

PREPARE TO RUN



Prepare to Run
Francko Westry | January 18, 2026
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5-Day Devotional: Laying Aside Every Weight

Day 1: The Race Set Before Us

Devotional: We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses—those who have walked faithfully before us. Their stories remind us that we are not the first to struggle, wait, or obey without seeing the outcome. Like runners preparing for a race, we must intentionally remove everything that hinders our spiritual progress. The race isn't about perfection; it's about persistence. Jesus, our ultimate example, endured the cross and despised its shame for the joy set before Him. Today, ask yourself: What weights am I carrying that slow my spiritual progress? What comfort, busyness, or distraction keeps me from running freely? Identify one weight and bring it before God, surrendering it completely so you can run with endurance.

Reading:

Hebrews 12:1-2 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, 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.

Reflection: The cloud of witnesses in Hebrews 11 reminds us that others have suffered, waited, and obeyed before seeing results—whose faith story encourages you when you face persecution or pressure for your beliefs?

Day 2: Comfort vs. Obedience

Devotional: "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful." Comfort is not inherently sinful, yet it can become a weight that prevents us from obeying God's call. When we choose what is easy over what is obedient, we resist the very change God is leading us toward. Jesus told would-be followers that discipleship requires sacrifice—no looking back, no excuses. Comfort reduces urgency and weakens our spiritual endurance. The Christian life requires pressure to develop perseverance. Are you so comfortable that you've missed God's movement in your life? This week, identify one area where comfort has replaced obedience. Take one step of faith beyond your comfort zone, trusting that God's plan is better than your ease.

Reading:

1 Corinthians 6:12 NKJV

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

Luke 9:57-62 NKJV

Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God."

And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house." But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Reflection: How does comfort function as a spiritual weight in your life, and in what areas might God be calling you to choose obedience over convenience?

Day 3: Busyness and Misplaced Priorities

Devotional: Martha was busy serving while Mary chose to sit at Jesus' feet. Both actions seemed productive, yet Jesus commended Mary for choosing "the better part." Busyness creates the illusion of progress while exhausting our souls and consuming energy without producing spiritual maturity. Our schedules can become so full—even with good things—that we have no energy left for God. Soccer practice, career advancement, and social commitments aren't inherently wrong, but when they completely push out time with God, they become weights. Examine your calendar this week. Does your schedule reflect your priorities? Are you doing many things but growing little? Carve out intentional time with God—even if it means saying no to something else. Stillness before God is not wasted time; it's essential.

Reading:

Luke 10:38-42 NKJV

Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

Psalm 46:10 NKJV

*Be still, and know that I am God;
Will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!*

Reflection: In what ways does busyness create an illusion of progress in your spiritual life while actually preventing genuine transformation and maturity?

Day 4: Information Without Transformation

Devotional: We live in an age of unprecedented access to biblical teaching—sermons, podcasts, conferences, study Bibles. Yet information without application produces no growth. The prophet Ezekiel described people who heard God's words with their mouths but whose hearts pursued their own gain. James warns against being hearers only, deceiving ourselves. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. Wisdom comes not from accumulating information but from applying it. You can attend every conference, fill notebooks with sermon notes, and still remain unchanged if

you never obey what you've learned. This week, review recent sermons or teachings you've received. Choose one truth and actively apply it to your life. Let transformation, not just information, be your goal.

Reading:

James 1:22-25 NKJV

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does”

Ezekiel 33:30-32 NKJV

“As for you, son of man, the children of your people are talking about you beside the walls and in the doors of the houses; and they speak to one another, everyone saying to his brother, ‘Please come and hear what the word is that comes from the Lord.’ “So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain.

“Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them.”

Reflection: The sermon suggests that information without transformation is a weight—what biblical knowledge do you possess that you have not yet applied or embodied in your daily life?

Day 5: Surrendered for the Favor

Devotional: The rich young ruler had kept all the commandments, yet Jesus identified one weight holding him back: his wealth. Jesus didn't condemn money; He wanted control of it. What we refuse to surrender reveals what controls us. God desires to bless us abundantly—not so we can hoard, but so we can be conduits of His provision. Surrender begins with small acts of obedience: the \$5 offering, the inconvenient service, the delayed gratification. If God can trust you with little, He will entrust you with much. The favor and double portion promised for 2026 require surrendered hearts. What is God asking you to release? Your career ambitions? Your need for approval? Your financial security? Like Paul, count everything as loss compared to knowing Christ. True freedom comes when nothing controls you except Jesus.

Reading:

Mark 10:17-22 NKJV

Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” So Jesus said to him, “Why do

you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, Good. You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’”

And he answered and said to Him, “Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.” Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.”

But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Philippians 3:7-8 NKJV

But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.

Reflection: What hopes, dreams, or plans do you need to surrender to God's timing and leadership rather than pursuing them on your own schedule, and how might this surrender position you for His favor?

Closing Prayer: *Father, reveal the weights I've been carrying. Give me courage to lay them down. Help me run my race with endurance, keeping my eyes fixed on Jesus. Transform my heart, renew my mind, and prepare me to receive Your favor. In Jesus' name, Amen.*