**The Christian’s spiritual occupations – The athlete**

1 Cor. 9: 26 -27 – therefore, I run in such a way, as not without aim, I box in such a way, as not beating the air, but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

**Focal Truth: The Christian lives with spiritual disciplines that keep them useful for the gospel**

Paul reminds Christians from the world of athletics of the importance of spiritual training and disciplines as we run for heaven

Heb. 12: 1 – therefore since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.

**Observations**

1. **The Christian is a spiritual athlete running for heaven**

1 Cor. 9: 24 – Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win

* When we live by faith, we win the prize! Eternal life – heavenly glory forever
* Every believer is running for heaven! Keep our focus on the prize

Paul said, I press to the mark of the high calling of God in Christ – eternal life & heaven

1. **The Christian trains like an athlete while running for heaven**

1 Cor. 9:25 – everyone who competes in the games exercises self – control in all things

The athlete practices self – control in all things to compete.

Nutrition

Exercise

Sleeping

Time management

Associations with others

Mind focus

Attention to detail

How serious are we as Christian athletes? Self – control in all things

1. **The Christian disciplines himself to be useful for the gospel while running for heaven**

1 Cor. 9:26 -27 - therefore, I run in such a way, as not without aim, I box in such a way, as not beating the air, but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

**Run** with direction – set your mind on Jesus in heaven – run after Him

**Box** – battle with the world, flesh & devil

**Discipline** your body as a slave – live by self – control – say no to the flesh!

**Avoid disqualification – May as Christian athletes we win the prize!**

**To the praise of the glory of His grace! The Lord is near at the door! Come Lord Jesus!**