

How to Be a Winner 5

Sermon #1020

Study by W. D. Frazee—December 4, 1981

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible" 1 Corinthians 9:24,25.

A winner is a temperate man, and a temperate man means one who is a total abstainer from that which is hurtful, and a moderate use in that which is good. This is one of the great lessons we have to learn. Most of us think of temperance in terms of abstinence. There is nothing wrong with that. But we need to learn moderation as well as abstinence. We need to learn temperance in all things.

"Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" Philippians 4:4-5.

It is interesting the two thoughts that are put together. The Lord is at hand. Then we had better work night and day, hadn't we? There isn't enough time to sleep because the coming of the Lord is so near, is there?

No. It is God that must finish the work in our own hearts and in the world. And when both are accomplished He is going to come. But neither of those goals is to lead us to be intemperate. "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."

We are dealing with righteousness by faith. Faith is believing God. And we are confident that which we have committed unto Him He will keep against that day. We are confident that He which has done a good work in us will finish it unto the day of Jesus Christ. I am thankful that God has pledged to finish the work He has started in our lives.

One of the great reasons that God wants us to learn temperance is so we will have time for everything we need to do. There is a time for everything. We are told that if every moment is valued and rightly employed, we will have time for everything we need to do for ourselves and for the world. That is a wonderful promise. But the only way we will have time to do everything is not to try to do everything at once.

There is a time to eat. I am thankful that God has given us not only food to eat, but time to eat it. There are multitudes in America today that are so busy trying

to make money that they have scarcely any time to eat. But to sit down at a breakfast table and enjoy good food is a great privilege.

There is a time to quit eating and go to work. There is a time to say, Thank you, no more. That is temperance. There is a time to work and a time to quit working.

I was telling you about the farmer who was telling his son, John to take it easy with the horses and telling his son, James to push the horses. It is interestingly enough when we talk about overwork that there are some people who are just enjoying any warning about overwork. They are lazy. The only way to get enough work done in the time allotted is to do our best while we are working. So the wise man says:

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" Ecclesiastes 9:10.

Let us not try to mix too many things at once. When we are on the job let's be on the job. If it is time to be at work at eight o'clock let's be there at eight o'clock. But there is a time to stop working and a time to rest. There is a time to quit studying and go to bed. There is a time to sleep. But usually if we are following the Lord's plan we are still enjoying what we are doing when we stop.

The Lord's messenger testified that she had just as good an appetite when she got up from the table as when she sat down. It is a wonderful thing to enjoy every mouthful of food and still have a good appetite when we stop. The same when we study. We shouldn't study until we get so exhausted that we can barely keep our eyes open. Work, study, rest, sleep, prayer, and missionary endeavor are all to be balanced in the life. And all this is a part of righteousness by faith.

You say, How is that righteousness by faith? It looks to me like works.

Faith is so good it works. Faith works by love. Faith and works are not to be separated in the Christian life. In fact, if faith is dead, works is dead.

Faith is to follow Jesus and believe what He says. Faith will enjoy working with God. While it is true that God has given us enough time to do all we need to do, He has not arranged that we shall have time for everything we want to do.

The only way we can have more time to read is to take less time with something else. The only way we can have more time for missionary work is to take less time with something else. The only way we can get more time to sleep is to have less time for something else. God has promised wisdom.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" James 1:5.

Do you believe that? If you believe it you will be happy that you have time enough. That means in practical life every day and every hour take up the next thing you believe that God wants you to do, and leave with Him the many things you don't get done. The successful winner is not the one who at the close of every day can boast, I got done everything I planned to. Often our plans fail that God's plans for us may succeed. Sometimes by faith alone we believe that God is getting something done. Otherwise we will get frustrated. We will run from place to place and job to job and experience to experience, vainly seeking the satisfaction of getting everything done we think of. That will never happen. In fact, during eternity we are going to see new heights to surmount, new achievements ahead.

Won't that be frustrating? Not to the man who learns the lesson we are studying. He rejoices that there is something more ahead. Another book to read, another friend to meet. Let us be careful lest we encourage in ourselves or others the vain desire to do everything everybody else is doing, visit every place everybody else is visiting, see everything that everybody else is seeing. Nobody does it, but some people get tired trying. Let it be your secret joy in shutting yourself in with Jesus and doing the work He gave you to do. Then you can rejoice.

