

A Championship Team (2)

by Wayne Goff

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However, playing 162 games during the year takes its toll on the mind and body! It is a massive undertaking for any group of young men and their manager. Injuries, freak plays, teams that get “hot” at the right time, etc. all play a role in determining the outcome of a team. In spite of all this, the Royals finished **first** in the Central Division and had the **best record** in the American League! Their team’s goals when they started the season included (1) Winning the Central Division of the American League; (2) Winning the American League pennant in order to clinch home field advantage in the playoffs; (3) Win each of the playoffs leading up to the World Series — one 5-game series and one 7-game series; and then (4) win the 7-game World Series! They accomplished **every one of their goals** this year! What an amazing team of talent, leadership, and determination. These things don’t come along very often.

5: Endurance

Perhaps *the most invisible quality* of a championship team is its steadfast determination and hard work. I listened carefully as several of the leading players on this year’s championship team expressed **how hard each player** on the team had worked, some through serious physical injuries, some through personal adversity (three men lost a parent during the year), and all through the ups and downs of a long, hot summer. But it is safe to assume that each player kept his eye on the goal — win the championship for themselves and more importantly, for the team!

“Run That You May Obtain It!”

The apostle Paul makes the application for us in 1 Corinthians 9:24 — “*So run, the you may obtain it.*” The same qualities that comprise a championship team make up a winning local church! But it takes **even more effort** to go to heaven because it is a *long distance marathon* for us!

1. **TALENT.** Yes, a strong local church must have sound preaching in the pulpit, sound teaching in the classes, and sound leadership from the elders. Jesus gave these “*gifts*” (Eph. 4:8-11) to the church so that it might be a winning team.
2. **LEADERSHIP.** Elders are men who are mature in the faith, and who have made *personal application* of the basic principles of Christianity (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). They are to be disciplined both in mind and body. They are to be knowledgeable in God’s Word and in the personalities of people. They are to be leaders at home and in the community. They are to be humble, diligent and determined. Many are the enemies of the elders from within local churches. Men who are unqualified themselves yearn to be in positions of authority and influence. They work hard to overthrow the elders so that they can be in charge! They are the “*bramble bushes*” among the trees (Judges 9:7-21). Strong leaders are necessary to defeat the “*insubordinate*” (Titus 1:10) “*whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain*” (v. 11). It takes a lot to be a leader in the Lord’s church. The Devil has his disciples lurking everywhere.
3. **TEAMWORK.** Ephesians 4:16 *eloquently* describes the essential need of *every member* of the body of Christ doing his/her job! In my forty years of experience as a gospel preacher, I have seen so many missed opportunities because the church has *too many bench warmers*, and not enough *players*. The “*faithful few*” could do so much more with the help of the many. Strong churches are comprised of strong members who work as a team.
4. **GOAL-ORIENTED.** Heaven is the “*one hope of your calling*” (Eph. 4:4). It is worth every sacrifice, every effort, and the expenditure of every energy to obtain it. Heaven will surely be worth it all! Heaven is mentioned 501 times in the Bible for a reason. If you miss heaven, then you’ve missed it all!
5. **ENDURANCE.** “*For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise*” (Heb. 10:36). This is **the hard part** — staying focused on your goal, running the long distance marathon, and not growing weary in doing well! The Hebrew writer

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