

Lesson Notes:

### **Staying Focused on the Right Priorities:**

We can use the same techniques used by athletes for training and keeping focused during an athletic event in our commitment and service to the Lord. Below is a discussion of biblical principles and their analogy to athletics and “staying in the game”.

### **Scriptural Principles**

- 1) **Don't bury your talents** - In **Matthew 25:14-30** Jesus shares the parable of the talents with his disciples. The key learning is that we are not to bury our “talents” but to utilize them to the best of our abilities. This is true in athletics and in our service to the Lord as well.
- 2) **Be a Leader** - In **2 Chronicles 31:21** Hezekiah was admired for pouring his entire heart and soul into his work. Hezekiah is an example for us both in athletics and in our service to the Lord. Whatever your sport you want to pour your entire heart and soul into your efforts. This will enable you to be a leader on your team, on the court and on the playing field.
- 3) **Stay in the moment.** - Paul encourages the Philippians in **Philippians 4:4-8** to “**stay in the moment**”. In **verse 8** he encourages us to focus on purity and what is good. It is easy to lose focus in an athletic event especially if the opposing team has scored or made a significant gain. It is important to stay focused on the task at hand and to “**win the next play**”. All too often we see a team lose focus if they are behind and fail to play up to the best of their abilities when they are behind. As an athlete and as a follower of Christ it is important to put past failures behind you and stay focused on the present to maximize your potential as an athlete and a servant to the Lord.
- 4) **Leave “it” in the gym or on the field.** - In athletics we are encouraged to, “leave it in the gym or on the field”. Great athletes will use every ounce of energy they have to win the game, event or the championship. Frequently, after Olympic running events you will see athletes collapse from exhaustion. They have poured every ounce of energy into the race to the point they have “left it all on the field”. Paul encourages the Corinthians in **1 Corinthian 9:24** to run the race so that they may obtain the prize knowing that only one runner will be crowned champion. To be successful in athletics and in life we have to “run the race” as Paul has encouraged the Corinthians.
- 5) **Be prepared to endure hardship** - Paul tells **Timothy in 2 Timothy 2: 1-3, 12** to be prepared to endure hardship. Anyone that has participated in intercollegiate football or basketball has endured weeks of grueling practice sessions. Coaches put their teams through a period of difficult preparation in an effort to prepare them physically, mentally and emotionally for the challenges that lie ahead. Paul encouraged Timothy to prepare himself to endure hardships. As athletes and followers of Christ we must prepare ourselves to endure the challenges we will face as well.

**6) Remember your priorities** - All too often we see athletes lose focus on what is important in life (Family, God, Commitments). Paul encouraged the Colossians in **Colossians 3:1-3** to focus on what is important in life. It is important in athletics and in our lives to maintain our focus on our relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.