

## *The Christian's Race*

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**Introduction:** It is exciting to see one begin a new life in Christ.

- A. Baptism is a first step to a way of life. **(2 Tim 2:1-6)**
  - 1. We need the patience of the farmer. **(Jas 5:7-8)**
  - 2. We need the disciple of the soldier and the endurance of the runner.
- B. The Christian's life is compared to a footrace.
  - 1. This is a race that has rules! You must compete in a certain way or be disqualified.
  - 2. What are the lessons we may learn from the runner?

### ***I. We must choose to start the race.***

- A. Every race has a course and has rules. **(2 Tim 2:5; 1 Cor 9:24)**
  - 1. I can not run in the neighborhood and then expect the IOC to give me a medal!
  - 2. I am told ahead of time the race will be difficult. **(2 Tim 3:10-12)**
    - a. Racing involves great sacrifice and effort.
    - b. Every one must "count the cost" before they begin the race! **(Lk 14:28-30)**
  - 3. If I start God's race, there will be support. **(Jude 24)**
- B. We start God's race when we are baptized into Christ. **(Rom 6:3-4)**
  - 1. This "newness of life" is the Christian's race. It is new because it is from God!
  - 2. There are many running the wrong course. God's reward is not in these races.

### ***II. We must expect to make sacrifices in order to finish***

- A. We cannot take this race on and expect to do everything we want. **(Heb 12:1; 1 Cor 9:25-27)**
  - 1. We "lay aside every weight" because we want to finish. There is nothing more important! (Ex. Man who started race with raincoat and medicine bag.)
  - 2. What must we give up to become a Christian? **(Lk 14:33)**
- B. The great weight we face is sin. **(Lk 21:34)**
  - 1. There will be the temptation to run in other races with Satan and his multitude. **(1 Pt 4:1-4; Jude 11)**
  - 2. Your associates will have much influence on which race you run.
  - 3. Sin by its very nature is distracting. You cannot have the kind of concentration necessary to finish this race when you practice sin. (Ex. Shoestring, blisters)
  - 4. There is great power in a good conscience. **(1 Tim 1:5-6, 19; 1 Pt 3:16)**
  - 5. When our affections are in different places we will never finish the race. **(Mt 13:22; Jas 1:6-8)**

### ***III. We must be consistent***

- A. We must never quit. **(Heb 10:35-39)**
  - 1. There is only one goal, we must finish!
  - 2. Those who quit suffer the pain of the race and the pain of their own conscience.
- B. We need the wisdom to do those things that will make us regular.

1. There are many who are like a comet. They burn brightly for a short while and then they are gone. (Ex. The Tortoise and the Hare)
2. God knows our limits and we must let him “train” us as to what things we should take on and what things we should lay aside. **(Mt 11:28-30)**

**Slow Me Down, Lord**

Orin L. Crain

Slow me down, Lord.

Ease the pounding of my heart by the quieting of my mind.

Steady my hurried pace with a vision of the eternal reach of time.

Give me, amid the confusion of the day, the calmness of the everlasting hills.

Break the tensions of my nerves and muscles with the soothing music of the singing streams that live in my memory.

Teach me the art of taking minute vacations -- of slowing down to look at a flower, to chat with a friend, to pat a dog, to smile at a child, to read a few lines from a good book.

Slow me down, Lord, and inspire me to send my roots deep into the soil of life's enduring values, that I may grow toward my greater destiny.

Remind me each day that the race is not always to the swift; that there is more to life than increasing its speed.

Let me look upward to the towering oak and know that it grew great and strong because it grew slowly and well.

3. In a race you must choose a wise pace! You give your all but with wisdom.

***IV. We need to draw on the support of others***

- A. There are great examples in the Bible and in our lives we can be encouraged by.

**(Heb 12:1; Phil 4:9)**

1. We naturally do better when there are others who give us encouragement.

(Ex. Nathan and Stephen at a race)

2. Parents can instill by example powerful lessons.

- B. There will be those who seek to discourage us. **(Heb 12:3-4)**

1. We should not be surprised because Jesus faced these men too.

2. There also will be those in the church who hinder. **(2 Thess 3:2)**

3. Who do you concentrate on, the encourager or the harsh critic? The choice is yours! (Ex. I will not come because of the hypocrites! Ex. Putting on blinders)

- C. We each need to encourage others in this great race. **(Heb 10:23-25)**

***V. We must concentrate on the finish.***

- A. This is given great emphasis in the Bible. **(Heb 12:2)**

1. Every runner knows the pain of the race. Why does he do it anyway?

2. When we lose sight of the finish then we will lose courage.

3. In a serious race runners will look over the course ahead of time.

- B. We must look to Jesus and run a straight race!

***Conclusion:*** Can you picture the finish line now? **(Rev 21:2-5)**