

DAY 1 YOU CAN'T DO THIS ALONE

People tend to put high value on independence, being the individual best at something. As humans, we think it's "me against the world." Some people think asking for help is a sign of weakness, when rallying together and working as a team is the perfect way to become the strongest we can be.

The Olympics were just broadcast around the world and every country cheered for their athletes as they competed against the best of the best. At first glance, it appears that the Olympic Games reinforce this idea of "me against the world." Athletes step up to the mat, the starting line or diving board and perform amazing feats all on their own. But when we take a closer look, we can see that there is much more to the story.



All of the Olympic athletes had coaches to train them, teammates to encourage them and families to support them throughout their journey to the Olympics. No doubt the Olympic athletes have put in many hundreds of hours of work to become as accomplished as they are. However, it is also easy to guess that most, if not all, of them would say they had strong support networks around them to be able to accomplish their goals.

Researcher Tim Rees asked nearly 200 elite golfers if they had support from family and friends cheering them on at tournaments and then studied their performance. Rees found that during difficult matches, the players with support from family and friends improved their golf score. The players without family and friends to cheer them on played much worse.

All of this goes to show that God made us to work together. We are not meant to live our lives “me against the world.” We are built to build each other up, to cheer each other on and support each other at all times.

Proverbs 27:17 says, “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”

PRAYER PROMPTS:

- Ask God to help your family support each other well
- Ask God to help you see other people around you that may need extra support
- Thank God for the people in your life that support you

I GOT QUESTIONS:

- Discuss with your family what you think this Proverbs 27:17 means.
- What do you think the danger of living like it’s “me against the world” would be?
- Why is it better to live in community with each other?
- Why did God make us to work and live together instead of just making us to live alone and by ourselves?



FAMILY OLYMPICS: HURDLES WITH A TWIST

Materials:

- Broomsticks, mop handles, cushions, chairs, etc. (anything to make a “hurdle” out of)
- Tea-towel

Set-up a ‘hurdle’ course with all the random items you found lying around the house. Then blindfold 1 family member and make them complete the course without knocking any of the hurdles over. Give everyone a go and see who can knock over the least amount of hurdles.

Once everyone had a turn by themselves, blindfold 1 family member and have another family member lead them through the hurdle course.



COOL DOWN:

- Was it easier to go through the course with someone helping you?
- What does this activity teach you about the importance of family and supporting each other?

REMEMBER:

Remember the words of Proverbs 27:17
“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” Jesus didn’t make us to be the best on our own, He made us to be the best when we work together. Next time you get stuck thinking it’s you against the world, think of the people in your family, think of your close friends and think of how much better life is when you spend it with your favourite people instead of all by yourself.

DAY 2

WE ALL START SOMEWHERE

Coming out of Olympic season, the whole world has just spent the last couple of weeks watching amazing athletes perform.

Who do you think the greatest athlete in the world is? Or maybe you're not into sports, who do you think the best singer or painter or actor is? Take some time and share with your family members who some of your favourite people in these categories are. No doubt you'll have some differing perspectives.

Have you ever dreamed of being the greatest at something?

Have you ever wanted to be someone famous? An actor? A sports star? An artist? How would you feel if someone in your family gathered everyone together and said, "Hey everyone! I have just decided that I am the most important person in this family, in the world actually, and from now on you all have to do what I want to do always and forever."

You'd probably laugh in disbelief at first and then tell them to settle down, because you know how imperfect they really are. You've seen every person in your family go through good days and bad days. Or maybe you'd feel angry because by making their big claim they would also be saying that you're less important than them. Maybe you'd think that person was being selfish and prideful.

While it is unlikely that someone in your family is going to get up and proclaim they are the best in the world and demand everything be done their way, in life we all get caught up being selfish in some way or another. Even Jesus' disciples fought and argued with each other about who was the greatest. (See Matthew 18:1-5; Matthew 20:17-28).

What do you think Jesus did when He heard about the disciple's arguing?

Jesus took the opportunity to teach the disciples a very important lesson (a lesson that is important for us to learn too). Jesus taught the disciples that greatness doesn't come from having the most money or the best talent or being the most popular. A great person is humble and serves others selflessly, just like Jesus.

