



## Are Christians Competing for Gold?

**1 Corinthians 9:24:** (NASB) *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.*

Every fourth summer for two plus weeks we have the opportunity to watch the Olympic games. It is a chance to witness excellence in motion, competition at its peak and sportsmanship on a worldwide scale. We get to witness the world's best athletes as they put the fruits of their life focus on display in order to be crowned the best of best of the best. Does the life of a Christian mirror any of this? Are we called to live the same kind of discipline and intensity that an Olympic athlete lives? Stay with us as we celebrate the very best of the human form and we investigate the very highest of human aspiration!

### Seeking the purpose of Christ

**Where would one look to find the calling to follow Christ?**

**1 Corinthians 1:26-31:** (NASB) <sup>26</sup>For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; <sup>27</sup>but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, <sup>28</sup>and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, <sup>29</sup>so that no man may boast before God. <sup>30</sup>But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, <sup>31</sup>so that, just as it is written, Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.

These aren't the best of the best of humanity! Why wouldn't God call only those who are great? Because it is not about us. It is about honoring God, not our natural ability.

**What is the mindset of one who seeks to follow Christ?**

**Mark 12:28-31:** (NRSV) <sup>28</sup>One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, Which commandment is the first of all? <sup>29</sup>Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; <sup>30</sup>you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. <sup>31</sup>The second is this, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.

These encompass what our lives are supposed to look like. Our basis - our driving force - must be to love the Lord with all our hearts. As Christians, if we just believe in God, aren't we going to coast into heaven? Does an Olympian win a gold medal without any effort? No, of course not.

*Chariots of Fire* is a 1981 British film. It tells the fact-based story of two athletes in the 1924 Olympics: Eric Liddell, a devout Scottish Christian who runs for the glory of God, and Harold Abrahams, a British Jew who runs to overcome prejudice.

 **He made me fast, *Chariots of Fire* (1981)**

- (Eric Liddell talking to his sister about what he sees as his calling) *So where does the power come from to see the race to its end? From within. Jenna, I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast! And when I run, I feel His pleasure...*



Logan Tom is a four-time American female Olympian volleyball player, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012 (silver medalist in 2008, gold medalist in 2012)

It's hard but it's worth it, *Logan Tom, Associated Press*

- *It's not easy, but it's worth it. Sacrifice all depends on what's important to you, and if you're willing to make certain sacrifices in life to get your goal, it's worth it. You have to put things in perspective towards you as a person.*

Our Christianity does not mean we just coast along. It is true that our burdens are eased, but there is work and effort involved. There is something that will cost you, just like it costs the Olympic athlete.

Matthew 11:28-30: (NASB) <sup>28</sup>Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take My yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

How costly is the choice to live the purpose of Christ?

We have no home games, *Logan Tom, Associated Press*

- *You are with the same team seven days a week, 24 hours a day, the same girls. You have no life outside of the sport... We don't have home games. When the season comes for us, usually May to November, we're on the road the entire time. We get maybe two weeks back in the States. We travel for two days on the cheapest ticket to China, get there, shove down some food and go and practice.*

Why would anyone do this? They are drawn to something bigger than themselves. We can be inspired by that kind of dedication.

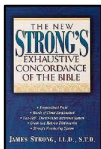
Now a look at Jesus defining Christianity:

John 6:44: (NRSV) *No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day.*

You have to first be drawn.

Jesus here lays out part of the cost:

Luke 14:25-33: (NASB) <sup>25</sup>Now large crowds were going along with him; and he turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup>If anyone comes to me, and does not **hate <3404>** his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my **disciple <3101>**. <sup>27</sup>Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my **disciple <3101>**.



**Hate**: Strong's #3404 *miseo* (mis-eh'-o); by extension, to love less:

**Disciple**: Strong's #3101 *mathetes* (math-ay-tes'); a learner, i.e. pupil:

Jesus is saying that you have to have your life in perspective, where God is first and foremost. He further explains that following him is not merely some confession of his name during an alter call, rather it needs to be a well thought out life changing decision.

<sup>28</sup>For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup>Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, <sup>30</sup>saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish. <sup>31</sup>Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten



*thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup>Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. <sup>33</sup>So then, none of you can be my disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.*

Jesus gives several examples of how we are to "count the costs" of being dedicated to Christ. This parallels an Olympic athlete about to go into training. They have to give over their will and physical talents into the hands of their coach. The coach takes that and gives it back to them, showing them how to use it and develop it to achieve excellence.

