body with drugs, alcohol, or other things not honorable to God...
3. **The PRIZE - an incorruptible crown.** While trophies and crowns that are corruptible or temporal all will fall apart one day and be forgotten, what is done for Christ will never be forgotten. There is a reward! The word “castaway” was a technical word familiar to those who knew the Greek games. It means “disapproved or disqualified.” At the games, there was a herald who announced the rules of the contest, the names of the contestants, and the names and cities of the winners. He would also announce the names of any contestants who were disqualified. Paul was concerned that he would get so busy trying to help others in the race that he would ignore himself and find himself disqualified (remember NOT his salvation but the crown). Paul did not want to lose his reward. He wanted to keep his body under control and keep his eyes on the goal. **He had one goal in life - to GLORIFY HIS LORD AND SAVIOR** by winning the lost and building up the saints to the extent he was willing even to give up his personal rights!

**How about your life?** If you have accepted Christ as your personal Savior and have a relationship with Him - you have a **PROMISE** for a new life, for you are in a new race. The challenge is “SO RUN that you can obtain the prize!” You also have a **PROCESS** you must follow in order to run this race of life - follow the rules, discipline yourselves unto holiness! We do not want to be ashamed at Jesus' coming (1 John 2:28.) A good principle to live by is *Whatever therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* (1 Corinthians 10:31) **Our goal** - an incorruptible crown that we can cast at Jesus' feet, because He is the reason we run and live and breathe to begin with! - *By Pastor Dean Chambers, December 3, 2013*

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**NOTABLE AND QUOTABLE:** “Whatever it is, whether it is a mission to accomplish, a goal to achieve, or a problem to overcome, if God has called you to do it, you can have complete confidence that it can be done. Let that sink in. Picture how it will work out. Focus your mind on the truth of the vision. Your mind is a powerful part of you, especially when it is filled with FAITH.” - *Coach Tony Dungy, Uncommon Life*

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**CHURCH EVENTS FOR JANUARY:** We now have an official “church calendar” located in the church office. If you lead a ministry in our church, please call the church office in order to get all events and activities on the calendar so that it can be announced in the bulletin each week.

**Monday Evening, January 2** - 5:30 pm - Joyful Ringers “New Year” cleaning to organize music.

**Wednesday Evening, January 4** - AWANA and CURE Youth Group resume

**Sunday Evening, January 8** - Communion

**Monday Evening, January 9** - Joyful Ringers Resume Practice - 5:45 pm

**Monday Evening, January 9** - Advisory Council Meeting - 7 pm

**Thursday Morning, January 12** - Sunshine Seniors going to Cross Lanes Christian School for program and Lunch. Van leaves the church at 10 am. Program begins at 11 am.

**Sunday Evening, January 15** - Annual Business Meeting

**Tuesday Evening, January 17** - Mom's Group “Accessory Swap” at the church 6:30-8:30 pm

**Sunday Evening, January 29** - Youth and Children's Safety Class - 5:00 pm - for all members who currently and wish to work with children (Nursery, AWANA, Youth Group, Junior Church, Vacation Bible School)

**Monday Evening, January 30** - Deacon's Meeting - 7 pm