Sometimes it's hard to be humble and serve other people selflessly because as humans we seem to always want the best for ourselves (think about it, do you really want to give your siblings or your mum or dad the biggest slice of cake?) As humans we like to be in charge and win every argument, we like to be seen as important and the one that is picked first. Often when someone else gets picked instead of us, we get annoyed or jealous. Jesus tells us that as Christians, we are to follow His example. Jesus always served others selflessly and put other peoples needs above His own. Jesus died on the cross for every one of us so that we can have the opportunity to live forever with Him in Heaven.



While we live on earth, Jesus wants us to selflessly serve others and share Jesus with people who do not know Him. When we go to school or into our communities, it's super important for us to not be selfish and put others first so people can see the love of Jesus in our lives. But it is just as important for us to practice not being selfish at home, and learning to love our family members with humility and selflessness.

Being the best Olympic athlete does not come without dedication and practice every single day. Just like being humble and not selfish comes easily to all of us as humans. The more we practice humility and serving others, the more we will become like Jesus.

PRAYER PROMPTS:

- Ask God to help you serve your family humbly and selflessly
- Ask God to help you serve others in your community with humility
- Ask God to give you courage to share about Jesus with others
- Thank God for your family and friends

I GOT QUESTIONS:

- Do you struggle with being selfish sometimes?
- Read and discuss Matthew 18:1-5; Matthew 20:17-28
- Why do you think it is important to live humbly and selflessly?
- How can we show Jesus to others, in our family and outside our family?



FAMILY OLYMPICS: ALPHABET JUMBLE RELAY

Materials:

- Alphabet written in order on a page
- Piece of paper and pen to keep score

Split your family into two equal teams (if there is one person left over they become the judge, if there are no left over people, parents are allowed to use their judgement when required).

Line up in two straight lines each team facing each other. Each person in Team 1 and Team 2 will take turns saying a letter of the alphabet, back and fourth, until they get through the whole alphabet. Have the judge keep an eye out for any mistakes. If a team member of either team messes up the order of the alphabet, that team gets 1 point. (If there is no judge assign a person on each team to write a point down each time their team messes up) Most likely neither of the teams will mess up the alphabet order until the second round twist.

For the second round, the teams have to say the alphabet backwards to each other. This round will definitely have some mistakes or trip ups. Give the judge the alphabet written on a piece of paper to check the order of the letters being said.

The aim is to have the least amount of points by the end of the game.

COOL DOWN:

- (To the winning team)
Was it easy to feel a bit proud when your team won?
- (To the winning team)
Did it feel like you were the better family members for a moment?
- (To the losing team) How did it feel to not win?
- (To the losing team)
Would you prefer to have won? Why/why not?
- (To everyone) Does it really matter who wins or loses because you are all family?
- (To everyone) What would it be like if there were no teams and you all worked together to try and figure out the order of the alphabet backwards?

REMEMBER:

It's easy to get caught up in our own desire to win and be the best. Let's remember Jesus' example of humility and service, when we help each other out is when we achieve the best win.



DAY 3

FAILURE HAPPENS

The Olympics teach us many things. They teach us what people are capable of when they put their mind to something. The opening ceremonies teach us a small bit about all the different countries and cultures that are involved. They teach us that hard work often pays off... but sometimes it doesn't. The Olympics teach us that even the best athletes don't always win. An amazing gymnast can win a gold medal one day and then stumble or fall the next and not even gain a place. The quickest runner in the world from the last Olympics can easily be overtaken by another competitor the next Olympics.

The point is that, no matter how good you are, nobody wins every time. When we don't do as well at something as we think we might, it's easy to feel like we've completely failed.

This can make us feel like we never want to attempt that thing again. Unfortunately, in life, no matter how hard we try there will come times that we feel like we've failed. Failure or sometimes not achieving the best result, is just a fact of life.

Psalm 73:26 says, "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

Question: What do you think this verse means?

This verse doesn't promise that we will always succeed in the way we hope every time. In fact, it says that there may be times that we don't win or times that we think we've failed. However, in these times of feeling like we've failed at something, our hope in God will give us strength. Jesus always cheers us on, no matter what. When we feel like we have failed at something, God wants us to know that He is there to pick us up and help us move forward. God cares about us so much and He wants us to know that even if we fall or fail, we are still amazing and loved by Him.

