

Continual Quickening - Part 2

by Ken Baird

Ken Baird's sermon emphasizes the importance of continual spiritual focus and the rewards of serving God through the pursuit of the five crowns.

Duration: 53:06

Scripture: Hebrews 5:11-14, Hebrews 6:8-10, Hebrews 12:1-2, 1 Peter 4:1-2

Topics: "Faithful Service", "Spiritual Discipline"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of taking our service for the Lord seriously, comparing it to the dedication of a devoted athlete. He encourages the audience to study and analyze their faith, just as an athlete studies slow-motion movies to improve their performance. The speaker warns against being distracted by worldly concerns and urges the audience to give their all to God. He references Bible verses from 1 Peter and Hebrews to support his message and reminds the audience that they are running a relay race, and it is important to carry the baton well.

Transcript

We begin a new series of studies. Last night we took a night's latest study, but it's been on our minds of late, and we've been appreciating the study of the fact that we need continuous scrutiny. We noticed last night that we have spiritual censors by which we apprehend God with the understanding just the same as we have physical censors by which we understand this world and interpret the different experiences that we get into, the different stimuli to our brains, our physical life.

Now we noticed that when God is in the focus of our soul, that we are really fulfilling the function of that soul, that is, we're really living to know God with eternal life. Having before us this living to be separated from him means that we are not really living. Now I don't mean by that that we have lost our salvation.

I don't mean by that that we can tell the Lord about 24 hours a day, we can't do that. That's a great part of the time. We have to concentrate on our business and our responsibilities.

But I think that this point was made so that I don't have to label it anymore, that when God is before us, we are stricken with the word of God, and this light is appreciated within us, and it is not before us. We need to be stricken because we revert to death, so will eternal life. We revert back to the old way.

We must have the Lord before us. Christian experience is not like the wrath of the satellite that is blasted into this orbit and then continues without resistance, evenly on its predictable way. The Christian life is most hardly predictable, and our experience is such that we need continual stricken before the Lord.

Well, so much for having God, appreciating God, having him within the focus of our souls. But now I'd like to talk, for the remainder of the week, with the help of the Lord, on serving the Lord. Now, this is an entirely different line of things.

Last night was more devotional, and tonight, with the help of the Lord, we want to be more practical in our service to him, the service that is brought forward as we consider the five crowns of the scriptures. Now, there are five crowns in the scriptures which are given to those who earn those crowns, and you and I, as Christians, may earn at least some of those crowns. We, in the course of the studies, will be considering the incorruptible crown as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 9. Then we will talk about that is the crown for the living of the Christian life, especially as it is seen as a race.

Then we have the crown of rejoicing, the 1 Thessalonians 2.19, which is the school winner's crown. Then we have the crown of righteousness, which is the warrior's crown, and then we have that's in 2 Timothy 4, 7 and 8. Then we have the crown of glory in 1 Peter 5 and 4, which is the shepherd's crown reserved for a select group of lost people. Then we have the crown of life, the overcomer's crown mentioned in James and in Revelation.

Now, in these five crowns, we indeed see the most of our life's activities as expressed in these five crowns. And God is going to reward us. Now, I think that we will find that these crowns are all contemptuous.

I mean by that, God gives the crowns in compensation for a life that has been lived for his glory. These five different crowns. Now, you and I, to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

We're going to consider them, and then we're going to consider if perhaps we want to go in for some of these crowns. Now, I was thrilled once in attending the graduation service of a certain high school in Colorado, and I was there, of course, to talk to some of the students that were graduating. This was rather a small house group, but one that was very efficient, one where they had good instructors, and it was amazing at the number of people in that senior graduating class that had won scholarships.

And I tried to anticipate the pride of the parents of those young people as they came to the platform to receive their scholarships. One scholarship was worth approximately five thousand dollars. Now, that boy or girl, whichever the case was, I believe it was a boy, had his eye on that scholarship in the moment that he entered high school.

He didn't just study throughout his high school course and then in his senior year decide that he was going out and get a scholarship to take him on to college. He had that as a long-range objective. He had his eye on that scholarship, and the proud moment had arrived, and the principal of that school gave to that boy that scholarship.

There were other scholarships given up, not all from the same source, but there were some proud parents there tonight, I remember. One of the young ladies graduating was one of the school officials, and as he gave her her scholarship, she rewarded her daddy with a kiss on the cheek. And I know he was very, very proud of that girl.

