

To Strive Lawfully

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible” (I Corinthians 9:24-25).

“And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully” (II Timothy 2:5).

Listen what God’s Prophet said about it:

And anyone of you know that in Olympics or any other athletical exercises, no matter if you arrive first in the race, **but if you haven't played the game according to the rules, you're disqualified. You have to play the rule right. And that's the way it is with human life. You can't play the rules of the game of life, wrong, and expect to win. You've got to play it according to God's Word, and the purpose that you were brought here for.** [1]

No matter who is there first, **you have to play the rules of the game or you'll never win.** If a runner is running around the track, **and one takes a short cut**, and cuts through the field, and beats the other one there by a half hour, still **he will be disqualified at the end of the race. He's got to play it according to the rules of the game or he's disqualified.**

And that's the way we have to do, **the race of life that we're running now, it has to be played according to God's qualifications or we'll lose when we get there.** Whether we're president, whether we are the governor, or a minister, or what church we belong to, or what denomination, **the rules of the game has to be kept. We must run it fair; we must play it by the rules. We must preach the Word. We must do it willingly.**

Paul said in Hebrews 12:1, *“That seeing we are compassed about with such a great cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth easily beset us, that we might run with patience the race that's set before us.”* Paul was speaking in the Olympics and so forth, that was in Greece and Rome, and so forth; **he knowed that you had to play that game fair, for if you did not, you'd be disqualified.**

And today, as born again Christians, as believers here at the end time, we've got to play the game according to the rules. **We've got to run with**

patience the race that's set before us, looking to the Author and Finisher, Jesus Christ (Heb. 12:2). [2]

Then I am told that, Napoleon, the great victor of a day gone by. He hated the French. He come over into France, borned out on an island, and come to France to get even with them, but become a great conqueror. He was a gentleman to start with, **but success went to his head.** And it's said, "That women, when they'd go to put their little babies to bed, that he was so feared (He put everything to death that didn't agree with him.), that the women instead of saying, "The old booger man's going to get you!" They would say, "Napoleon's going to get you." And the little bright eyed fellows would get their heads under the cover real quick, thinking of that great monster, Napoleon.

But you see, the victory that he won, didn't last. He was a prohibitionist to start with, and died at **the age of thirty-three an alcoholic.** Victory of that type don't last, because it's not wrought right. **You can never get good out of wrong. You've got to play the rule of the game, fair.** [1]

But he was defeated, because he never played the rules of the game right.

And just remember this; that's a good lesson for the church of the living God. **If we don't play the game according to the rules, we'll be disqualified at the end. You have to keep the rules of the game to win.**

And if the rules of the game in this place, is a man must be borned again to enter into the fellowship of Christ and His church (John 3:1-8; I.Cor. 12:13), and we might be the greatest denomination on earth, but if we haven't played the rules of the game, we'll be disqualified at the end. **We've got to come straight with God's rules. It isn't our rules; it's His rules,** that we've got to abide by. **We're running the race according to His rules, and we have to abide by them (John 15:7).**

So you see, Napoleon, after though being a great warrior, and a great conqueror, he conquered people **under fear,** and that's not the rule of the game. **The rule of the game is conquer by love.**

There is no other force in all the world as great as love (I Cor. 13:1-13). And I'm almost sure that we, as people, have put too much emphasis upon other rules that **(don't mean to be rude, but sometimes), that we've made ourselves, and put so much stress on those rules, only to find ourself disqualified.** [3]

But you see, because if a man is a conqueror, **his objectives** must be right and **his motives** must be right. **And if you don't play the game fair,**

you're bound to lose no matter how much conqueror you are. You have to follow the rules of the game to be a winner. And if you cheat, you're put out of the game, no matter how good a player you are.

What if Martin Luther would've played the rules of the game right? There'd have never been a Methodist Church. What if Methodist had have played the rules of the game right? There'd never been a Pentecostal church.

But if we fail to play the rules of the game right, God will disqualify us and raise up out of these stones, children to Abraham.

And God wants the game played right, and we must do it. So it doesn't make any difference how much we feel like that we're progressing on, until we get back to the rule of the game...