Failure happens in life, but failure is only bad if we let it stop us in our tracks instead of letting it teach us something. God is so powerful and He has a way of helping us learn something good from the tough times we go through. Next time you're in a tough spot, take some time to talk to God and ask Him to help you pick yourself up and try again next time. The best Olympians don't just give up because they didn't win a medal, they go home and train again for the next Olympics. They let their failure push them to try again next time.



PRAYER PROMPTS:

- Ask God to help you see that even if you fail you are still amazing
- Ask God to help you learn something from failing and to have the courage to try again next time
- Thank God that there are other people around you that you can talk to when you're feeling upset or like you've failed

I GOT QUESTIONS:

- Have you ever felt like you failed at something? If yes, how did this make you feel?
- What are some ways you can lean on Jesus in tough times?
- Who are some other people you can go to when you're feeling upset or like you've failed?



FAMILY OLYMPICS: BALANCE PRACTICE

Materials:

- Materials:
- Light weighted stick of some kind

Have all family members stand up in a line (can be one straight line or a line facing each other, depending on the length of your stick) and hold out their pointer fingers.

Balance the stick on top of everyone's pointer fingers.

Then, as a team, everyone has to work together to lower the stick to the ground. The catch is that everyone has to move together, no one's finger can lose contact with the stick. If someone's finger stops touching the stick, the family has to stand back up and try the activity again until everyone is able to get the stick to the floor together.

COOL DOWN:

- How difficult was it to balance the stick and get it on the floor without anyone losing contact with the stick?
- Did you have to try a few times to get it to work?
- Do you think the activity was more difficult because everyone is a different height?
- What would make the activity easier?

REMEMBER:

Sometimes in life we have to perform tasks that are hard, whether that be something we are choosing to do like running in a race or doing homework that just doesn't make sense.

Whatever the task is, we will face hard things. Sometimes it takes a bit of trial and error to get the job done. When something doesn't work the first time, we might feel like we've failed. But failure is only bad if we let it stop us in our tracks, instead of pushing us to try again next time.

Remember the words of Psalm 73:26
God promises to give us strength
always, even when we feel weak.

DID YOU KNOW?

The first Olympic Games took place in 776BC. The original Olympics competition lasted for up to six months, and included games like wrestling, boxing, long jump, javelin, discus and chariot racing.

DAY 4

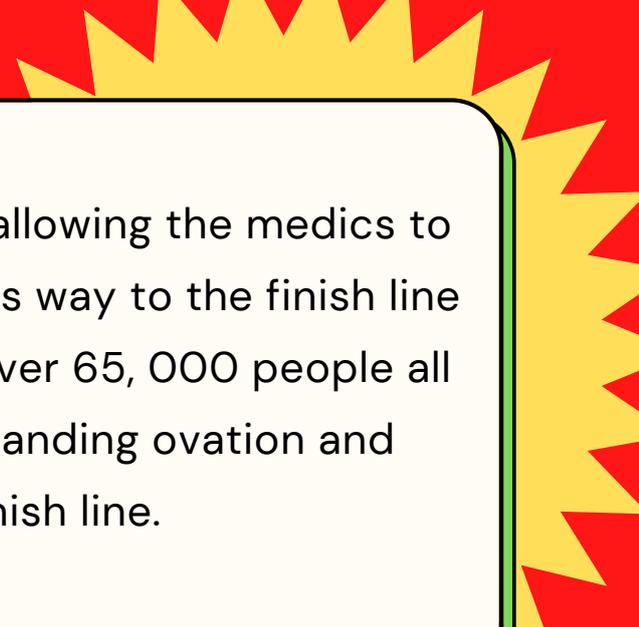
WINNING ISN'T EVERYTHING

The Olympics are an exciting time. For athletes it's a chance to compete for a medal, for spectators it's a chance to cheer for their countries' athletes and celebrate the wins when they come.

Winning is exciting. Whether you have won the family games night or won an Olympic medal, everyone loves to win. But we need to remember that winning isn't everything. One of the most celebrated and well known Olympic athletes never even won a medal. Crazy, huh?! People don't often remember the Olympians who won gold medals from one Olympic Games to the next, so why is someone who never even won a medal one of the most well known athletes? It's because of this athlete's determination.



