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## Decks - Men At The Cross Devotional

JULY 11TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

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*Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross By Joe White*

#### 1 Corinthians 9:19-27

*"19Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 22To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. 23I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. 24Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 25Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. 27No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."*

#### VIDEO OF THE DAY

It was brought to my attention this summer that some of my staff had gotten creative in

their quest to keep in shape.

"They're doing decks," my source told me. The word "deck" sounded ominous until it was explained. It

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seems that two (or more) guys, eager to pump up their pectorals, can go through a deck of cards and get a pretty good workout if they match the number of each card with the same number of push-ups. Depending on the luck of the draw, one participant can end up doing a whole lot more push-ups than the other guy.

You ought to see some of my counselors go at it. Talk about a passion for winning. The other day I watched two counselors go head to head. When it was all said and done, one had sixteen more push-ups than his partner. Not to be outdone, the guy who was behind did seventeen more. In turn, his pal added an extra two to put himself over the top. It continued like that until both of them fell exhausted in a pool of their own sweat.

That is the same kind of tenacity Paul was expressing when he used the phrase "that I might win" five times in a span of four verses. What was he trying to win? He was trying to win souls. And whose souls was he trying to win? Any one soul who had a pulse. Paul placed evangelism over every other aspect of life. He even set aside his own rights when it meant the salvation of another human being.

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Verses 26 and 27 indicate that Paul had a plan, a "workout regimen", that would help him achieve his spiritual goals. He knew that in the game of life there were no ties, there were only wins and losses. Because he could not bear the thought of a neighbor losing his soul to the devil, he was always willing to go the extra mile, do the "extra push-up" for the sake of those who were lost. That's why he worked hard . . . prayed hard . . . studied hard . . . preached hard . . . traveled hard . . . loved hard . . . and trained hard.

Nike puts it well. "What are you training for?"

## QUESTIONS:

1. So, what are you training for?
2. Do you have a spiritual workout schedule? If so, describe it.

## LIFELINE:

Paul was passionate and disciplined when it came to sharing the gospel. Discuss

something in your life about which you are extremely passionate and disciplined. What are you diligently working towards? What is your goal?

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