The call of Christianity requires everything that we have - complete dedication. This is what our life is all about.



### "This is My Dream," (Verse 1) Kashy Keegan

I have no choice, I'm in too deep.  
My heart was born to follow this dream.  
I can't back down and I won't give in.  
Somehow I'll find that strength deep within.  
The passion I feel inside is too strong to lay down and die  
This is my life, this is my dream  
This is the reason my heart beats  
I'd rather fight each day of my life  
Than give up belief  
'Cause this is my heart, this is my soul  
This is the only love I've known  
My will to try grows weaker with time  
But I won't give in  
No, 'cause this is my dream

### Jesus again lays out the cost, this time in even more difficult terms:

Luke 9:23-26: (NASB) <sup>23</sup>And he was saying to them all, *If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup>For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake, he is the one who will save it. <sup>25</sup>For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? <sup>26</sup>For whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.*

Colossians 1:27: (NASB) *to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

The "hope of glory" is the Olympic gold in a Christian's life.

### How do you actually LIVE the cause of Christ?

#### First, if we are to follow Christ, then we are to really follow Christ!

John 15:12-14: (NASB) <sup>12</sup>This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup>Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup>You are my friends if you do what I command you.

#### IF we follow, then we will get the necessary help to cope with life:

John 14:15-17: (ASV) <sup>15</sup>If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup>And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, <sup>17</sup>even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you.

God's Spirit - His power and influence - will work in your life.



## Having been so instructed and equipped, we now need to run to win:

**1 Corinthians 9:24-25:** (NASB) <sup>24</sup>Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. <sup>25</sup>Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

The Apostle Paul compared the athletic competitions of his day as a picture for the life of a Christian. It is a lifetime of effort but the reward is infinitely better than a wreath or gold medal.

### We do it for pride of our country, Logan Tom, Associated Press

- *It's not a glamour lifestyle. We don't get paid a lot. We do 100% of it for pride of our country. That's one of the wonderful things about it and why it really chokes people up - they sacrifice their life for how many years they play on the team. It's their life.*

## Athletes sacrifice themselves for their higher objective - so should we!

**Romans 12:1-2:** (KJV) <sup>1</sup>I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup>And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We aren't to conform Christianity to the standards of the world. We are not to be conformed to this world. We are to walk away from the world to find our Christianity. We aren't supposed to make it "fit in" to the world around us. It is a higher calling, a different calling, requiring us to step away from the things of the world. It is the sacrificing of our every day, just like an athlete sacrifices their entire life for their cause.

**1 Peter 1:7:** *The trial of your faith is more precious than gold that perishes.*

### Run in God's name, Chariots of Fire (1981)

- *You can please the Lord by peeling a spud if you peel it to perfection - don't compromise. Compromise is the language of the Devil. Run in God's name and let the world stand back in wonder.*
- *I want to compare faith to running in a race. It's hard. It requires concentration of will, energy of soul. You experience elation when the winner breaks the tape. But how long does that last? You go home, maybe your dinner's burning, maybe you've got a job. So who am I to say, "believe, have faith" in the face of life's realities? I would like to give you something more prominent but I can only point the way.*

Eric Liddell returned to missionary work in China after the 1924 Olympics. He worked there until he was killed in 1945. He used the Olympics as a way to point the way toward God.

## Just as an athlete must be well-rounded in his training, so we must be in our spiritual discipline:

**2 Peter 1:3-8:** (NASB) <sup>3</sup>seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. <sup>4</sup>For by these (His glory and excellence) He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, (aptly pictured by GOLD in the Bible) having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. <sup>5</sup>Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, <sup>6</sup>and in your knowledge, self-control,



and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness,<sup>7</sup> and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.<sup>8</sup> For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These qualities should be increasing in our lives. We want to focus on the excellence we are to strive for as Christians. The focus and dedication of an athlete is an apt picture for us to use to overcome!

### Are there tests - qualifying heats - for EVERY Christian?

The New Testament describes our tests in several ways:

James 1:2-8: (NASB) <sup>2</sup>Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,<sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.<sup>4</sup> And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.<sup>5</sup> But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.<sup>6</sup> But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.<sup>7</sup> For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,<sup>8</sup> being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.



What observations do we see here?

- The testing of our faith produces endurance which can complete us.
- Spiritual wisdom must reign supreme. We are to ask for wisdom.
- We are not to doubt as we ask for those things that we lack. God can supply just what we need.

