

“Running to Win!”

We’ve all the heard the saying that it doesn’t matter if you win or lose – but it’s how you play the game. That is true but we all know if given the choice we would rather win than lose. Even the Bible says that we should run this race of life in such as way as to WIN the prize.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NIV

²⁴Do 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.

²⁵Everyone 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. ²⁶Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. ²⁷No, 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.

Are you running the race in such a way to win the prize?

What is hindering you?

Most of what hinders us is our mindset. It’s that our minds are filled with fear, excuses and the like. We’re called to have a renewed mind in Christ. The old man is dead through Christ. Read the two passages of scripture below and see how we are now in Christ Dead to sin. That means the old ways - the excuses, the fears – the reason why we can’t run to win are gone. Read the scripture below and pray and ask God to give you revelation on how you can Run to Win.

Ephesians 2:1-3 NIV

¹As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ²in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature^[a] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

Ephesians 2: 4- 9 NIV

⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.

What can you do to help you Run to Win?

All of us essentially start off in the same boat. We were all dead in our sins. Those sins hinder us. They make us fearful – they fill us with excuses (remember Adam and Eve). Now because of God’s great love for us we have been made alive in Christ. This life in Christ changes how we think – how we respond – how we live and how we run this race of life.

Just knowing this gives you more power to run to win. You are no longer trapped by your sinful nature. Through Christ you have been given the power – you have been made alive and you have dominion over sin. You have dominion over all the things that have troubled and plagued you.

If you started each day would this awareness – how could your life be different?

Ephesians 2:10 NIV

¹⁰For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

A lot of people “stumble” over what God has called them to do. He has called you to do good works. He has prepared you in advance to do these good works. In other words, you have already been prepared to win this race. You are especially crafted in such a way to do good works and to run in such a way as to get the prize.

This frees you up tremendously. You don't have to strive or try “hard enough” anymore. You simply receive and walk in what God has already prepared you to do.

Think about how this knowledge can alter the way you think. Think about how it can change the way you pray. You're no longer trying to convince Him to do good things in your life – you realize He's already prepared you to do good things. You can simply say God show me what good things you have prepared for me to do today.

What are some of the things you feel like God has shown you?

I Peter 5:13 -14 NIV

¹³She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark. ¹⁴Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

This salutation is often missed as just a simple “goodbye”. But at a closer look the mention of Mark (actually John Mark) is important. In fact Mark just isn't mentioned the apostle Peter actually says that Mark is like a son to him. This is very important if you know the whole story of Mark's life. You see at one point John Mark quit on Barnabas and Paul during a missionary journey (Scripture reference listed below). Paul was “none too happy”. In fact, at a later time Barnabas said to Paul let's bring John Mark along and Paul essentially said “No way” because John Mark had quit running the race. The good news is the story doesn't end there.

You see Barnabas went back and got John Mark. At some point John Mark starts to work with Peter too. We don't know all the details but we know that John Mark got back up and started to run the race again. In fact in the salutation above in 1 Peter 5:13-14 – Peter says my son Mark...in other words Mark (John Mark) was like a son to Peter. So the man that was once a quitter is now back in the race. We all stumble from time to time. Sometimes it's a big fall – but the key is to get back up and run in such a way as to win. It's never too late. **He's called us to do good works and He's called us to run in such a way as to win.**

Acts 15:36-28 NIV

³⁶Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." ³⁷Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, ³⁸but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work.

Even Paul changes his mind later about John Mark....see below

Paul says these words below to Timothy about Mark (John Mark)

2 Timothy 4:11 NIV

Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

So we see then that even if we have "fallen or quit" – God is able to restore us. We see also that sometimes God will use us to help restore someone else. The key thing is that it is God's desire that we run in such a way as to win the prize. Winning is God's idea. He has appointed you to Run in such a way that you Win.

My Prayer for you

Father I ask you right now in Jesus Name to give the person reading this the courage to Run to Win. I ask you to give them increased courage and strength in Jesus Name. I pray for hindrances, yokes, discouragement, and bad relationships to be broken off and to be replaced with life and godliness. Father your Word says that winning is your idea. I pray for a winning spirit to be this person's portion.
In Jesus Name - **AMEN**

It may be beneficial for you to read and re-read through this Encouragement Guide. There is power in keeping the Word always before you. You can order the DVD copy of the message by visiting www.monicaspeaks.com. The DVD is called "Running to Win"

Shalom,
Monica