Derek Redmond was a British sprinter who competed in the 1992 Olympic Games. Derek lined up with all the other athletes, readied himself into his starting position and took off racing with all the other athletes. He started well and was running well until midway through his semifinal event, Derek tore his hamstring and fell to the ground in terrible pain. It's what Derek did next that has made him quite memorable around the world.



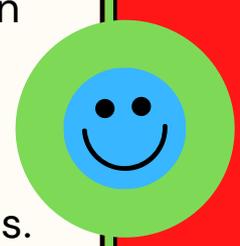
Rather than giving up right there and allowing the medics to carry him off the field, Derek limped his way to the finish line supported by his dad. The crowd of over 65, 000 people all rose to their feet and gave him a standing ovation and cheered him onto the finish line.

No doubt Derek was disappointed that he couldn't finish the race the way he wanted. But what Derek was showing the world was that winning isn't everything. We all stumble and fall and need to accept help from others. With his injury, Derek could not have gotten to the finish line without help from his dad. Just like we can't get through life on our own.

Life is hard, problems arise and hard times come along. That's why Jesus created us to live and work together. We don't need to be the best at everything, we don't need to win every race we enter. As humans, we need to rally together and help each other out. When we work together, we win together.

Winning by ourselves isn't everything, winning together is.

How can you help others win? Is there someone at school that is lonely? Does your sibling need help learning to ride their bike or tie their shoes? Do your parents need help tidying up the house or weeding the garden? How can you rally together with your family so you can win together?



PRAYER PROMPTS:

- Ask God to help you see people that may need an extra helping hand
- Ask God to help you have the courage to ask for help when you need it, instead of trying to do it all by yourself
- Thank God that you have people in your family to rely on

I GOT QUESTIONS:

- What did you learn from the story of Derek Redmond?
- Do you think winning by yourself is better than winning together?
- What are some ways you can help others win this week?



FAMILY OLYMPICS: HUMAN KNOT

Materials:

- Family members

Have everyone in your family stand in a circle. Then have everyone reach out and grab someone's hand opposite them, then with their other hand, have everyone grab a different hand opposite to them. Everyone will be all twisted up together. Work together to undo the human knot you just created.

COOL DOWN:

- Was it tricky to get the knot undone?
- Did you family members have to work together to get untangled?
- What would happen if no one listened to each other and just tried to untangle themselves without caring about what anyone else needed?



REMEMBER:

Just like the human knot you created was a bit tricky to get sorted, sometimes life is a bit tricky to get sorted too. When we try and sort everything out all by ourselves, it can actually make things worse. Often we need to ask for help, whether that's with our homework or with bigger things like friend problems. God made us to win together. Sure, it's nice to achieve something and win something by ourselves after lots of hard work and it definitely isn't bad to win at things. It's just important to remember that winning and being the very best isn't everything. Helping and caring for our friends and families and sharing Jesus with people who don't know Him sets us up for the best kind of win!

DID YOU KNOW?

The Olympic rings were designed in 1913. The five colours (along with the white backdrop) reflect colours found on the flags of all participating nations, so everyone is represented. The overlaps also represent international cooperation, and the coming together of athletes from all over the world.

DAY 5

GIVE IT YOUR ALL

1 Corinthians 9:24 says, "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."

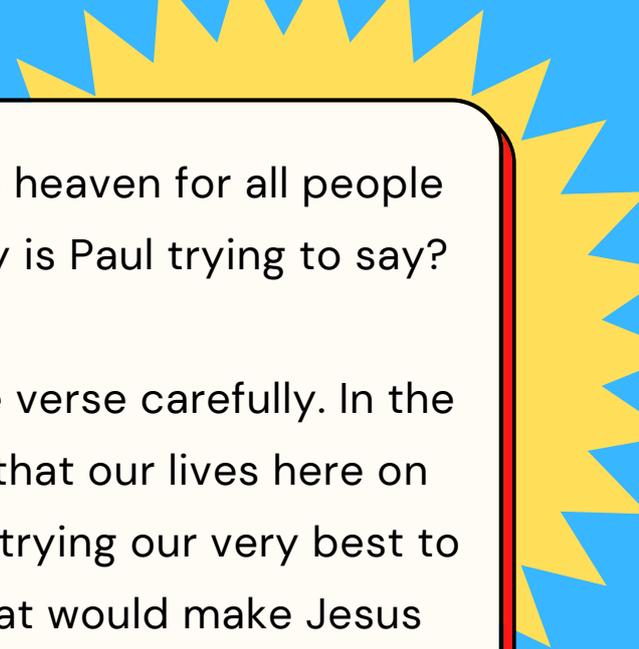
Does this verse confuse a little bit? Especially when spoke yesterday about how winning isn't everything? Well let's unpack it a little bit here.

