

# ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

WESTLAND, MICHIGAN

Home Directions Services Contact Us Celer

pico search >>

## Family of God - Devotional Topics

### Your Child and Competition

Competition is a way of life for most of us. And for our children, too. In a sense, all of us are competitors - at home, at work, at school, at play.

Competition at its best is always a personal matter, an individual's pursuit for improvement and excellence. Parents can do much to help their children as they try to do better, to improve their performance, to become the very best they can be. Christian parents can be assured that their sons and daughters can be victorious competitors, to live the winner's life.

#### Every Christian's race

God's Word does not speak directly to the subject of competition. But Scripture does make reference to runners and races, to winning and losing. It uses these activities to picture our spiritual life. As we travel throughout life we are competing against our spiritual foes - the devil, the world and our sinful flesh.

In Hebrews 12:1, for example, the inspired writer encourages all of us to "run with perseverance the race made out for us." In verse 2, he encourages us as we run the race to "fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith."

Obviously for the Christian, the ultimate goal of running the race is the crown of life which God gives. This directs the entire life of the Christian as he runs the race that is marked out for him.

Christians run the race by faith. Hebrews 11 lists a host of victorious people who ran the race with faith in Jesus. Faith alone assures the ultimate victory. Faith in God makes God's people victorious as they run their race day after day. By faith we are assured of God's daily forgiveness. And by faith we have a fresh start every day. The assurance of the Apostle Paul is ours: "I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13).

Training and discipline are essential for us as we run the race. We are to "throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles" (Hebrews 12:1). In Ephesians 6:12 (King James Version), we are described as "wrestling against" every evil that would keep us from being victorious.

Daily striving is the key characteristic of the Christian runner. Under God's grace, Christians press on (Philippians 3:14) and fight the good fight (1 Timothy 6:12). Striving, not winning, is the key for the successful Christian competitor. Every day can be victorious because God in Christ gives the victory.

These are the key guidelines for parents as they help their children become victorious runners in the big race, the race of life. 1) Keep their eyes fixed on

"Competition provides an opportunity for learning teamwork, cooperation and loyalty."

About Us

Bible Studies

School

Christian Living

- > HOME
- > Brothers/Sisters
- > Christmas
- > Change

Competition

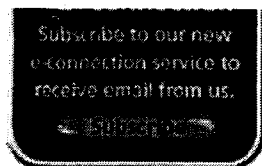
- > Child & Money
- > Friends
- > Communication
- > Decisions
- > Devotions
- > Discipline
- > Humanism
- > Law/Gospel
- > Parents
- > Pop Culture
- > Pray
- > Priorities
- > Problems
- > Provider
- > Resources
- > Self-Image
- > Sexuality
- > Teaching

Fellowship

Links

Make a Donation





Click here to register or adopt a military member to pray for.

the goal of heaven. 2) Strengthen their faith through the word of God. 3) Train and discipline them in the Christian life. 4) Help them daily to strive to live for God.

## Benefits of competition

As we consider the all-important struggle of our Christian life, we are able to take a more balanced look at earthly, temporal competition. Although we usually associate competition with sports, it is not limited to athletics.

In and of itself competition in any field is not bad. It only becomes evil when the people involved in it go against God's Word. Because competition is such a large part of life today, we will try to find the good in it and use it for the benefit of our children.

What are some benefits of competitive activities? Competitive sports can help promote physical fitness and discipline. Competition in general can instill in young people the importance of doing their best. They can also learn how to bounce back from setbacks and keep on trying. The importance of striving for excellence and the courage to take one's place in the competitive arena are further benefits which competitive activities can cultivate.

Most of us have watched marathon races. We may have observed that often it is the last person to cross the finish line who gets the loudest applause. The applause is not for winning, but for striving - for patience, for endurance, for fortitude. Striving for excellence produces winners. Scoreboards tell only a small part of the story.

## Benefits of group competition

Whether in sports or in other group competition, there are many potential personal benefits to those who participate. Competition provides an opportunity for learning team work, cooperation and loyalty. It also offers an opportunity to develop skills that enrich life, often for an entire lifetime. And competition provides the opportunity for boys and girls to develop character as they put into practice their Christian values and faith.

Christian parents can do much to help their children enjoy these benefits. Keeping these benefits in mind will help put winning and striving in their proper perspective.

## Pitfalls of competitive sports

When your children enter competitive sports, they often enter an arena where negative factors are present. Parents may need to help their children deal with factors such as the overzealous coach, the excitement of cheering and booing crowds, and the pressure to win at all costs. Parents will avoid putting unnecessary pressure on their children. They will help children interpret and understand losing, winning and striving. They will seek to reduce the negative factors in sports events that violate the rules of good sportsmanship and Christiana principles.

Competition can be a means by which our children develop their God-given talents - talents they will use to glorify God as they run Life's race. Let's always keep it in this perspective!

## Something to think about

1. Often parents urge their children to participate and excel in sports where a parent has a special interest or talent, even when a child does not have interest or talent. What dangers are present when this happens?
2. Coaches often have a strong influence on the lives of team members. Coaches often are under a variety of pressures.

including pressure from parents. How can coaches and parents work together as partners in helping children grow and mature as Christian people?

3. In what ways should a sports program in a Lutheran school be different than in any other school? How can a Lutheran school's sports program explain and promote the school's Christian distinctiveness?
4. How can Christian parents help their children strive for excellence in their daily lives and all their tasks? How does being a Christian make it possible for children to be winners?

### Prayer

Lord, give us the strength to compete in a Christian spirit. Win or lose, may what we do be for your glory. Help us always keep in mind our heavenly goal as we run life's race. In Jesus' name. Amen.

---

The Family of God series is copyright © 1985 Northwestern Publishing House, and is published under the auspices of PACE (Partners Advancing Christian Education), Wisconsin Lutheran High School Conference, Milwaukee, WI. Reprinted by permission.

Northwestern Publishing House  
1250 N 113th Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA 53226-3284  
Phone: 1-800-662-6022