"If God has given you a talent, stay with that talent (*I Cor. 12:4-11, 28-31*). And no matter what you try to do, if that talent isn't operated, no matter how great it is, if it isn't operate according to the rules, you'll be disqualified in the race."

And the strongest force, that I know of, is **love (the token)**. *"Though I speak with tongues of men and Angels, and have not love, I am nothing, or become as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Though I have power to move mountains, and have not love, I am nothing." (I Cor. 13:1-3; Gal. 5:13-15).*

If we're going to win, we've got to get back to the winning principle. All these great signs and wonders, that we have seen, **to God we give praise.** But if those things **isn't built upon godly Christian love and respect for God and His people, it'll fail (*Rom. 12:9-21*).** **It's just got to fail.** See? Because it has no foundation. [4]

If you've got a sick man laying here, or a sinner laying here, or a man that wants to be right (can't give up drinking, can't give up smoking, can't give up lust and things); **if you'll just work according to the laws of God, let the Holy Spirit come in there, then he's no more his own.** He will stop that thing, because the Holy Spirit takes him over. **But you've got to work according to the laws of God, the rules of God: Repent - and be baptized...** (*Acts 2:38-39*). [5]

God has no substitute, nothing but the Blood. **He has no shortcuts, no by-cuts. You come God's way through reconciliation by the Blood (*Col. 1:19-23; II Cor. 5:17-19*), and then become a son and daughter of God (*John 1:12-13*).** Then all things are possible. Then miracles are possible; then a revival is possible. [6]

People today want shortcuts. They're out here today, and they're going on, **and tomorrow they want to preach:** Pentecostal people letting them do that too (*I Tim. 3:1-6*). Yeah. They want a shortcut to heaven, "Hallelujah, all I have to do is get down here and just don't think of nothing at all, and say, 'Hallelujah, hallelujah, I got on Elijah's garment. I'm going out tomorrow to cast out devils. Hallelujah, hallelujah, I got It.' Praise God, here I go." **They want the shortcut to heaven, taking as much of the world as they can take. You can't take any of it. There's no shortcuts. You come the way of Calvary.** You come the way of the brass altar. You come the way of the brazen serpent. **You die.** You actually die, **you die, literally die to yourselves, die to the things of the world,** and are borned anew (*John 12:24-25; I John 5:6-8*). Amen. No world, the things of the world is dead (*Gal. 2:19-20*). **There's no shortcuts.** See? They want to come right quick; **they don't want to grow. We grow in the Lord. It takes growth and experience** (*II Cor. 3:18; Eph. 2:21-22*). [7]

And I say this with reverence and respects, and I hope it doesn't sound sacrilegious, **but that same thing's got into the church move. God has no shortcuts. You just pay the price** (*Heb. 12:14-17*). You come and take the way that God provided for us (*Matt. 7:13-14; Matt. 16:24-26*). [8]

The world and the people are watching for some little outlet, some little bypass, some little shortcut, but there is no shortcuts in the **Word of God.** There's one Pattern. **You must cut yourself** (*Col. 2:11-12*) and fit that Pattern, not try to cut the Pattern to fit you. Everybody must do that. That's the only way God has of doing it. [9]

Reference:

- [1] "Faith Is Our Victory" (58-1004), par. 6-7
- [2] "What It Takes To Overcome All Unbelief" (60-0729), par. E-51 ff.
- [3] "Mighty Conqueror" (58-0610), par. E-6-E-7
- [4] "Mighty Conqueror" (58-0110), par. E-7-E-10
- [5] "What The Holy Ghost Was Given For" (59-1217), par. 45
- [6] "Reconciliation Through Fellowship" (56-0120), par. E-38
- [7] "You Must Be Born Again" (61-1231M), par. 140-146
- [8] "Investments" (63-1116B), par. 44/48
- [9] "Events Made Clear By Prophecy" (65-0801E), par. 51

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There's coming one with a Message that's straight on the Bible, and quick work will circle the earth. The seeds will go in newspapers, reading material, until every predestinated Seed of God has heard It.
[Bro. Branham in „Conduct-Order-Doctrine“, page 724]