

LIFE LESSONS FROM THE OLYMPICS

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 1 August 1, 2021

“Training for the Games”



OPENING PRAYER

Lord, when we are disciplined—when we pray, read the Bible, and seek your will with all our heart, mind and soul, we find joy, peace, love and laughter, just as you intend. Free us from the mistaken belief that we have to be dull, joyless and stern to be good Christians. Thank you for all you do for us and for all you mean to our lives. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 (NIV)

²⁴Do 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. ²⁵Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

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INTRODUCTION

Athletes need to train in order to run faster, jump higher and be stronger. As followers of Jesus we must train ourselves spiritually in order to run faster, jump higher and be stronger. The early Methodists had three goals in practicing their faith - do no harm, do good, and stay in love with God. John Wesley said we must attend to the ordinances of God (worship, communion, studying scripture, prayer and meeting with other Christians.) if we are to stay in love with God. When we are not praying, going to worship, gathering in small groups, our spiritual life diminishes.

QUESTIONS

1. What was your favorite moment in this year's Olympics?
2. What are things in your life that hinder your spiritual growth?
3. Which of the "Ordinances of God" help you grow the most in your faith (worship, communion, prayer, small group gatherings, studying scripture)?
4. What is one thing in your life that you would like to be remembered for?
5. Jesse Owens won 4 gold medals competing for the United States during the 1936 Olympics in Germany, while Adolf Hitler looked on. When asked about Hitler not shaking his hand Jesse Owens replied "Hitler didn't snub me – it was our president (Franklin Roosevelt) who snubbed me. The president didn't even send me a telegram." When Jesse Owens returned to the U.S. after the Olympics he still had to ride in the back of the bus. There was a reception for Jesse Owens at the top of the Waldorf Astoria and they made him ride in a freight elevator to his own reception. What are your thoughts on this?

FINAL APPLICATION

This week, we focus on emulating the life of Christ. One of the things he regularly did was to find solitude, using the time to simply be with and speak to his Heavenly Father. Find time to be alone to pray and meditate, focusing on your relationship with God and upon the direction of your life. Next week, tell the group what you experienced by doing this.