

Work out your **SALVATION**

“Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:17b).

Well done dearest Paul, our good and faithful brother! You ran the race and your hard labor was not in vain. You passed the baton to a remnant of enduring believers who locked their grip and set their eyes on the finish line. We are into the 21st century, still holding the baton more tightly than ever before. Your letters have become our training manual, your instruction lifts us out of the mucky mess of this world and over the barbed barriers. It is a difficult run, the body aches, but discouragement is thrust aside for on the horizon, lies something very big and bright. We are nearly there. We will stand together on the top of the podium bloody and bruised, but alive and well, as God’s flag is raised—soon.



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The race believers run was finally understood by Solomon. “When all has been heard, the conclusion of the matter is this: **Fear God and keep His commandments, because this is the whole duty of man**” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Deception distracts people from seeking truth. Those holding the baton know that they must not break their focus, hold firmly onto the word of God, and live God’s ways growing daily in His grace and knowledge. This is what is meant by working out your own salvation in fear and reverence of Almighty God.

“But in keeping with God’s promise, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, as you anticipate these things, **make every effort to be found at peace with Him, WITHOUT SPOT OR BLEMISH**” (II Peter 3:13-14).

The Apostle Peter wants believers to enjoy a rich welcome into God’s kingdom. This prodigious entry comes with a price that only the truly humble and teachable believers understand. They search daily for truth and when it is found, they hold onto it, guarding it like a dog with a bone that nobody slips it from them to replace it with falsehood.

“**Be eager to make your calling and election sure.** For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a **rich welcome** into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (II Peter 1:10).

Join our brother, Paul and run the race as he did. “Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? **So, run to win!** Everyone who competes in the games trains with **strict discipline**. They do it for a crown that is perishable, but **we do it for a crown that is imperishable**” (I Corinthians 9:23-24).

The Apostle Peter provided the steps that refine and build the discipline to win. “**His divine power** has given us everything we need for life and godliness... **participate in the divine nature** and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, **make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance, and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love... make your calling and election sure. IF YOU DO THESE THINGS, YOU WILL NEVER FALL.**” (II Peter 1:3-10).

The Apostle Paul added, “And **endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation**” (Romans 5:4) and “Let us **run with endurance** the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1).

The Apostle Paul is a coach who won’t allow his athletes to fall, instead he relentlessly stands by their side commanding attention. “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us **throw off everything that hinders** and the sin that so easily entangles. And **let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.** Let us **FIX OUR EYES ON JESUS**, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

There is no room for half-heartedness. The athletes trained under the apostles have devoted their every breath to winning the race set before them. So, they train feverishly building skills, enduring pain, developing a strength beyond human limits. “Therefore, **I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight like I am beating the air.** No, I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that after I have preached to others, **I myself will not be disqualified**” (I Corinthians 9:26-27).

Eliminate the distractions of life on this physical planet. Our coaches tell us where to focus.

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, **set your hearts on things above**, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. **Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.** For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” (Colossians 3:1-4).

We are getting close to the finish line, now is not the time to slow down. Listen to the words of our triumphant coaches and finish the course with more strength than you had when you entered the race. “We want each of you to **show the same diligence to the very end**, so that your hope may be fully assured” (Hebrews 6:11).

“But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only **I may finish my course** and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to **testify to the gospel of the grace of God**” (Acts 20:24).

“Blessed is the one who **perseveres under trial** because, **having stood the test**, that person will receive **the crown of life** that the Lord has promised to those who love him” (James 1:12).

Thankfully our faithful Father in heaven is honest and true. “Let us **hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm**, for **God can be trusted to keep his promise**” (Hebrews 10:23).

God’s flag will be raised soon and standing under it will be the first-place winners. They will be in the first resurrection transformed into sons of God, to live eternally in harmony with and loving God. What a reward!

Compiled by Janette Andrejowich