Now, you and I have a chance to win some crowns for the Lord. Now, I don't mean to suggest that we should live our life and let the winning of a crown be the motive of our service to the Lord. We should serve the Lord out of a sense of love to him, but at the same time our Lord Jesus Christ is so gracious that he rewards us even for service for him.

Actually, we should serve the Lord out of a sense of love and gratitude because of the fact that he took our place on the cross of salvation, because of the fact that he suffered unspeakable agony in the payment of our sins, for his Holy Soul was made an offering to sin in his time for us. That should be the motive of our service to the Lord. However, he tells us plainly in his words that there are going to be crowns given for those who serve him well.

Now, I think that perhaps the real reason for winning these crowns is that so we, following the example of the 4 and 20 elders in the book of Revelation, might be able to cast those crowns at his feet, might give those crowns to the Lord Jesus and tell him, you were worthy to receive these crowns. Yours was the grace that bought me. Yours was the love that bought me.

Yours was the grace that bore me along and gave me my incentives to serve thee and gave me the strength to do it. And, we will cast our crowns at his feet if, indeed, we have crowns to cast at our feet. Now, in setting the crowns, I don't believe that they are literal.

I believe that they distinguish ourselves. For instance, the crown of rejoicing, as far as the apostle Paul is concerned, were those of Thessalonians to whom he was writing, and he also referred to the Philippian as being his crown. Those crowns were people.

These are our crowns of rejoicing. However, I wouldn't say that they weren't, but that's a rather loose question as to whether or not they are literal. But, I rather think they are figurative.

But, we will be distinguished by one means or another for what we have done for our Lord Jesus Christ. And, we will be able to cast those crowns for the feet at his feet. I believe that is symbolic language.

Now, let's look at these crowns. First of all, I'd like to consider the incorruptible crown in 1 Corinthians, chapter 9. This is the crown for Christian living, and especially as it is seen as a race. What race? I think we might do well to begin our reading at verse 19 of the 9th chapter of 1 Corinthians, For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain more.

And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews. To them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law. To them that are without law, as without law, being not without law to God, but under the law of Christ, that I might gain them that are without law.

To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker of with you.

Now, he's talking about how he has extended himself in verses 19 through 23. The Apostle Paul extended himself in the matter of serving our Lord Jesus Christ. He put his all into it, and then he takes up the figure of the race, the example of the race.

He says, verse 24, Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the crown 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 therefore so run, not as uncertain, so fight I, not as

one that feedeth the air.

And, of course, he's taking up another figure of athleticism. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be attacked the way. Now, Paul does not mean by verse 27 that he loses his salvation.

He simply means that side he disapproves. The word is *adhokema*. The word was used at the fema, the judge's stand, in the pre-athletic game.

The apostle Paul uses these illustrations because they illustrate his truth. And at the fema, during the athletic contest, and after all we must recognize the fact that the Olympics started in Greece, the judges would view the men to see whether or not they were competing according to the rules. And, after they had won their victory, if they had carried on the contest in keeping with the rules, then they received the appraisal of the judges.

Adhokema approved. That was a high honor to the athletes of those days. But, if they were not fair, if they didn't take shortcuts, if they didn't set aside the rules, there was a pronouncement from the judges *adhokema*.

It means exactly the opposite. Disapproved. And, if he tells us that they had to erect a statue, their penalty was to erect the statue to the god Zeus.

Well, now, the apostle isn't urging us, of course, by these illustrations. These illustrations, as a matter of fact, Zeus isn't even mentioned here. But, this is history, secular history.

But, Paul is using this as an example. Now, here is the example. These athletes would strive so hard for what? What would they strive for? What was their goal? A leash that went around their head that would save.

Now, he is using the same example for you or for me. What have we got to gain by extending ourselves? And, we do extend ourselves, or should extend ourselves, in the Christian race. The Christian race is a long race.

We could look at it under five headings. We could look at it under the runner, then under the training that they have to undergo, and then we can see the race course, then there are spectators who are erased, and then, of course, there is inevitably the goal. Now, the runners were the apostle Paul.

He says, he speaks of himself, I therefore so run. And then he says to the Corinthians, so run that ye may obtain. Now, the Galatian converts were encouraged to run, and the Hebrew converts in the book of Hebrews were encouraged to run.

As a matter of fact, were all running the Christian race. Now, he says, know ye not that they which run in a race, that is a race of this world, run all. They all are running.

