

Spiritual Training (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

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Guidelines: Protect confidentiality and follow the leader's prompts.

Ignatian Meditation Process: Ignatius focuses on personally experiencing God's grace through Christ (as in this Bible reading), especially in Week 1 of *The Spiritual Exercises*. Read the introduction and then "Ask for the grace". Then quietly read the passage by using your imagination to enter into the story, sensing and feeling what's going on. Don't analyze the passage or seek insights — *experience yourself as a character in the story*. After the second reading have a "colloquy" (short, personal conversation) with the Lord. You can use the prompts and questions at the bottom to guide your prayer time and journaling (and sharing with others).

Introduction: Paul didn't care about worldly privileges and benefits, but sought the spiritual blessings of God's grace and sharing this with other people. To do this he disciplined his body and soul in the same way that an Olympic runner trains to win a gold medal. He exhorts us to follow his example.

Ask For the Grace: Lord Jesus, I ask for the grace I desire: a more personalized experience of God's grace that brings me spiritual relish and fruit.

Imagine Yourself in the Gospel: 1 Corinthians 9 (MSG)

24-25 You've all been to the stadium and seen the athletes race. Everyone runs; one wins. Run to win. All good athletes train hard. They do it for a gold medal that tarnishes and fades. You're after one that's gold eternally.

26-27 I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got. No sloppy living for me! I'm staying alert and in top condition. I'm not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it and then missing out myself.

1st Reading: Visualize yourself in the illustration. Don't seek intellectual insights — stay with the imagery. Use your senses to see, touch, feel, and hear. What part of the story are you drawn to? Which character do you identify with or are you a bystander?

2nd Reading: Experience the story in the role of the character God led you to. Then talk with the Lord. What do you feel? How does this relate to something in your life today? What is God saying to you?