

“Leadership is the art and science of inspiring others to reach their full potential in the pursuit of a common vision”

Dr. James Bultman



*Today Scripture  
References  
I Cor: 9 24-27*

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. Everyone 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. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

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## The TCL E-Leadership Resource Training for the Right Race? – I Cor 9: 24-27

This weekend I watched a quite famous fishing tournament on television. Many of you know of the Bassmaster Classic tournament. It is the super bowl of the fresh water fishing world, especially in the southern half of the United States. It is a grueling multi-day bass tournament. The simple goal of the tournament is to identify the person who catches the heaviest string of legally caught bass. Those in this tournament have found themselves at this level after investing thousands of hours of time and energy.

Before the Lord got a grip on me, my dream was to become a professional bass fisherman. My desire was to own a high performance bass boat and fish tournaments, maybe even to make some money doing so. I bought different books on fishing patterns, and studied closely what the pros were catching fish on and what their strategy looked like in terms of equipment, type of presentation, and the kinds of lures they used. My fishing really improved. Today I have a fair amount of confidence every time I fish.

The truly exceptional and famous fishermen have something extra you cannot buy ... and that is - patience and mental toughness. You can only get that on the water with a lot of time and training. Even with the most determined mind, this can be an elusive thing, never to be fully attained. In our verse today Paul speaks of the training intensity that a runner must experience to attain the prize. Picture the amount of time, stress and pain the body must go through to acquire the mental toughness to win a marathon or the Bassmaster Classic. Getting up before dawn, running or fishing in the rain ... trying to keep good balance while running or casting endlessly into the wind. Is that the kind of intensity Paul wants of us when he declares "No, I beat my body and make it my slave"?

By now I suspect you are beginning to get the point of this exhortation for leaders. Friends, if you are a leader, you are in a race. My question to you is how is your training going? Paul states that his training as an apostle is not "aimless". If you are a business person reading this, how are you learning to improve your leadership? Are you going to a financial

seminar thinking you will learn how to lead people? How about some of you pastors and ministry leaders out there? Are you going to a theology conference thinking you can become a better leader? Folks, I will admit that studying how to catch walleye might bring some benefit to the bass fisherman. However to become an effective bass fisherman, you need to study bass!

And so it is with leadership ... if you want to be a better leader, study leadership! Spend time talking leadership with other leaders ... go to leadership classes. Brainstorm with those you lead to discover what they need to improve performance. As their leader, set those you lead up for success! If you want the prize for leadership, don't just train when you have extra time or when the sun is shining. Try doing it when the waves are high and your boat is blowing all over the place!

Is leadership one of the races you signed up for? I would suspect that it is since you still subscribe to this exhortation of mine. I would also think leadership might not be your only race. Many of us are in more than one race. If this is true for you, it only means you need to be a bit intentional about the specifics of your training program. You need to effectively cross train.

Paul knew that more than one was going to get the "prize" he was training for. He just raised the importance of strict training by highlighting the satisfaction of getting our prize. In doing so, we will share with him an enduring crown no one can take away.

Just remember that training is necessary in the pursuit of our prize.

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