

UNRELENTING, REDEEMED COMPETITIVENESS FOR GOD'S PROFITABLE MAN

Run in such a way to win the prize (1 Cor. 9:24) That says it pretty plainly that God likes us to win in life by using His ways. You can be in a sporting event with a person, or playing a board game. They can accuse you of being too competitive. You slack up. They win. Turns out they were the very competitive ones; competitive in the realm of ideas. They wanted to utter words directed at you so you would surrender to their belief of how a person should act. They were very competitive and unrelenting in their arguing. The other yielded and lost twice. First they lost in the game or sporting event they were playing. Secondly, they lost in the wrestling match in the realm of ideas. If they are not careful, the I-surrender-leaven could spread to far more vital areas of life than a sporting event or a board game.

I have seen the result of relenting in the realm of ideas in the realm of organized sports for little ones. There will be a basketball league of little ones with the rule, "dribbling is encouraged." Also, they will not officially keep score! A competitive person in the realm of ideas was unrelenting and prevailed on the rules committee.

What is God's will for us concerning what people call competitive (usually with a negative judgment against the one so accused). Here is an acronym for what I consider the answer: UBADAGHSYTBATDTJTO; this stands for Unrelenting-Being-And-Doing-All-God-Has-Shown-You-To-Be-And-To-Do-Through-Jesus-To-Overcome!

Life is not compartmentalized where one portion of it is for God and that portion is to be lived for God according to God's ways. No, it is in God that we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him (Col. 3:17). All of our life is God's offered up as an offering to Him, reflecting God's ways on earth. We are to be led by the Spirit of God and follow that leading in all that we do. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God (Romans 8:14). So following the leading of the Holy Spirit all of the time for all that you do, you are to discern God's good pleasure in you following that leading. 2 Thess. 1:11 tells that we are to fulfill all the good pleasure of God's goodness and work of faith with power (NKJV). Shrinking back, yielding to the wrong things is not consistent with that.

If you go play sports, then it only needs to be done because you are following the leading of the Holy Spirit to do it. Then you need to discern God's good pleasure with you for doing it, play it to His glory and enjoy that God is pleased with you following the leading of His Holy Spirit for you to play.

God is affiliated with victory, overcoming, triumph, defeating evil, being the head and not the tail. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world, and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith (1 Jn. 5:4). He always leads us in triumph in Christ (2 Cor. 2:14). Affliction will not rise up a second time (Nahum 1:9). And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only and not beneath (Deut. 28:13). Mal. 4:1 talks of the wicked being left no root or branch.

Much of life is a spiritual wrestling match. We wrestle against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12). We want to be absolutely unrelenting if slithering strife tries to raise its ugly head in a marriage; we are to use God's grace to stomp it and have peace (Rom. 16:20). If lust of the flesh tries to raise its ugly low level head, we are to by the Spirit put to death that deed of the body and live the true high life (Rom. 8:13). If the reptile of unforgiveness tries to raise its head, we stomp it with the spirit of forgiveness so we can be forgiven (Mt. 6:14-15). If hatred tries to be in our heart, we are to push it out by the love of God poured in our heart by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). We are to confidently live by faith, unrelenting in enduring; if we shrink back, God has not pleasure in it (Heb.10:36-38). Life is not a "coexist" (do not be duped by that bumper sticker) affair. It is about prevailing for God using God's ways by you following the leading of His Holy Spirit...it takes being unrelenting in His ways. If you let up in a wresting match for a moment you can be pinned!

You want to keep the same attitude as in the above paragraph when you are led by the Spirit to participate in a sporting event. It can be viewed as training in overcoming like we are to do in the spiritual wrestling match. You use God's Holy Spirit led ways to win over the flesh in the form of nervousness. To seek God's wisdom in to be applied to strategy. Learn how to overcome the best shots fired against you by the opponent. You can learn to overcome trash talk against you, to play in the Spirit and not fulfill the lust of the flesh to get angry, tense, or lazy. Using sports as spiritual training this way opens the door to help your spiritual walk out of sports, then opens the door for God to teach you

spiritual lessons for all of life through sports. You can pray for wisdom strategy in sports and receive. Great training for praying for wisdom strategy outside of sports for His course of action to prevail in challenging circumstances. You can pray for God to illumine how to do shots to you (and He will); this too is great training for praying for God to illumine solutions to problems outside of sports to you (and He will)!

Interestingly there is a connection between what is call competitive, but really is UBADAGHSYTBATDTJTO, and profitability. First, understand that God uses the words profitability, prospering, and fruitfulness about interchangeably. Whatever you do in word or deed, God expects you to do in His will and flourish and increase in it. You can check it out that blessing, multiplying, and increase are all related. In fact, when you read the parable of the talents, it is made abundantly plain that God is greatly displeased with not profiting (Mt. 25:14-30). God's way is to greatly reward profitability and take away from and punish the unprofitable. An unprofitable person is even called wicked and lazy! You need to see that this is good of God to be that way (See the teaching GOD IS "ALL GOOD."). It is generally true if you are not a profitable person, then someone who is profitable will have to take care of you. If you are not an overcoming person by God's ways, then generally, someone who is overcoming will have to take care of you if you are not going to be overcome. The goal of profitability is to bless you and others. In Eph. 4:28, the thief was told to steal no longer, but to work with his hands what is good, that he might have something to give him who is in need.

Since profitability-fruitfulness-prospering is our only option in pleasing God, it should be not surprise that we would have to be unrelenting (UBADAGHSYTBATDTJTO) against the forces of evil to prevail and make you unprofitable. We have to overcome choking quagmire that tries to gum up thing to make it fruitless, massive talking environments, useless and negative interactions, unfruitful ways. You have to overcome philosophies that call profitable evil and unprofitable good, overcome teaching that call profitable greedy and unprofitable good. You have to overcome the greed motive for profit. You have to war to keep as good the idea of hiring people and people keeping their job based on ability to fruitfully perform, based on capability. You have to be strong to reward based on fruitful performance and punish and even fire because of unfruitful, negative results. You have to be strong to take away from the unprofitable and give what they had to the

profitable, as done in the parable of the talents. You have to be strong to know that you are doing good by being that way because God is good and that is the way He operates. You have to fight to keep your satisfaction that you are doing your body part in your nation and in the world when you flourish and help others truly in need. You have to overcome unfruitful, not profiting, not winning ways in any area lest that leaven spread to all areas! And that gets us back to sports. To give up, to relent in sports, to give up wanting to win can be leaven to spread to other areas.

You have to have a seeing that profitability-fruitfulness-prospering is good and loving. You are taken care of and you have spare to help others...that is love! People that do not have that seeing view profitability as a bad word, a bad concept and view the God approved behavior of what it takes to profit as harsh (Mt. 25:24) and austere (all the time while they are possibly being taken care of by the profitable that they criticize!). In the parable of the talents the unprofitable servant was just that, a servant of the master. The master fed, clothed and gave shelter, yet the servant did not profit to carry his load and help others. Yet he was critical of the profitable master and what it takes to profit, critical of what sustained him and he did not contribute to! See, see, see, profitability is good.

So when the Holy Spirit leads you to play sports, be unrelenting in being and doing all God has shown you to be and to do through Jesus to overcome...play to win and discern the good pleasure of God for your behavior. Remember, if a competitive person in the realm of ideas criticizes you for being competitive, don't be a double loser...losing in the realm of ideas by shrinking back and giving in to them and then losing on the court because you did some shrinking back.