Acts 14:22: (KJV) Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much **tribulation** enter into the kingdom of God.

**Tribulation**: Strongs #2347 pressure (literally or figuratively)

Do we feel pressure with our Christianity? Why not? If our Christianity is supposed to be "outside" the world, then being in the world should create pressure. This is something we should expect. Notice the Apostle Paul uses the collective "we" in the scripture above.

**Temptation**: Strongs #3985 endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline

**Temptation**: Strongs #3986 a putting to proof, by implication, adversity

1 Corinthians 10:13: (KJV) There hath no **temptation** <3986> taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you **to be tempted** <3985> above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

The enticements of the world are very tempting. We must find a way to live *apart* from the world while still living *in* the world.

Matthew 26:41: (KJV) Watch and pray, that ye enter not into **temptation** <3986>: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Acts 20:19: (KJV) Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and **temptations** <3986>, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

**Suffering**: Strongs #3958 to be affected or have been affected, to feel, to undergo



**Suffering:** Strongs #3804 externally - a suffering, misfortune, calamity, evil, affliction.  
Inwardly - an affliction, passion

Luke 24:26: (KJV) Ought not Christ **to have suffered <3958>** these things, and to enter into his glory?

Hebrews 5:8: (KJV) Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he **suffered <3958>**;

Jesus had to also be taught by experience.

Romans 8:16-18: (NRSV) <sup>16</sup>it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup>and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. <sup>18</sup>I consider that the **sufferings <3804>** of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.

The more we open this topic, the more similar the journey of an athlete towards gold pictures the journey of the true follower of Christ towards gold.

### What does it mean to be persecuted?

**Persecution:** Strongs #1377 to pursue (literally or figuratively); by implication, to persecute

Because this word has a wide base of meaning, it is important to pay attention to the context to see what shade of meaning is meant.

John 15:20: (KJV) Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If **they have persecuted <1377>** me, **they will also persecute <1377>** you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

The word can be used in a malicious sense or could literally mean to pursue, to catch up to someone.

Jesus spent a lot of time teaching his followers to prepare for their coming persecution and to prepare for their godly response to it:

Matthew 5:10-16: (NIV) <sup>10</sup>Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>11</sup>Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.



What observations do we see here?

- Persecution because of Jesus means you are on the right track;
- It is cause for happiness;
- It is not new - God's prophets were also persecuted in the same ways.

<sup>13</sup>You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. <sup>14</sup>You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup>Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.



Salt is a preservative and used as a metaphor here. If you lose your true Christianity, you become pretty worthless. If you are the light of the world, it should be a guiding light where everybody can see it. This is very similar to an Olympic athlete, who can only shine in their field after the proper preparations.

**Matthew 5:44:** (KJV) *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

When people persecute you, you pray for them and do good to them. We aren't supposed to make trouble, but trouble may find us because we are different. Receive persecution and don't retaliate!



### "This is My Dream," (Verse 2) Kashy Keegan

I've stood my ground and I've had to fight  
But I won't give in to these fears of mine  
The road may be long but I'll soldier on  
'Cause I know in my heart where my soul belongs  
Don't ever lecture me  
Or tell me who to be

This is my life, this is my dream  
This is the reason my heart beats  
I'd rather fight each day of my life  
Than give up belief  
'Cause this is my heart, this is my soul  
This is the only love I've known  
My will to try grows weaker with time  
But I won't give in  
No, 'cause this is my dream

**True Christianity is very unique - we are called to rise above and to ultimately bless those very people in the future who would persecute us now:**

**1 Peter 2:9-12:** (NRSV) *<sup>9</sup>But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of Him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. <sup>10</sup>Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. <sup>11</sup>Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. <sup>12</sup>Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.*

We are called to be different, to serve, to be unified, and to be spokesmen for God's marvelous light.

### So what does an overcomer look like?

**Isaiah 40:27-31:** (NASB) *<sup>27</sup>Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, My way is hidden from the LORD, and the justice due me escapes the notice of my God? <sup>28</sup>Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. <sup>29</sup>He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. <sup>30</sup>Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, <sup>31</sup>Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength (this phrase used in other Scriptures in the context of "changing your clothes," meaning putting*



on a whole new source of strength.); They will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.