But one receiveth the prize. Now, he says, so run that ye may obtain a prize. But, you know, the race of the Lord is not like the races of this world.

Everyone who runs the Christian race, yes that's us, there's a whirling. Now, here is what the apostle Paul is saying. He says, the whirling, even though they know that only one man out of their group is going to receive that wreath of honor, they all run and put all they've got into it.

And he says, they know that only one of them is going to receive the prize. But you and I may run the race, and every one of us is going to receive a prize. If we run that race, this crown is for all the children of God.

None are excluded, and it is a race. Now, he says, if they do it, to earn that perfect crown, that wreath that simply fades away, what of us? What of us trying to earn an incorruptible crown? A crown that faded not away? Well, of course, that should be an incentive. Now, let's look and notice a little the zeal of athletes in this world.

And we have some dedicated athletes in this world. I remember in my earlier days, I did a little running myself. And I was very, very devoted.

As an athlete, I was very, very careful not to eat between meals. I would eat sweets and sugars. I followed a very strict diet.

I got to bed every night. It was really, well, I'll tell you, it was an obsession. I am sorry to say that.

But, it was an obsession. Well, I've got a few medals, and so forth, but, you know, I'll get them out once in a while and show them to my grandson, and the gold has certainly earned them, as a matter of fact, it's really not. They're junk.

That's all they are is just junk. They look nice and shiny at the time, but, I'm telling you, they have faded away. Now, if I had to work that hard, I would think indeed what I would do.

But, now, take, for instance, take, for instance, the enthusiasm of the athletes, the devoted athletes, the one who makes an obsession. Why do they do it? Why do they do it? And, if they've got a motive for doing that, why haven't you and I got a motive for serving our law that we may win an incorruptible prize that they did not await? Certainly, the incentive could be there. Oh, I'm not just the earthly athlete.

Well, athletes pronounce self-denial, that is, practices rather, self-denial. Those should be practiced self-denial. Let's take up the matter of its food.

It must be wholesome. It must nourish him. It must be of balance.

Now, you and I, indeed, need food for the Christian race, and here is our food. Now, we have some younger people here tonight, so I'm going to turn up a few pictures, and this is set 1 Peter chapter 4. Oh, this is not our food. 1 Peter chapter 2, I'm sorry.

Uh, he says, Therefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that she may rule thereby, if so be that she has tasted that the Lord is gracious. Now, Hebrews chapter 5, he says, in Hebrews chapter 5, speaking of the Lord Jesus in verse 11, Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing we are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again.

This be the first principles of the oracles of law, and it become such as have need of milk, not of strong meat. For everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness, that is, uses milk exclusively, is unskillful in the word of righteousness. For you see, that strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of youth have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Now, I believe the milk of the word of law is Christ in his humility, and the meat of the word of law is Christ in his actual nature. Now, we need both. The daily burnt offering which was offered upon the priest's altar every day, morning and evening, at nine o'clock in the morning and three o'clock in the afternoon, the daily burnt offering was really a threefold offering.

It was the offering of an animal, and it was the offering of what was called the meat offering which was really a fine meal offering, upon which was poured oil, and then there was a drink offering that went on top of those offerings. A gin of wine, I think, were left. Now, one was the burnt offering, and one was the meal offering, and they were combined together.

The one speaks of Christ what he was as God. The other speaks of Christ in his perfect humanity, but they are linked together in the one offering, and that offering was consumed upon the altar. Now, I wouldn't suggest that we ever outgrow the need of milk.

As Christians, I like a good glass of milk even to this day, but that is not my true desire. We need to get past the cross of Christ in our apprehension of the Lord. Now, I know that a young Christian, when God's first page is told, the cross of Christ means so much to him.

But, after he throws over in Christ, he finds out that he fellowships with the Lord. He fellowships with a risen, glorified Lord Jesus at the right hand of the throne of God. Now, we need both of these, and these are food for our souls.

We need both the burnt offering and the meal offering. Christ in his perfect humanity, and Christ in his reality. We need them both.

Of course, the drink offering would be Christ pouring out his life unto death, to accomplish his salvation and mine, and to glorify his throne. So, we must have the right kind of food. Now, the athlete is very, very particular.

As a matter of fact, I visited on the campus of the University of Oklahoma a number of years ago while visiting the Hall of Medicine in Norman, and I went over to the campus, and I found a dining hall where no one ate but the athletes themselves. Their diet was absolutely as carefully supervised as if they were in a hospital, and I was quite amazed. And, I thought, well, that would be an incentive.

