



Gladiator

“Don’t you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.”

The Apostle Paul | 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (NLT)

Am I prepared for the fight of my life?

One of my favorite movie scenes comes from *Gladiator*. Russell Crowe plays Roman general Maximus, who becomes a gladiator after the emperor's jealous son, Commodus, attempts to have him killed.

Maximus is a warrior—smart, fit and highly trained. Eventually, he becomes known as “the Spaniard.” Then, after defeating his combatants before a roaring crowd, Emperor Commodus enters the arena and demands that the mysterious gladiator reveal his identity.

Maximus slowly removes his helmet and turns to face Commodus.

He’s been waiting for this moment—the opportunity to kill the man who destroyed his life and threatens Rome. But he exercises remarkable restraint, confronting his enemy without taking his life.

It’s a powerful scene.

But what interests me almost as much as the battle is what happened prior.

Gladiators didn't simply walk into the arena and hope for the best. They trained. They developed strength, endurance and fighting skills. They ate nutrient dense diets. They did everything possible to be prepared for the arena.

Reflect: Am I prepared for my next battle?

The Apostle Paul repeatedly used athletic imagery to challenge followers of Christ. He understood something we often forget:

Followers require training.

Paul says, *"I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should."*

Why?

Because living the Adventure God Made You For requires more than good intentions. There will be places God asks you to go, things he asks you to do, people he asks you to serve and challenges he asks you to endure.

Your body is the instrument through which that happens.

Imagine a firefighter who hasn't prepared to climb ladders, carry heavy equipment or work under pressure. When the alarm sounds, good intentions won't be enough.

Are you physically prepared for the work God has given you?

That doesn't mean everyone needs to become a top athlete. It means we should steward the body God has entrusted to us—to be our top self. Considering our age or limitations, we should make it ready for the work he calls us to do.

*Consider: **My entire self—body, mind and spirit must be ready.***

But Paul doesn't stop there.

He raises the bar.

“Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.” The Apostle Paul (1 Timothy 4:8)

Yes, train your body.

But train your mind and spirit even more intentionally.

A gladiator needed his entire being engaged in the fight—strength, skill, focus, courage and discipline. The stakes were too high to be only partially prepared.

The same is true for us.

Paul writes:

“And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.” The Apostle Paul (Romans 12:1)

Notice the progression.

» Give yourself to God.

» Train yourself in his ways.

» Then be ready when he calls.

My friend Brad uses a simple illustration that helps me grasp this. When you put on a button-down shirt, you have to get the first button into the right hole. Then the rest of the buttons fall into place.

The same is true spiritually.

Start with God's Word. Get that button right. Embed it within. Then obey it.

Everything else begins to fall into place.

Imagine: I've resolved to be in tip-top condition.

So here's a challenge. Don't wait for New Year's Day to make a resolution. If something needs to change, why wait?

Rate yourself from 1–10:

- Physical fitness: Where am I? What could I do to move up one or two notches?
- Diet: Where am I? What could I change to move up one or two notches?
- Godliness: Where am I? What could I do to move up one or two notches?

Then resolve to prepare yourself.

Paul reminds us of another reason this matters:

"Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body." The Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

You were bought with a high price—you belong to Christ.

Your body isn't yours to neglect. Your mind isn't yours to fill with whatever you please. Your life isn't yours to spend however you want.

You've been entrusted with all three.

Ahead, there is an arena you haven't entered yet.

A challenge you haven't faced.

A person you haven't met.

A task God hasn't yet revealed.

Will you be ready?

Will you become a warrior—a smart, fit and highly trained...

Gladiator?

Get off the grid and ask these questions

Coach's Questions:

- **Reflect:** *Where do I stand on my physical, mental, spiritual preparedness?*
- **Ask:** *What resolutions will I make?*
- **Challenge:** Write your resolutions down, share with an accountability partner. Follow through.
- Further insights: [Aim Higher](#); [No Matter What](#)
- Don't know my Mission—[Start here!](#)

Spirit Talk

Post this where you will see it regularly.

Be prepared for the fight of my life.

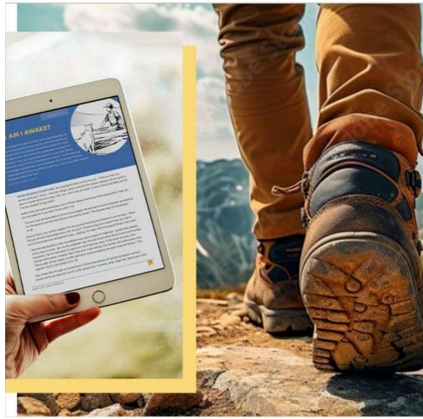
*"A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.
Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm
against all the strategies of the devil."*

The Apostle Paul | Ephesians 6:10-11 (NLT)

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