

“God With Us pt 4: Run to Win”

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Many times I watched, on tv, a marathon race hundreds and even thousands of people begin the race and then, only to watch a small number finish. The person who wins the race and the people who finished, trained and disciplined themselves to run and finish. The race was hard, challenging, demanding, painful, laborious, and at times wearisome. The contestants had to cast down thoughts of quitting, throwing in the towel, and continue to run, to press on, and at the times the natural elements were against them, but they pressed on to the finish line. The final finish and victory was worth all of their training, discipline, and self-sacrifice.

Because of their training and self-discipline, they pressed forward, some even tripped and fell, some had their opponents push them and became an obstacle of resistance but, they got back up and finished.

We are in a race, a contest of great spiritual significance. The way we train for this race and the way we run this race will determine whether or not we finish and receive the prize that is rewarded to us by Jesus.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (NLT)

“Don’t you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! 25 All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. 26 So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. 27 I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.”

1. We must train and discipline ourselves individually and as a team, Team Jesus.
 - a. Endurance training is training to build a strong heart and lungs so you can go the distance in a race or contest. (The heart represents, the heart of faith and a heart of love:
Romans 10:10 (NKJV) “For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
 - b. **Luke 6:45 (NKJV)** “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”

The lungs represents our ability to breathe which represents the breath of the Holy Spirit filling us to overflowing with the Power of God, the ability of God, and the Love of God.

Ezekiel 37:1-5 (NKJV) “The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. 2 Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry. 3 And He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” So I answered, “O Lord God, You know.” 4 Again He said to me, “Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! 5 Thus says the Lord God to these bones: “Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live.”

Ephesians 5:18-20 (NKJV) “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and

hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”

- c. Resistance training is a form of physical activity that is designed to improve muscular fitness by exercising a muscle or a muscle group against external resistance. (We must develop our faith muscles and maintain our exercises of faith and prayer.)

Ephesians 6:10-13 (NKJV)

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

Jude 1:20-21 (NKJV)

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

1 Peter 5:8-10 (NKJV)

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. 10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.”

2. Every race has opponents and opposition. Your opponents are determined to beat you and stop you from winning the race.

Acts 20:22-24 (NKJV)

“And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. 24 But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”

3. Jesus stressed to His disciples and to all His disciples (to us) the importance of endurance. Even when He was pointing to the last days, before His return, He emphasized endurance.

Matthew 24:7-14 (NKJV)

“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows. 9 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. 10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

Hebrews 12:1-4 (NKJV)

“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, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. 4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.”