Daily Devotion #206

**An Eternal Perspective**

**1 Corinthians 9:24 (NASB)** *“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.”*

Holidays are full of emotions. There is the anticipation of the day when everyone will get together - when all your loved ones come from various parts of the world to catch up and enjoy one anothers company. The joy builds like a creshendo in a song. Like a huge wave of the ocean that builds until it reaches the shore. It is a wonderful time. But in the background of our minds is the awareness that the time will come to an end and everyone will go back to their lives and their respective places they now call home. What began as an emotion of excitement often ends in sadness and longing to be together again.

All of that is part of the great tragedy of sin. Sin has left us in a whirlpool of emotions that pulls us in all directions as we are being dragged down into death. Something no one will escape. Intuitively we all know it. Our human brains know very well that life ends on this planet and everything we do is temporary. King Solomon once said that there is a season to everything. (Ecclesiastes 3) And because there is a season to everything, our sinfulness often causes us to run from the pain of it all. People do whatever it takes to remove themselves from the sad emotions that life brings. Many people drink themselves to death to hide their pain or take drugs or seclude themselves from people all together in an attempt to protect themselves from the inevitable pain of having to say good-bye.

But the joy of being a follower of Christ is knowing that the joy we experience now doesn’t have to end. When the Apostle Paul was giving life-changing instructions to the church in Corinth, he wanted them to change their perspective on life to an eternal perspective. To do so he used a common illustration from his day, running a race. Any runner or athelete knows that in order to win or be the best in their sport, they have to have a particular focus. They have to keep their eye on the goal or whatever it is they are trying to achieve. Because they know if they don’t, many things will take their focus from their goal.

Last year my wife and I had the priviliege of meeting a professional athlete. We had a few minutes to talk with her about her training. One of the things I asked her was about her diet because I know most athletes are extremely careful about what they put in their bodies. Her response was what I expected. She said she eats the same thing every day because she needs to be careful not to do anything that would hinder her ability to train and compete at full capacity.

Many people do not have a perspective on life that is healthy or at least not one that will help them win the prize they are looking for. As a result, they bounce back and forth through the highs and lows and never achieve their dream. Sadly, that same things happens to people in their spiritual lives. Many, many people begin their journey with Christ well. They see their sinful natures and their devastating effects on their lives and make serious changes. They surrender themselves to Christ and live for Him and enjoy an eternal peace that cannot be described with earthly words. But others, start well but end up falling by the spiritual wayside because they do not keep their eye on the prize which is being like Christ and with Christ. They have a desire, and often a strong desire, but too many things keep them from following Him all the way. Too many things take their focus.

As you begin to think about this new year, take some time to examine where you are in life. Is this the life you hoped for? Is this the life that gives you the most joy? Nothing is going to be perfect now, but your life can be something that keeps you focused so that you are not blown off course. Your perspective must be eternal. It must be Jesus. You must keep as your goal, every day, to be like Jesus and with Him. Run this life race with Jesus at the finish line. If there is anyone else at the finish life or anything else, you will surely get lost and your efforts will end in tragedy.