

YOUR GOLD MEDAL

by Matt and Chantal McGee

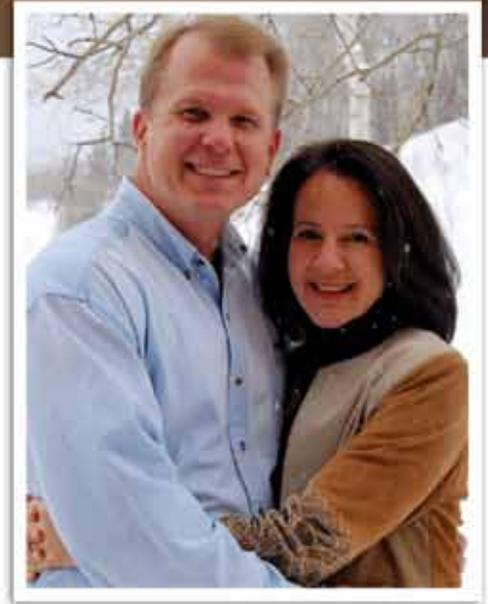
Watching the medal ceremony during the Olympics regularly brings people to tears. Why is this? Maybe we realize how much time and effort was necessary to win those medals. Maybe we recognize the sacrifices made to achieve that level of performance. Or maybe it's because the medal winner represents not just an individual, but millions of people. Regardless, when you look around the room at people watching one of their countrymen sing the national anthem with a gold medal on their chest, you can expect to see some emotion.

While very few will receive the Olympic gold here on earth, we are all invited to an even more meaningful medal ceremony – one where the prize remains forever. Paul raises the curtain on this ceremony in his message to the believers in Thessalonica:

*For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown
in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when He comes?
Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.* (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20)

Through Paul, God allows us to see what the gold medals will be handed out for at the end of our lives.

Notice what **will not be** our crown and our joy in the presence of the Lord. We see no mention of first-place ribbons, a beautiful house, making executive vice-president, or exotic vacations. These are not evil; they just won't matter in the end. What **will be** our crown and our joy, our hope and our glory before the Lord? PEOPLE - the lives we have invested in with God's love and truth. It begins with our spouses and children, and extends to co-workers, friends and family, and others with whom God provides opportunities to spend time. These are the medals that will last forever. May God give us the vision, discipline, and courage to pursue the things that will be our crown and joy for all eternity. May we run after gold medals that last.



We really benefited from the retreat and have refocused on the important stuff.