

Rudgwick

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Dear Friends

Did you watch any of the Olympics or have you been watching the Paralympics? I am not an avid sports fan, but I do try and watch major international events. I happily watched some of whichever Olympic sport the BBC were showing when I switched on, including some of the track and field. I am amazed that the hammer throwers manage to release the 16lb weight at just the right time, so it flies in the right direction and in awe of how long and high people can jump. However, it was one of the 800m women's heats that struck me. Jemma Reekie started so well, she was second going into the final 100m but rather than overtaking the leader to win, people overtook her, and she crossed the line in fifth place.

It reminded me of Paul's advice to the Church in Corinth, the home of the Isthmian Games – an athletics competition second only to the ancient Olympics and where, rather than a gold medal, the winner received a laurel victory crown. Likening the Christian faith to a running race, Paul urged them to '*Run in such a way as to get the prize*' adding that competitors in a race "do it to get a (laurel) crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever."

Whilst we cannot earn our place in Heaven (it is not through being good, helping people, or even going to Church regularly; but through faith in Jesus) the way we then live our life – the way in which we 'run' to use Paul's imagery – shows whether we have faith in, and are following, Jesus. I think we would all conclude that an athlete who doesn't do any training and is always eating junk food, isn't very serious about standing on the podium. Paul is telling us that a Christian who does not follow Jesus teaching is not very serious about where they spend eternity! I wonder what the way you are 'running' says?

Every blessing

Cover photo: Spectacular hanging baskets at the Milk Churn!