

Racing for Jesus With One Arm

Winner of the 2009 ESPY Award for Best Male Athlete With a  Disability, 36-year-old Jason Lester is proof that a dysfunctional home, physical trauma and personal loss aren't reasons to quit on life.

Already a regular on the Ironman circuit, Lester won the ESPN award after becoming the first person with a disability to complete the Ultraman triathlon—a grueling three-day, 320-mile biking, running and swimming race involving the world's top 36 endurance athletes.

“I feel honored that He's chosen me to do what I'm doing,” says Lester, who shares how Christ helped him endure his trials in his upcoming book, *Running on Faith*. “My hope is that people will say, ‘There is a greater cause and purpose in my life’ and see that God has a perfect plan for them.”

He has good reason for hoping people will believe that. At age 12 Lester was thrown nearly 130 feet from his bike in a hit-and-run. He suffered 21 broken bones, a collapsed lung, and his right arm was paralyzed. Only months later his father died of a heart attack. With his alcoholic mother already out of the picture, Lester threw himself into sports and eventually took up extreme running as a way of hiding from the pain. However, his conversion in 2001 showed him that God had given him athletic talent for a reason.

“My mission is to inspire others to use their God-given gifts and their calling for their life,” he says. Next up for Lester: He plans to run in the New York City Marathon on Nov. 7.