

## Running Differently

I used to be a runner. I loved racing; and I loved the joy, freedom, and clarity of thinking that a good run could afford me. Then I got a hip replacement and had to end my running career. I now appreciate a good, brisk, contemplative walk—with some jogging thrown in there.

When I was having to come to terms with this change in my body and my lifestyle, I found several scriptures in the Bible that use the word “run” or “running” as a descriptor or metaphor.

In Proverbs we read, “The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.” In Isaiah there is this famous passage: “those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.”

We run from our problems and fears, as Hagar ran from Sarai in Genesis. Later in the New Testament, in the Garden of Gethsemane, all the disciples deserted Jesus and ran away.

The bible tells us to flee from temptation; flee the evil desires of youth. We are to “throw off everything that hinders us and the sin that so easily entangles and run with perseverance the race marked out for us.” We must keep our eyes on Jesus and not our circumstances or ourselves.

The race metaphor is one that is used repeatedly in scripture. “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.” (1 Corinthians 9:24). We need to run with purpose and discipline. Work and preparation is involved in running towards our heavenly reward.

Paul wrote that he “fought the good fight; finished the race; kept the faith”. He wrote in Acts: “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.”

So, we need to ask ourselves: What am I getting out of this particular race I am in? Recognition, fun, money, success? Or am I pursuing righteousness, faith, love, and peace? When we fall off track, we must ask ourselves the question posed in Galatians, “You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?” What voice are you listening to? Stay focused.

Finally, the theme of persevering and discipline suggest that it takes more faith and yields greater rewards to go *through* a trial than to expect an instant miracle. Keep putting one foot in front of the other, running the race marked out for YOU.

-Susan Landry, LPC