

has the prob == has the answers to the problems of God's people in all ages, and God wants us to be able to go into it and dig through it ~~and~~ and study every part of it and see what God has there for us. The Apostle says, We should strive as the athlete; we should struggle in order to be like those who are struggling to get a prize.

He says in 1 Cor. 9:25, "Everyone who competes in the games goes through strict training. Are you in strict training now for the service that lies ahead, or are you doing what is assigned and doing what you are supposed to do and then ~~waxing~~ wasting the added time, if you have the time, during the day or the week? Are you putting first the preparation for the future activities? He says, They do this in order to get a crown that will not last. We do it in order to get a crown that will last forever. Yes the man ran in the race got a crown of glory which decayed in a certain length of time.

The man who is a great athlete may get his name in the hall of fame and have a statue of him there, and 50 years later people say, Who on earth was that? People who are not working in that special area may have completely forgotten him and wondered who or what he is. But we are to run for God and serve God effectively and the one who does that will have a crown that will last forever. He will receive a Well Done from the Lord. Therefore Paul says, 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 a slave so that after I have preached to others I myself will not be disqualified." KJV translates it "after I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway." I think "disqualified:" is perhaps a more accurate translation, than castaway, but castaway brings out very clearly I think the tremendous importance of it. Because to be disqualified of one prize is not such a tremendous thing, but to become a castaway and to look back on your life and say, The Lord used me, I~~a~~ accomplished much for ~~me~~ Him. I went along fine up to this point, and then it just dropped. I failed to go on to serve the Lord.

I got interested in more fame, more money, more satisfaction of my bodily needs and I drifted away from the race the Lord wants me to compete in. To become a castaway. There was a man when I was in seminary who used to ~~s~~ sit right next to me in the classes. We were all seated alphabetically. We graduated and I didn't hear from him for a number of years. And then I met a man from his area and he said, He has become a castaway. He became to become indiscrete in his relations with women and now he is teaching in a public school. He no longer has his place in the ministry. Oh how easy it is to become a castaway, to be disqualified. How easy it is to fall short of the goal God has set before us.

There are two things we need in order to fulfill running the race as God wants us to. One of these is energy, determination. Putting your effort and time into accomplishing what the Lord has called you to do. But the other thing is intelligent thought so that you will plan ahead and see how you will be ready for contingencies. To be ready to meet situations as they come up.