I think there were a good many thick plates went over the counters of that dining hall. It has to be good, solid food. Now, we as Christians may spoil our Christian race by not the right kind of diet, because we can be feeding upon the things of this world and not upon the good change of law, and it will certainly show up in our ability to run the race.

Then, too, the athlete must have regular habits. May I suggest to you that, as Christians, we need to establish regular habits of prayer and regular habits of reading the word of God. We need to get our rest.

We need to get our rest in the presence of the Lord, and we need to get plenty of exercise, too, as athletes. Now, what about our habits? Do we really, seriously, publicly have a habit which will further our development as Christians? Do we set aside a certain period of the day in which we read the word of law? Is there a certain period of the day? Do we set aside certain periods in which we pray, and then be careful that that routine is not set aside? We do. I think we will get a lot more done if we do it that way.

Establish a good Christian routine in the matter of our Bible reading and in the matter of our prayer life. I'm sure that we get more accomplished. I think if there's anything that indicates the presence of the devil in this world today, it is, indeed, the chaos that he has introduced into the human family that absolutely telecasts against the routine of any family.

Now, I know that in some families that there is not a single member... Now, I hope I'm not offending anybody in saying this, but I'm just going to illustrate what I'm talking about. I have been in one home, some home, where no member of the family ate breakfast together. One had to go this direction, one had to go that direction, one had to go this direction.

And, absolutely, it was chaos. Sometimes life came out of the way of people being overrun. It's just better that way.

And, I do it, of course, for the sake of my own purposes, nor have I anything to say against it. But, you know as well as I do that you and I, in this day and age, are having difficulty establishing a routine that will favor our church's development. Everything mellifaciously.

They don't say they don't care how much you work on Sunday. Some of the brethren there, recently in Boulder, Colorado, had to go along with an union agreement that they would be working Sunday. They had to go along with an agreement that they would be working Sunday, or in the evening, they would be working in the evening.

Can't get out in the evening. And, that happens so consistently that I think there's a divine matter. Our lives are so absolutely chaotic that we can't establish a routine in which we can read and pray to God.

There is much to be said for a routine. Now, there's a difference between a routine and a rut. I don't think the Lord would have us get into rut, but I think it would be well if we can establish regular habits as Christians.

Now, these are practical, down-to-earth considerations. I find that one of my most difficult phases of my service to the Lord is the absolute lack of routine that I have. Now, may I confess to you, and confession is good for the soul, it takes all the discipline that I can exercise to see to it that I get a proper amount of reading of the word of God in a day, and a proper amount of prayer.

And, you thought you were the only person that had that problem. Well, now, you just thought wrong. I have the same problems, too.

There is so much to be said for establishing a routine, just like the athlete is regular in his habit. Let's work towards that end. Let's discipline ourselves.

Let's see what we can do about it. Let's see if we can actually make time for God. Can you take discipline? Now, if you don't exercise discipline, you're going to find out.

You're going to slip a little here, and you're going to slip a little there, and when you get to the end of the day, you're going to find out, to your dismay sometimes, that perhaps you haven't even opened your lips to a happy occasion with me. I'm not supposed to do that. Well, neither are you.

You know this. May I suggest that you do a little research in your own habit, and find out which is the best day, which is the best part of the day, which you can set aside for each one. It might mean getting up a

little bit earlier in the morning in order to be able to attend to Jesus, and that, of course, involves getting to bed a little earlier at night, but I'm sure that that won't hurt us.

Let's give it a little thought. Would you do that? Would you do that now, honestly, sincerely? Would you try to promise yourself that you'll do that? That you'll do some thinking about it, establishing regularity? That, indeed, is a very, very serious element in the athlete's training. Legitimately.

Then he must be purposeful. He must seek out new techniques, and you don't need to think that all the runners out do is just start spinning his arms and legs and running down a track. There's more to it than that.

Believe me, it has become, running has become an exact science, and it's paying off with these sub-per-minute milers and all that sort of thing, and these 16-and-a-half-foot pole vaulters. Oh, I wish somehow or other he could catch the spirit of the devoted athlete, and see how he studies with every moment, slow-motion moves. Studies everything.

He takes it seriously. Do we take our service to the Lord seriously? Or do we somehow just, just kind of say, well, I've got my work to do, after all, I've got to make a living, and if there's any time left, well, I'll give it to God. Now, did he give it to God, or did he give it to the or the TV, or the radio, or any number of different things? Let's don't single out anything.

