

Run your race!

We all have a race given to us as individuals - Heb 12:1 - Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance **THE RACE MARKED OUT FOR US.**

The race is not setup the way we think it should be setup - Eccl 9:11 I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but **TIME AND CHANCE HAPPEN TO THEM ALL.**

When we live God purposed, Time and chance does not matter - Rom 8:28 And we know that in all things **God works for the good** of those who love him, who have been **CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.**

Though each individual has his own race, it all comes together for one coach (which is Christ) and one goal - Eph 4:15-16 - 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

What distorts the goal? ...Human desire!

We aim for distorted message - 2 Tim 4:3-4 - 3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, **TO SUIT THEIR OWN DESIRES,** they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

Then we create distorted goals - 2 Tim 3:1-5 - But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2 **People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,** 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— 5 **having a form of godliness but denying its power. HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THEM.**

HOW TO RUN TO WIN

Like Paul we all should live driven to serve the Lord no matter what we face now - Acts 20:22-24 - 22 "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. 23 I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. 24 However, **I consider my life worth nothing to me, IF ONLY I MAY FINISH THE RACE and COMPLETE THE TASK THE LORD JESUS HAS GIVEN ME — the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.**

***If I run the race for any other reason than what the race is for, then I'm a worthless racer...**

You must prepare so you can race to win - 1 Cor 9:24-27 - 24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26 Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. 27 No, **I beat my body and make it my slave** so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Like Jesus, we must have our focus on the right goal and endure - Heb 12:2-3 - 2 **Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.** 3 **Consider him** who endured such opposition from sinful men, **SO THAT you will not grow weary and lose heart.**

Accept the conditions of your race, unless God opens the door to change - 1 Cor 7:17-24 - 17 Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches. 18 Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised. Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He should not be circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. **Keeping God's commands is what counts.** 20 Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. 21 Were you a slave when you were called? **Don't let it trouble you** — although **if you can gain your freedom, do so.** 22 For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is **the Lord's freedman**; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. 23 **You were bought at a price;** do not become slaves of men. 24 Brothers, **each man, as responsible to God,** should remain in the situation God called him to.

In order not to get distracted we have to consciously make those things that SEEM important to me worthless - Phil 3:7-9 - 7 But whatever was to **my profit** I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss COMPARED TO the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. →

➔ **I consider them rubbish**, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but **THAT WHICH IS THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST — THE RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT COMES FROM GOD AND IS BY FAITH.**

Elements needed to run your race to win

The main path to everyone's race is the Truth. Be careful that you are not led off course - Gal 5:7-10 - 7 **You WERE** running a good race. Who cut in on you and **kept you from obeying the truth?** 8 That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. 9 "**A LITTLE YEAST WORKS THROUGH THE WHOLE BATCH OF DOUGH.**" 10 I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. **THE ONE WHO IS THROWING YOU INTO CONFUSION WILL PAY THE PENALTY, WHOEVER HE MAY BE.**

There are only two paths and only two outcomes - Matt 7:13-14 - 13 "**Enter through the narrow gate**. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that **leads to destruction**, and **MANY ENTER THROUGH IT**. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that **leads to life**, and **ONLY A FEW FIND IT**.

Be aware of false motivations - Col 2:18-19 - 18 **DO NOT LET** anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. 19 He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

Reset ALL worldly motivations - 1 Cor 7:29-31 - 29 What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. **From now on** those who have wives should **live as if they had none**; 30 those who mourn, **as if they did not**; those who are happy, **as if they were not**; those who buy something, **as if it were not theirs to keep**; 31 those who use the things of the world, **as if not engrossed in them**. For **THIS WORLD IN ITS PRESENT FORM IS PASSING AWAY**.

We must make Christ the sole purpose - Phil 2:12-13 - 12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for **IT IS GOD WHO WORKS IN YOU TO WILL AND TO ACT ACCORDING TO HIS GOOD PURPOSE**.

Keep working towards the goal and not lingering in the past - Phil 3:12-14 - 12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on **toward the goal** to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Adding these three Godly reminders - 2 Tim 2:3-7 - 3 **Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus**. 4 No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs — **he wants to please his commanding officer**. 5 Similarly, if anyone **competes as an athlete**, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he **competes according to the rules**. 6 The **hardworking farmer** should be the first to receive a share of the crops. 7 Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

- **Like a soldier, Live to please our commander Jesus**
- **Like when your competing, we only live by HIS rules**
- **Like the Hardworking farmer, we diligently live for HIS reward**

In the end all races defined one way; LIVE FOR GOD - 1 Tim 6:11-16 - 11 But you, man of God, flee from all this, and **PURSUE** righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 12 **Fight the good fight of the faith**. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13 In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you 14 to **keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ**, 15 which God will bring about in his own time — God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

We all should strive to have the victorious ending - 2 Tim 4:7-8 - 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and **not only to me**, but **also to all who have longed for his appearing**.