

RUN TO WIN PART ONE: WHAT IS THE RACE and HOW DID WE GET IN THE RACE

FOUNDATIONAL VERSES:

“You know that in a race all the runners run but only one wins the prize, don’t you? You must run in such a way that you may be victorious. Everyone who enters an athletic contest practices self-control in everything. They do it to win a wreath that withers away, but we run to win a prize that never fades. That is the way I run, with a clear goal in mind. That is the way I fight, not like someone shadow boxing.” (1 Corinthians 9:24-26 ISV)

*“Therefore, having so vast a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, and throwing off everything that hinders us and especially the sin that so easily entangles us, let us keep running with endurance the race set before us, fixing our attention on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of the faith, who, in view of the joy set before him, endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Think about the one who endured such hostility from sinners, so that you may not become tired and give up.”
(Hebrews 12:1-3 ISV)*

Run To Win is our four part Bible Study To Go series focusing on keeping you moving forward throughout the high and low points in your life.

The focus of this series is to help you understand that you are in a race - a race called life. Unlike the competitive races that you may participate in or watch, your primary competitor is yourself, not other people in the race.

Even though you will have outside influences and hindrances while in the race.

In the series we will answer the following questions:

PART ONE

- What is the race?
- Why are we in the race?

PART TWO

- What's the purpose of the race?
- Where do we get the power to run?

PART THREE

- What are the elements of the race?
- How to prepare to run?

PART FOUR

- How to run the race?

Our life, especially our life as Believers in Jesus Christ, is described by Paul as a race. And it is a race that both needs to be won and a race that has already been won.

In the context of the race that Paul is alluding to in 1 Corinthians 9: 24-26, the 'stadion' (in greek). This race was the oldest Olympic sport and it was a sprint of over 600 feet. As a sprint, the person competing had to be conditioned specifically as a sprinter. However, in Hebrews 12: 1-3, Paul talks about the Christian life as running a marathon.

The sprinter's mental and physical conditioning is different from that of a person running a marathon. And, in this regard a person being prepared to run a sprint in the Christian life, is different from a person running a marathon in the Christian life. As Believers, we must be conditioned for both, the sprint and the marathon, because both are needed.

According to Livestrong.com, “The training programs for sprinters and marathons vary according to the specific demands of each running event. Sprinters focus on developing fast-twitch muscle fibers and phosphagen systems by improving speed, strength and power.

You can develop fast-twitch muscle fibers using plyometric exercises and strength training. Marathoners, however, focus on developing cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular endurance and stamina.”

(<https://www.livestrong.com/article/429810-sprinter-vs-marathoner/>)

What Is The Race:

- The race that all people are involved in, is what has become known as the race called life.
 - From Merriam-Webster,
 - “2a - literary : a set course (such as the apparent movement of the sun along a path over the period of a day) or a duration of time”,
 - “2b - archaic : a person's progression through life or through a period in life.”
- (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/race>)

The Race is our progressive movement during our period of time on earth. While we are alive, we are to be constantly moving forward. Even when we rest or need to regroup, our mindset and preparation is to be with an eye on moving forward.

Why Are We In The Race - By Choice and By Choice:

- **Our parent’s choice**
 - The decision of our parents to come together sexually, created the opportunity for us to be put into the race of life.
 - That opportunity, whether humanly planned or unplanned, if it resulted in our birth, it put us into the human race and we

became participants.

- **Our personal choice**

- Our decision to believe that Jesus Christ (being God) came to earth as a Man, lived as a Man, died as a Man, was buried as a Man, was Resurrected as a Man and will Return as a Man (in His fully identifiable transfigured form).
- Being born again is a decision, influenced by God, that we make and that decision makes us participants in another layer of our human race. The natural race becomes incorporated into a spiritual race with God being our Father, Jesus being our Brother and the Holy Spirit being our essence.

We were initially put into the race by natural means (our parents) and then we made a choice to get into the spiritual race with God as our Father. Our first birth came “by the will of man”, our second birth came by the Spirit.”

*“Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”
Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” (John 3: 3-8)*

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that

was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men... He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1: 1-4, 10-13)

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2: 8-10)

“...if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” (Romans 10: 9-11)

Bible Study Questions:

Do you feel that your life is similar to running in a race?

1. All of the time? _____
2. A lot of the time? _____
3. Most of the time? _____
4. Some of the time? _____
5. None of the time? _____

If you feel like you're in a race, how often do you feel like your primary competition in life is yourself or others?

1. All of the time? _____
2. A lot of the time? _____
3. Most of the time? _____
4. Some of the time? _____
5. None of the time? _____

Why do you feel like your primary competition is yourself or others?

If you don't feel that life is a race, how would you describe life? If you don't feel that life is a race and there's no competition, how do you assess your progress in life?

Have you made the choice to participate in the spiritual race by being born again? Why or why not? (If you'd like more information on making that choice, contact us)