Anything that he says, from the Lord, and from consideration of him, is to be reckoned with. Then, uh, and then he must be firm. Now, he says here, in 1 Corinthians chapter 9, Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain it.

Running is serious business. A person has got to be earnest. Running is hard work, and he has to behold himself to it.

Sometimes some runners run as if they were afraid they might run. Well, you can't run that way. You've got to put yourself into it.

And then, too, we have to run, and we have to compete according to the rules. That's what Paul was afraid of, that he would receive an adult email from our Lord Jesus Christ. He was afraid of that.

That he would receive that word dis-approved. That he would be set on the shelf because of not following the rules. Now, a man is not crowned except he's triumphantly.

Let's go to 2 Timothy chapter 2. We see again the athlete, the poor. As a matter of fact, the Christian is seen in a number of different figures in this second chapter of 2nd Timothy, but in verse 5 we read, And if a man also strives for lastly, yet is he not crowned, except he strives lawfully. He hasn't been crowned because he begins to perform.

If he doesn't exchange for the time within the limit, he's disqualified. If he steps over the pole to the inside of the pack, he is disqualified. Some of the qualifications are indeed very, very strict.

He must strive lawfully, or he will be disqualified. Now, this is the day of expediency. Now, when I think of serving our Lord lawfully, I think of observing the principles that God has set down in this book.

Now, I think that this is a day when expediency has crept in to spiritual circle, and oftentimes, I hope I'm not using too big words now, I know for some of our young people, but oftentimes principle is set aside in

the favor of expediency. There are shortcuts made in the things of God, and be careful, we may lose our crown because we do not strive lawfully. There is more than just simply getting to the goal first.

There is indeed getting to the goal lawfully. Now, a lot could be said about this, because I feel that there is a danger right in our attempt of setting aside principle in favor of expediency. Well, if it gets the people in, if it gets convergent, does it work? Let's do it! I wonder about that.

I wonder about that. A man must strive lawfully in accordance with this word. Now, apparently, we may get a lot of results by resorting to expediency, but I fear they won't be worth much.

Now, I'm not going to make this application for you, because if I did, I'd spoil it all, because you'd think, well, what business has he got to tell me what to do? I'm going to let you make that application. Now, there is also the race course that we've done. That is collected by the Lord himself.

May I suggest to you, well, let's turn to Hebrews chapter 12, please. Hebrews chapter 12, verse 1, Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our days, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, was tithed in the and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Now, notice here, we have our race set before us.

Let us run with patience the race that is set before us. The Lord chooses our course, and he may say, your running will be done in Africa, or your running may be done in New Guinea, or your running may be done in Omaha, Nebraska. He selects the course, and we follow that course.

There is a goal in mind, too, and this seems to be, as a matter of fact, this seems to be a relay race. Now, a relay race is one in which a number of different runners are used, and they carry a little light weighted stick which is called the baton, and one runner starts out, and he hands the baton to the next runner. He carries it for his prescribed part of the race, and hands it to the next runner, and then the anchorman changes the race last, and he must have the baton in his hand.

Now, that is called a relay race. May I suggest to you that the language of Hebrews 12 almost suggests that, and as a matter of fact, I think it does suggest it. Notice it again, wherefore seeing we also, we also.

Now, what's he talking about? Well, you see, we had the runners in the 11th chapter of Hebrews. They ran the race, and they ran it well. Now, here is the suggestion, wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which hath so easily beset us, and let us run with grace over patience the race that is set before us.

Our leg of the race is set before us. This is a relay race. Others have run, and they have run well, and now they are out of the race.

Some have fallen out just recently. Mr. D. R. Charles is no longer carrying the baton. My dear brother Arthur is not carrying the baton now.

Who did he hand it to? Who took it from them? Are we running well? One of the most disheartening things that I have ever seen is to see runners running in a race, and the three lead runners just run their cart out, if you'll let me use that expression, and they give the baton to the anchorman with a nice lead so that he can go on and run the race. And, he thinks that because he has such a good lead, that he can take it a

little easier. And so, he squanders the lead that those men have fought for and given him, and then he loses.

He doesn't run as hard as he should run, and when they come down to the finish line, though he is still ahead, he puts on a burst of speed, but he's amazed by the fact that the other runner has more sense left in him than he's probably had, and he is beaten out of the race. For, as if he had started that race and run it as he should have run it, they would have won the prize. Now, you and I are running a relay race.

