

From This Corner
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Winners

I Peter 2: 9-10

I enjoy competition when I have a chance to win. I do not enjoy competition when I am certain to be loser. I'm not sure when competition became a reality in my life. My mother used to say it started early. She meant my brother and I were not immune to the sibling rivalry thing. Thank God that is over. I was the second born and always had to keep up with my bigger brother. He became a lawyer. I became a clergyman. He became a family court magistrate. I became a superintendent. I'm glad he recently retired so I can stop unconsciously keeping up.

My least favorite competitions were "The Presidential Fitness Tests" we used to take in junior high. I didn't like them because I did not do very well. Sit-ups, pushups, and the like were never my forte. I think I was marginally fit for my age and never excelled at the muscular types of sports. At that age I could pick up a fly rod and put a fly on a dime at a considerable distance. The problem is that the president could have cared less, and most of my classmates wouldn't have even understood what I was doing. I was a winner only to my dad, uncle, and the other older gentlemen we would occasionally meet on the stream.

Competition is still a part of my life. My wife and I play Scrabble fairly often. I have to be honest in saying that in ninety-nine percent of the games my wife beats me soundly. She has a uncanny way of coming up with words that have high value letters and place them on squares that multiply their value even more. Some of the drubbings are not a pretty sight. I try to convince her that I go easy on her since I know she likes to win so much. That doesn't work either. It is a lesson in humility.

In our culture "winning" has a lot to do with ones self esteem. The key to wellbeing in all areas of life is to find that one or two things at which you can win. Allow me to share with you a sure fire way to become a winner. This certain way of winning is becoming

valuable in the building up of God's reign. It is within the reach of everyone, and in the end it is the only winning that makes any difference. Listen to the word from I Peter:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people;¹

So as we begin this New Year I think we can all have a shot at being a "winner" by sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with others we meet in the world. I've noticed that literally everyone has a chance of being good at this as God has given everyone some gift or talent for doing it. Try it. I'll look forward to being there with you in the winners circle.

¹*The New Revised Standard Version*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 1989.