

True believers should race to win favor with God

Continued from page 4B
Christian life and athletics that can help us live faithfully for God? Which similarity do you find to be most important? What hidden dangers are there?

One similarity is the single-minded focus required for success. Becoming a world-class athlete in many sports is a full-time job. Similarly, our development as disciples requires that we make spiritual issues the highest of priorities. The physical and mental exertion required to develop athletically is paralleled by the extreme effort required for spiritual maturity. We are sometimes lulled into thinking that Christian maturity can come without great effort. But Paul describes the process as very hard work.

But there is a pitfall: a few people focus so much on being spiritually minded that they no longer are able to "connect with" the unsaved. Shuffling off to join a monastery (house for monks), either physically or just in one's thoughts, doesn't help!

5 What did Paul mean when he said he wanted to avoid being a "castaway" (v. 27)?

Using himself as an exam-

ple, Paul said that he was not like a man running aimlessly. He sought to stay on course and not become distracted by those things that might pull him off the chosen path (cf. 2 Tim. 4:7).

Changing the figure from running to boxing, Paul said that he was not merely shadowboxing, either. He was attempting to land blows where they would count.

As all athletes know, the human body must be brought into subjection. The body may want food or drink that may not be best for athletic training. The body may want to stay up late when it needs rest. The body may want to quit when the coach says to go on. So it is in the Christian life. The believer must live a life of self-discipline. "Whoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mark 8:34), Jesus said.

Even though Paul had "preached to others" (1 Cor. 9:27), he knew that he had to persevere to the end; otherwise, he might become a "castaway." This word meant rejected, disqualified, or not standing the test.

Paul is not only a Christian preacher, he is also one who plays in the game. That is, he

not only preached the Gospel but he also lived by the Gospel's rules. True Christians, while confident of God's sovereign grace, are nevertheless conscious of their own battle against sin" (Barker and Kohlenberger).

Their Examples (1 Corinthians 10:1-5)

6. How was Israel "baptized unto Moses" (1 Corinthians 10:2)? How does this relate to Christian baptism?

Having encouraged faithfulness by using athletic illustrations, Paul now turns to the example of Israel to stress the same point.

Although many of the Corinthians were Gentiles, it was appropriate to refer to the ancient Israelites as "our fathers" (v. 1). There is a continuity between the Old Testament saints and New Testament believers. Indeed, those who trust in Christ are "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29).

After the ten plagues were visited on Egypt, Moses led the Israelites out of bondage and on their journey toward the Promised Land. "The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them

light; to go by day and night" (Exodus 13:21).

The first major obstacle on the journey was the Red Sea. At God's command, Moses lifted his rod, the sea parted, and the people passed through on dry land.

"The waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left" (Exod. 14:22).

That the people of Israel were "baptized unto Moses" (1 Cor. 10:2) simply means that they submitted themselves to

the authority and leadership of Moses. Similarly, those who trust in Christ submit to His authority by being obedient followers of Christ (Matthew 28:18-20). As the Hebrews were "baptized unto Moses" under the old covenant (1 Cor. 10:2), so those rescued from spiritual bondage under the new covenant are "baptized into Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Christian baptism portrays what the blood of Christ performs (Romans 6:3-4).

7. Who was the "spiritual

Rock" (v. 4) that accompanied Israel in the wilderness?

Once they passed through the Red Sea, the Hebrews found themselves in the wilderness. During their long and difficult journey, they relied on God to provide them with both food and drink. While God sustained them physically, they were also being spiritually nourished.

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Q: You teach that God loves some and hates others. I can't conceive of God hating anyone. What are you going to do about John 3:16?

A: In John 3:16, when my Lord used the word "world", He was not speaking of everyone "headcount". The word "world" is used in the Bible nearly 300 times. The word "world" does not always have the same meaning. (e.g. In Jn. 17:9: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world." To the natural mind, or natural man, these Scriptures contradict each other. But there are no contradictions in God's Word. The word "world" in Jn. 3:16 means the elect only. The word "world" in Jn. 17:9 means the non-elect. In Rom. 9:13: "As it is written, Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated."

Q: But my Bible teacher said the reference is to nations in Rom. 9:13.

A: Individuals make up nations. Read your Bible and see for yourself that God said this of the two children before they were born. (Rom. 9:11)

Q: Why are you always judging folks in your teaching?

A: The word "judge" and two other related words are used nearly 300 times in your Bible. The word "judge", like the word "world", does not always have the same meaning. (e.g. "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." (1 Cor. 2:15) The words "judgeth" and "judged" in this Scripture means to understand or discern. When God's servant sets forth the truth as it is in Christ, the natural man feels condemned and always accuses the Lord's servant of judging because the natural man is blinded by the god of this world and stands before God unforgiven.

Q: You say you are right, and Dr. So and So says he is right. I don't know whom to believe.

A. Ask the Lord to open your heart. (Lk. 16:14)

Q: Do you believe the Word literally?

A. Yes. And you will, too, before you are ever saved, if you ever are to be saved.

Civil rights legend dies at age 83

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA—The Rev. Joseph Boone, a well-known civil rights leader, died on Saturday, his daughter said. He was 83.

Andrea Boone confirmed that her father died from complications with diabetes in his home in Atlanta.

Boone was inducted into the International Civil Rights Walk of Fame at the Martin Luther King National Historic site where his footprints were imprinted in January this year. He was appointed by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. as chief negotiator for Operation Breadbasket, the economic development area of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

With a network of SCLC branches in over 30 cities across the country, he was responsible for coordinating the efforts of more than 200 ministers.

But perhaps some of his best work came while he was director of the P.J. Woods Center for the Blind and Elderly, where he established a drug therapy community, which consisted of three 24-hour residential facilities within the center.

Known as the "picketing preacher," Boone lived by the motto, "Find something worth dying for as well as worth living and die for it daily."

"He was my hero," Andrea Boone said. "He taught me how to live unconditionally. He never put things ahead of the family."

Boone is survived by his former wife Alethea Williams Boone; another daughter Jolaunda Boone Campbell; two grandchildren; brother John O. Boone and sister Lois Montgomery, who are all of Atlanta.

Boone will be buried at the Jackson Memorial Baptist Church on July 22.

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