How are we carrying the baton? Others have run well. Are we running well? Now, in this race, there are witnesses. There is the grandstand.

First of all, I think that the angels are watching us run this race. The Apostle Paul says here, verse 14, "...we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses." The cloud is over your head, of course, and we have witnesses to our race. There are others watching us run.

There are others always watching us run. And I'm sure that the angels are watching us. I wonder what they think of what we're doing to the Lord.

Now, you know, there's something so evident about a runner. You can tell when he's running and putting his heart into it. You can tell when he's walking.

If there's anything that shows up, it's ever on the part of the runner. What do they think? The angels are looking on. I think that we forget that.

Let's notice 1 Corinthians chapter 4 in this respect. Some have gone so far as to suggest that perhaps the other runners of the lead who have handed the baton to us are looking on. I can't see that I can be dogmatic about that, but I certainly can about the angels.

Notice, will you, please, verse 9 of the fourth chapter of 1 Corinthians, "...for I think that God hath set forth up the apostles last, as it were appointed to get. For we are made as spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." We are made spectacle. The world is watching us.

Angels are watching us. Men are watching us. All around us that are watching us, we are made spectacle to.

I wonder what they think of our efforts. I think sometimes we take the Christianity rather lightly. I heard one dear sister say one day after her heart was moved at a conference, she said, we're playing at this thing.

We're playing at it. That's the way she put it. I wonder if we are as devoted as we are polite.

Now, we're being watched by those all around us. Are we putting out our best efforts for the Lord? Now, the goal, of course, is to plead for Lord Jesus, and oh how wonderful it is to see Him, and to have to receive His adoration at the end of the race. Soon will earth's little day be done, and oh, to have His approval at the end of the race.

It is well done that our good and faithful service. I think the apostle Paul, too, was afraid of the fact that he would be disqualified for service right down here below. Not lost, but disqualified, and there is danger of being set on a shelf in the things that God and Paul fear.

That danger. Now, they do it to obtain a corruptible crown. Now, shouldn't this devoted athlete, he shouldn't be shameless in these matters, shouldn't be very much ashamed when he's got no more to gain by his efforts than he has.

A corruptible crown, he teaches his pen, plated over with a very, very thin plate of gold or silver. That's his incentive. Think of the incentives that we have in serving the Lord.

And thinking of the crown that we can earn, the pen, isn't it worthwhile running the race and putting ourselves into it? We are striking out with our legs, running. Take care of our service for the Lord. Now, I realize that much of our time is spent in walking.

The Christian walk, I think, speaks of the Christian life as a whole, and perhaps our running speaks of our service to the Lord. I think some will agree we can make that distinction, because we are all His servants. Many, many times we make the mistake of referring to those who spend their full-time work, whether they be missionary, mission worker, preacher, or whatever they are, we refer to them as the servants of the Lord.

We're all the servants of the Lord. Each and every one of us are servants of the Lord, and the Lord wants us to serve Him with purpose and heart, with devotion, yet even the devotion of an athlete. And, oh, when we think of the crown, the incorruptible crown, the crown that He gives, the crown that we can pass it as Jesus, may God help us to take these things seriously.

Now, I feel, you know, I feel almost apologetic when I see people who are having to work hard to earn enough for the prize of their family, for food for their children, and for clothing, and for paying the bills in this day of inflation. I feel a little guilty sometimes in getting up and giving ministry at this time, as if to say, you're not busy. I feel almost sometimes like a feral.

But, would you have me, would you have me call you on the phone? Would you have me sympathize with you? Yes, I know, I know, this is a busy life, and things have changed, and why you have to work so much harder now to maintain our standard of living. Would you want me to sympathize with you? Now, come on, leave it. Or, do you want me to just leave it as it is? Well, I'm not, I can't change the word of God, and I'm not going to change the word of God.

I just want to leave it as it is. And, I'm not going to feel too bad about it, because, you know, I'm teaching you myself. Now, you may not think that I'm sincere when I say that, but I am sincere.

I trust that you believe me when I say that I'm teaching myself. Oh, may God help us, so we won't have to reproach ourselves constantly in this matter, that we may put our soul in it and run with the devotion and the affliction to run for the Lord. Let us try to be closer to the Lord.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/8/SID8517.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ken-baird/continual-quickening-part-2/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net