

## Heavenly Goals Randy Reynolds

Remember that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize. You also must run in such a way that you will win. 1 Corinthians 9:24 What does it mean to be goal-oriented as a Christian? How do we aspire to the things of God? I can remember my first goals as a young boy. In junior high our gymnastics coach would take the kids to the LA City High School Championship. I was in awe and set my sites for making it to the championship when I got in high school. I worked hard and took risks to learn new tricks on the events I competed in. Pretty soon I was making a mark and accomplishing feats I never thought that I would accomplish. However as I aspired to greatness in gymnastics in the little world that I lived in, there were so many who were much more accomplished than myself, but the issue for me was to keep my eye on the goal and not on others. I had many failures and discouragements; I came off the high bar and flew past the mats cracking my head on the gym floor and got a concussion, broke my arm and was in a cast for weeks. I achieved strength as a ring man until I, in doing rolls to crosses in

an exhibition with the Olympic team, ruined my elbow. Had I lost all my chances to achieve my goal in making it to the city finals?

Paul in his letter to the Corinthians uses athletics as his model for faith and knows and understands that faith has strong under-girdings of discipline, focus, and the ability to suffer towards the goal. When I was in junior college one of the best gymnasts in the L.A. area came off the high bar and broke his neck. It looked like he was done, but within a year he was back and then made the Olympic team. With all my high school injuries I felt I was not going to accomplish my goals, I certainly did not have the courage, perseverance, and toughness of some of the champions I admired. In my senior year I missed my routine and did not qualify for the city championship, but was voted the best or most valuable gymnast on my team. I was disappointed but doors opened. I achieved a position on my junior college team that lead me to athletic scholarships all over the country. As I committed my life to Christ I thought the goal He would have for me was to become a national champion on my event, at the U of A. I ended up with more injuries; however, faith in the Kingdom and the goals of His Kingdom began to be what I was aspiring to. I thought maybe that if I was godly my athletic goals would be blessed. Silly wabbit, the Kingdom is not "about you" it is about Jesus. As my focus went to Jesus, "the things of earth were becoming strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace." What I began to realize is I was on the U of A gymnastic team to share my faith and evangelize and disciple others, not just to win athletic awards. That the exhortation of this passage was in the context of Paul's call to evangelize the world and that is a part of the goals of God's kingdom. My goals of athletic glory were beginning to fade as Jesus became more important in my life. I had the privilege of leading others on the team to Christ and starting a Bible study that eventually became the Vineyard Christian Community.

Question: Are you integrating the goals of His kingdom into your life, through focus, discipline and a relationship with Jesus?

Prayer: LORD, allow me to focus on you that I might run my race to please you and accomplish what You have called me to in my life?