### "This is My Dream," (Verse 3) Kashy Keegan

There were times I tried  
To follow a path  
That was never right for me  
And so I promised myself  
That I would follow my heart  
And if no one else believes

This is my life, this is my dream  
This is the reason my heart beats  
I'd rather fight each day of my life  
Than give up belief  
'Cause this is my heart, this is my soul  
This is the only love I've known  
My will to try grows weaker with time  
But I won't give in  
No, 'cause this is my dream

Christianity is a higher path from anything in this world. It doesn't fit in with the other paths of the world and there is no way to make it easier. Taking the adversity out also takes out the victory. The road of a Christian is not supposed to be wide and broad. Although there is joy, the perspective is that Christ suffered and died. We should be willing to also suffer difficulties.

**An overcomer - just like an athlete - is always looking forward, never assuming anything and always striving:**

**Philippians 3:10-16:** (NRSV) <sup>10</sup>I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup>if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

This is the great Apostle Paul, writing about "somehow" attaining the heavenly resurrection! He didn't take it for granted just because he was an Apostle.

<sup>12</sup>Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

Not only is the Apostle presenting himself as an example, he is pointing to Jesus as *his* example.

<sup>13</sup>Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Just like an athlete, we are to forget the defeat of yesterday and grab hold of today!

<sup>15</sup>Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. <sup>16</sup>Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.

**1 Corinthians 9:24-27:** (NASB) <sup>24</sup>Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. <sup>25</sup>Everyone who competes





*in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. <sup>26</sup>Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; <sup>27</sup>but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.*

The Apostle Paul had a clear focus and disciplined his body so that it would conform to the will of Christ, just like his head and heart. Christianity combines our heart, head and body all being willing to give everything so that we can glorify God in all that we say, do and think.

**Are Christians competing for gold?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!**



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The New Testament tells us much about “counting the cost” of a life devoted to Christ. This is somewhat contrary to a common Christian belief of instantaneous conversion to true Christianity.

### Why count the cost?

**Matthew 20:22-23:** (NRSV) <sup>22</sup>But Jesus answered, You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? They said to him, We are able. <sup>23</sup>He said to them, You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.

Exactly what is this counting of the cost for? Let us suggest 3 categories:

1. Guiding beliefs
2. Sacrifice
3. Spirituality

As we look at these three categories, let us do a “mirror check” to be sure that we are focusing ourselves on what Christianity is requiring of us, rather than what we might “require” of Christianity.

### 1. Guiding beliefs

#### The necessity to grow from “babes” to spiritual maturity:

**1 Corinthians 3:1-9:** (NRSV) <sup>1</sup>And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup>I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, <sup>3</sup>for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? <sup>4</sup>For when one says, “I belong to Paul,” and another, I belong to Apollos, are you not merely human? <sup>5</sup>What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. <sup>6</sup>I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. <sup>7</sup>So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. <sup>8</sup>The one who plants and the



one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. <sup>9</sup>For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

**Hebrews 5:12-14:** (NRSV) <sup>12</sup>For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic elements of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food; <sup>13</sup>for everyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is unskilled in the word of righteousness. <sup>14</sup>But solid food is for the mature, for those whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil.

## 2. Sacrifice

**Romans 8:35-39:** (NRSV) <sup>35</sup>Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written, For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered. <sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Reproach:** Strongs #3679 oneidizo (on-i-did'-zo); to defame, i.e. rail at, chide, taunt: KJV--cast in teeth, (suffer) reproach, revile, upbraid.

**Matthew 5:11:** (KJV) Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

**1 Peter 4:14:** (KJV) If ye be **reproached** for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

## 3. Spirituality

### The Challenges:

**Galatians 5:16-26:** (NRSV) <sup>16</sup>Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. <sup>17</sup>For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. <sup>18</sup>But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. <sup>19</sup>Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, <sup>20</sup>idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, <sup>21</sup>envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>22</sup>By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. <sup>24</sup>And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup>If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. <sup>26</sup>Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.

**Romans 8:1-10:** (NRSV) <sup>1</sup>There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup>For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. <sup>3</sup>For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup>so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. <sup>5</sup>For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup>For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law--indeed it cannot, <sup>8</sup>and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. <sup>9</sup>But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup>But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.



### The Remedies:

**Galatians 5:22-26:** (NRSV) <sup>22</sup>By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. <sup>24</sup>And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup>If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. <sup>26</sup>Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.

**Colossians 3:1-11:** (NRSV) <sup>1</sup>So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, <sup>3</sup>for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup>When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory. <sup>5</sup>Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). <sup>6</sup>On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. <sup>7</sup>These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. <sup>8</sup>But now you must get rid of all such things--anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. <sup>9</sup>Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices <sup>10</sup>and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. <sup>11</sup>In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!