This verse was written by a man named Paul to people who lived in a place called Corinth. Paul is using something called a metaphor to help the people understand what he is saying.

You see, the people of Corinth loved the Olympic Games, they were very competitive people. Running races were a very common event in the Olympic Games in these times, as they still are today. So Paul was using a running metaphor to help people understand what it is like to live as a Christian. As Christians, we all want to win the prize of living in heaven with Jesus one day and how do we win that prize? While living on this earth we do our very best to live our lives like Jesus would.

In this verse is Paul actually saying that only one person will win the prize of living in heaven with Jesus? Definitely not!





The Bible says there is lots of room in heaven for all people who want to be there. So what exactly is Paul trying to say?

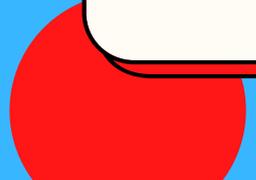


Well, that's where we have to read the verse carefully. In the first part of the verse, Paul is saying that our lives here on earth are kind of like a race, we are all trying our very best to live the best that we can in a way that would make Jesus proud. And what happens to the best runner in a race? They get the prize.

But the second part of the verse is very important. Paul says to "run in such a way as to get the prize." Paul isn't saying that we should be consumed with "winning" but we should run the race of our lives with a winning mindset. If we wake up every day with Jesus on our mind and think, "today I am going to live like Jesus as best as I can, I want to be on the winning team with Jesus" then you're already running in such a way as to get the prize.



Is Paul saying that if we stumble sometimes and mess up then we're out of the race and miss out on the prize of heaven? Of course not! Over the last couple of days we've spoken about Olympic athletes and how even they have their off days and don't perform to their very best abilities. What makes Olympic athletes great is that even though they have their off days, they come back and try again the next day.



We are allowed to have our off days, we are allowed to stumble and make mistakes. What matters is that our minds are set to running this race of life the best we can. We are running with the intention of winning the prize of heaven. If heaven is our goal, then we will automatically focus the race that is our lives in that direction.

PRAYER PROMPTS:

- Ask God to help you live every day for Him
- Thank God that even when you stumble and fall that He is there to pick you up, cheer you on and love you as you try again

I GOT QUESTIONS:

- What did you think 1 Corinthians 9:24 meant when you first read it?
- Do you think it is easy to misinterpret the verse to think it means that winning is everything?
- Do you have to live a perfect life to win the prize of heaven? (No, we just have to live for Jesus as best we can, humans aren't perfect.)

DID YOU KNOW?

From 1921-1948, artists participated in the Olympics too. Painters, sculptors, architects, writers, and musicians all took part! They competed for medals by creating works of art, that often celebrated the sporting successes going on at the same time.



FAMILY OLYMPICS: HUMAN KNOT

Materials:

- Empty Tissue Box
- At least 3 Ping pong balls (or bottle caps or some other relatively light and small things)
- Rope (or scarf, stockings, etc. – something to tie the tissue box around waist)

Put two holes in either end of the tissue box and thread the rope through. Put the 3 (or more) ping pong balls (or substitute items) into the empty tissue box and tie it around the players waist. Make sure the tissue box is sitting towards the players lower back. Then have the player wiggle around to try and get as many ping pong balls out of the tissue box as they can in 1 minute.

There are no winners, just reinforcing the thought of giving it your all and participating in the race with a winning mindset.

COOL DOWN:

- Would this game have worked if you just stood there and did nothing at all?
- How do you think this game relates to today's devotional?

REMEMBER:

It is important to be part of the race and give it your all. The way you run the race that is your life might look different to how someone else run's the race of their life. But what we need to remember is that we are running with the intention of winning the prize of heaven. God is there to pick us up if we stumble and fall. We're allowed to have off days or days that don't go quite right. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter if we are the most popular or the most talented. What matters is that we try our very best to live like Jesus with humility and love.

