

Joyce Meyer: How to Deflect Peace-Stealers So You Can Finish Your Race

Everyone has a race to run. That just means we all have a life to live. The apostle Paul says 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. Now, much of life is just ordinary, everyday living. Yet a lot of what happens comes in the form of difficult situations, from little annoyances to serious burdens.

Hard times happen to us all. But it’s how we handle them that matters most. And 2 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 a back injury, I broke a nail, 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 of serving God with our whole heart. It’s just a waste of time getting upset over petty things. And at the very least, 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 when difficult times come. One way to do that is to get your mind off yourself and your concerns and help someone else. The truth is we are happier and more content when we're helping others than when we're focusing on ourselves.

I want to encourage you to refuse to get stuck in an attitude of self-pity, selfishness or self-centeredness. We all have problems, but our problems don't have to have us. Our victory will come as we remain determined to just keep moving, doing what God puts in our heart to do.

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 complete trust in God. From a position of rest, we can do whatever we need 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 place of rest from His work.

In the Old Testament, maintaining a covenant relationship with God was all about work. The high priest went into the Holy Place to offer a sacrifice for the sins of the people. There was no place to sit in the Holy Place because he was there to work. But when Jesus came, His sacrifice paid it all and He sat down 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. A lot of times, people get stressed-out about their circumstances, but really it's not the circumstances that cause their stress; it's the way they handle them that stresses them out.

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 need to do in peace, having complete faith in God's grace 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 when it's time to sit ... to stand ... to walk ... and to run your race to win!