Sometimes young people can't decide whether they are going to be a teacher or a medical worker or a Bible worker or a cook or a farmer, or something else. Let God plan your life. Success as men write it is that somewhere a boy or girl gets the idea what they are going to be, and bends everything to that goal. That is the winner in the world's stories. But God got Joseph to the throne of Egypt by putting him in the dungeon. He got Moses to be the leader of Israel by putting him in the shepherd's experience for forty years. God has many ways of preparing us for the work that He wants us to do. And He never intended that we should seek to reach our goal of what we are to do in life. Let God plan for us. Often our plans fail that God's plans for us may succeed.

There is only one thing I want. That is to do the work I was born for. God's promise will accomplish that in my life if I will let Him, and I propose to do it.

I remember an expression that Elder Tindall, the man who trained me in the ministry, had, and I like to repeat it. He said, "I covet no man's place or position."

I can echo that. There is no other person's job that I want. I want to do a good job of what God has given me to do. I want to fill the little place that God has given to me. And the beautiful thing when we do this is that there is a satisfaction that comes into the heart that makes us happy to see others succeeding in their lines. Winning in the Christian life is not a matter of defeating any other human being. It is a matter of accomplishing the work that God has given us to do.

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: Rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead

bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power" Colossians 2:6-10.

As we receive Jesus we walk by faith. As we accept Jesus we are to keep accepting Him moment by moment. And He will each day do for us all He did for us when we first came to Him.

Notice that in Jesus everything in the Godhead dwells. He is infinitely wise, infinitely powerful, and He has infinite love. Ye are complete in Him.

I warned about the tendency of looking to ourselves. We are to look where? To Jesus. Our hearts are to reach out to Him and to others. We are to forget self in contemplating Jesus. We are to forget self in our burden for souls. We are even to leave our own salvation in the hands of Jesus. We are not to worry about whether we are going to be saved or not. That is in Jesus hands.

I put it in a crude way. If Jesus doesn't want me to be there, I don't want to be there anyway. That is a crude way of putting it. But He has exhibited the evidence that He would rather die than see me lost. He is a lot more interested in my salvation than I am, and He can do a lot better job than I can. He knows the way. I don't. He has the power to get me there. I don't have any. My wisdom and strength are all in Him. Therefore my hope lies not in studying myself, but in studying Him. Not in looking at myself, but at looking at Him.

What does the Father see when He looks at me? He sees Jesus. Wouldn't it be a good thing for me to look just where the Father looks. When you start to look at yourself you will say, What does the Father think of me? He tells us what He thinks. Ye are complete in Him.

Am I complete? That's what He says. If I get out of Christ I get a zero. But in Him I am complete. I had better say in Him, hadn't I?

How do I stay in Him? As I received Him, so I walk in Him. He is all the while holding our His arms inviting me to come. "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." I read:

"Jesus stands in the holy of holies, now to appear in the presence of God for us. There He ceases not to present His people moment by moment complete in Himself"
Faith and Works, page 107.

Before the throne my Savior stands,
My name is written on His hands.

I am complete this moment in Him. That is the only completeness I have. It is the only completeness I had yesterday, and it is the only completeness I will have next week. And no matter if I burn the midnight oil and try to learn some more, or work some more, no matter what I do I cannot get complete in myself. My completeness is in Him.

Perfection through our own good works we can never attain. When is never? I hear people arguing about sinless perfection. Why not leave that with Jesus? You and I have never yet experienced all God wants us to experience. Don't misunderstand me. I encourage us to learn all we can. But there is a lot more to learn when we get there.

"Perfection through our own good works we can never attain. The soul who sees Jesus by faith repudiates his own righteousness. He sees himself as incomplete. His repentance is insufficient" *Ibid*.

The answer is not to hang on in agony until we think we have repented enough. The answer is Jesus, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." "Perfection through our own good works we can never attain. The soul who sees Jesus by faith repudiates his own righteousness. He sees himself as incomplete, his repentance insufficient, his strongest faith but feebleness, his most costly sacrifice as meager, and he sinks in humility at the foot of the cross. But a voice speaks to him from the oracles of God's word. In amazement he hears the message, 'Ye are complete in Him.' Now all is at rest in the soul. No longer must he strive to find some worthiness in himself, some meritorious deed by which to gain the favor of God. You are to find your completeness by beholding the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." *Ibid*.

Oh, let us rejoice in our completeness in Christ. It is all ours if we choose Him.

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