

## Winning and Losing

By Sheila Johnson

We walk, talk, and breathe in a highly competitive world that often places a greater value on winning, at all costs, than on developing values that can ethically win ranks of trust and respect within humanity. We are a people whose DNA strands contain chromosomes that date back to the persuasive serpent, the rugged cave man, and the elusive sea god, Proteus. In addition to the mythical chromosomes, we actually create DNA strands that our progeny inherit when we buy into the social and psychological rhetoric of current day politicians and high-ranking counsel across the boards of institutions and organizations. The bottom line is that we want to, we need to, and we *must* be winners. Period. After all, everyone likes a winner. There is glamour, notoriety, and power in winning. At times we win with our brawn, and not with our brain. At other times we win with our brain instead of our heart. And yet, there are times when we conquer with our heart and our heart gets broken. But even with a broken heart, we are determined to become winners.

On the other hand, there are people who win with moral intentions, hard work, elbow grease (as my Dad would say) and faith in God and themselves. They move with discipline, fortitude, and long-suffering; they have the will to finish the race—not necessarily first, but just finish. They are more than winners; they are Champions. Champions don't always finish the race they set out to win, but they run the race well. Champions don't always succeed in reaching their goals, but they help others reach theirs. When Champions win, they do so with a humble spirit. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Champions may lose, and happily congratulate their competition on their victory. Champions know that their work was not done in vain and are always open to being the lesson and not the critic. Champions make the conscious decision to not give up, no matter how difficult the task. Champions look neither to the right nor to the left, but keep their eyes on the prize and remain focused on the task at hand. Champions are not magical or mystical but true people of courage who constantly see the good in others. Champions may appear on the boxes of cereal and on the front covers of *TIME*, *National Geographic*, and *Women's Circle* magazines; or they may simply live in the hearts and minds of someone whom they have helped. Champions are people who begin as advocates and may end as paracletes, angels, and heroes. Champions can start out as social justice representatives and end up as martyrs. Champions often work behind the scene, not seeking personal recognition, but giving public praise and thanksgiving.

Webster's dictionary defines winning as: gaining, succeeding, and disarming.

Webster's dictionary defines champions as: defenders, victors, and titleholders.

Are all winners Champions, and all Champions winners?