

# called to COMPETE

## LESSON 12

# DETERMINATION

*“I have fought the good fight,  
I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”*

2 Timothy 4:7

Her elementary school classmates used to mock her for her skinny “chicken legs” when she ran. But that all changed when she joined the track team in ninth grade. Allyson Felix is still listed at only 5-foot-6 and 125 pounds, but she isn’t teased by those who watch her run anymore. Not after she became the fastest woman in the world. After breaking Marion Jones’ national high school record in the 200 meters, Felix stunned the world by earning a silver medal at the 2004 Olympics at the age of 18. Later she became the world champion in three events—only the second woman ever to win three gold medals at the World Championships.

Felix’s determination to run isn’t only about winning. She said, “When you recognize that your athletic career is in God’s hands, it can keep you from getting caught up in the ‘winning is everything’ philosophy that so many coaches and athletes follow. Naturally, we all want to win or be successful, but unless we’re doing our sport God’s way, we’re not honoring and giving Him the glory. Whether you win or lose, you need to realize that your priority or goal is to bring the glory to God. Once I understood God’s perspective on sports, it helped me to enjoy my sport and gave me a greater purpose for running.”

- Do you think Christian athletes are more determined than other athletes? Why or why not?

# WORKOUT

READ PHILIPPIANS 3:12-16

## CONTEXT

The Apostle Paul uses the analogy of a runner to describe the Christian's spiritual growth. Since believers have not reached their goal of Christlikeness, they must continue to pursue it like the runner in a race. This goal of becoming like Christ is repeated many times in the Bible and is clear from passages like Romans 8:29, "For those He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers."

## EXPLORE THE MEANING

1. What is the upward call of God?
2. How is Paul determined to meet this goal?
3. How is it possible to forget what lies behind?

## MAN'S WAY OR GOD'S WAY?

Many athletes pursue goals that will only disappoint and frustrate them throughout their careers, but the Christian athlete should have a much greater goal. Just as the Apostle Paul was still striving with the purpose of being Christlike, how much more should we be striving to be like our Savior? Christlikeness should be our goal in all we do. We should be determined to obtain it and press forward at all times. Paul was determined to be obedient so as to not disqualify himself from the prize. He had a goal and was determined to meet it.

## GOING DEEPER

1. What are the common goals many athletes spend their lives pursuing? How can these be disappointing?
2. Are most athletes determined to become more like Christ?