

A True Christian Is Non-Competitive

The whole teaching of Jesus Christ shows that nothing in Christianity can be promoted by competitive acts.

The very essence of Christianity is selfless love.

This selfless love was expressed first by the personal life of Jesus Christ in His redemptive suffering.

This same selfless love has been expressed again and again ever since by deeds of kindness and compassion done by Jesus Christ's true disciples, for each other and the suffering world.

In total contrast the essence of competition is self-love.

People compete to gain something for themselves, and in doing so they must of necessity cause someone else to lose what they gain.

We cannot be selfish and selfless at the same time.

Nothing spiritual can be gained in competition.

The very idea of struggling with another person for some eternal treasure is unthinkable.

Paul uses two analogies which at first sight seem to liken a Christian's life to something that is competitive.

2 Timothy 4:7 [NIV] *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."*

Paul likens his Christian life to a fight. But if we read the next verse everyone can be winners in this fight. [**2 Timothy 4:8**]

Ephesians 6:11-13 [NIV] *"Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."*

Our fight as Christians is against Satan, our own fleshly nature and society which is influenced by Satan and his demons. [**2 Corinthians 4:4; Matthew 4:8-9; Revelation 12:9-11**]

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 [NIV] *"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last for ever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."*

Paul also likens a Christian life to a race, in which we have a limited time in which to run it. [**Ecclesiastes 8:8; Ephesians 5:16**]

In a physical race there is but one winner, and this is for a prize that is short-lived. The Christians's prize is for an eternal prize that is available to all human beings.

Hebrews 12:1-4 [NIV] *"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 author 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. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.”

Each of us has a personal race in life with personal weaknesses we have to set aside, so we are not hindered in this race for life eternal.

Recorded within the pages of the Christian Bible are the lives of those who have won this race of life and await the time they will receive their crown of eternal life.

Such accounts we can use for encouragement as the weaknesses we have to overcome were also found in their lives.

In both our fight and race in our Christian life we are not without help.

John 15:4-8 [NIV] *“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. ‘I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”*

The writer of Hebrews told us to continue to look to Jesus Christ, for he knew that without Jesus Christ working in us we would fail in our fight or race of life. Jesus Christ is confirming this in His Personal teaching.

Romans 8:1-11 [NIV] *“The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man. Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: ‘See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.’ But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises. For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. But God found fault with the people and said: ‘The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, “Know the Lord,” because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.”*

In these promises from God the Father as expounded by Paul we see how we can succeed.

Only as we allow the Holy Spirit, the spirit of Jesus Christ, to direct and empower our lives can we overcome the influence of Satan and the weakness of our human flesh and its desire to experience physical pleasures instead of the spiritual righteousness that our Creator God desires to form within our nature.

Only then will God the Father open up to us His family, the Kingdom of God and eternal life with Him and His Son Jesus Christ. [**John 17:3**]