

How to Run Your Race to Win

We've all heard the phrase, "Everyone has a race to run." That just means we all have our own lives to live. And as Christians, God has a specific purpose and plan for each of us.

The apostle Paul says to us in Hebrews 12:1, "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (NKJV).

Part of what that means to me is to keep going, even in the midst of the difficulties in life. Much of life is just ordinary, everyday living. Yet a lot of what happens comes in the form of challenging situations, from little annoyances to serious burdens.

Hard times happen to us all. It's how we handle the situations we face that matters most. Second Timothy 4:7 says, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

Keep Moving. I once kept a record of all the petty peace-stealers that happened to me over a period of time. They were things like injuring my back ... breaking a nail. I left some luggage on a plane, and had a water leak in my humidifier. I hurt my arm doing stretches for my injured back, twisted my wrist, spilled a red drink on a white couch ... and I lost my pants at a spa! Some were small irritations; others were more serious.

But what I learned from this experience was simple: "Stuff" happens in life. But we don't have to let what happens keep us from fulfilling our purpose and serving God with our whole heart. It's just a waste of time getting upset over petty things. If you don't know what to do in a situation, just do

what you *do* know to do and keep moving forward.

We must learn to keep going in the midst of difficulties. One way to do that is to get your mind off yourself and help someone else. We all have problems, but our problems don't have to have us! I believe part of our victory comes as a result of our determination to just keep moving.

Rest. One major part of running your race is learning to rest. Now, that may sound like an oxymoron, but here's what I mean: Resting isn't about doing nothing. It's about being in a place of peace and completely trusting in God. From a position of rest, we can do whatever we have to do because our faith is not in ourselves, but in the One who gives us the strength and ability to do it.

God did the work of creation in six days and on the seventh day He *rested* from His work. He created Adam on the sixth day of His work, so Adam's first full day on this earth was a day of *rest*, signifying that everything we do is to be done from a place of *rest*. Jesus died for our sins and then sat down at the right hand of God ... a place of *rest* from His work.

In Old Testament times, a high priest made sacrifices for the sins of the people. This was done on a regular basis. But when Jesus came, His ultimate sacrifice paid the debt for all our sins, and He sat down at the right hand of the Father because His work was finished.

Learning to rest may be one of the most important things we ever do. Resting in God is like a vacation for your soul. In rest, you are not concerned with what others think of you or how everything is going to work out as you fulfill God's will for your life. Too many times, people get stressed-out about their circumstances. But really it's not the circumstances at all; it's the way they handle them that causes the stress.

To rest means to be in faith. You can be steadfast in the midst of trials because you know that God is in control and He

will see you through anything you face. That's what it means to work from a place of rest. You do what you have to do in peace, having complete faith in God's grace and His help to accomplish the task before you.

Run. Everyone has a race to run, a goal to accomplish, a life to live. And we all have to start somewhere. My encouragement to you is to start from a place of rest. Learn how to trust the Holy Spirit's leading. He will guide you and help you run your race to win.

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