

## Week 9 Day 2 | *Running the Race: The Plan*

One of the many differences between novice and experienced runners is that novice runners “wing it.” They train when they feel like it, if at all. They wear their lawn-mowing shoes and some cotton socks. The morning of the race, they’re overdressed and under-hydrated. When the gun goes off, they start with a sprint and finish with a whimper.

Experienced runners know that running to win requires a plan. Their training is diligent, and it’s specific. They do hill work, speed work, pace work, and long runs. Their equipment is individualized: shoes that match their foot type, with limited miles, worn with a synthetic blend sock. They understand that overdressing results in overheating, so they start the race cold. All week they’ve been hydrating. They know they’ll lose pounds of water during the race, which if not replenished, will slow them down. When race day comes, they fight the impulse to give in to the adrenaline. Instead, they have planned the maximum pace they can maintain, while still finishing strong.

If we are to run to win, we will need a plan. Halfhearted efforts will give us halfhearted results. So winging it neither helps you nor honors God. We are called to do all things for God’s glory:

*“Don’t you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win!”—1 Corinthians 9:24 (NLT)*

Where winning our race toward fitness is concerned, we require a plan. A plan helps dictate performance. It gives us confidence and eliminates uncertainty. It gives us freedom because we are no longer enslaved to the nagging conviction of complacency and indifference. A plan gives us direction and hope as we finally have a roadmap to reach our goals.

Just like we don’t fall into a good relationship with Christ, neither do we fall into being in good shape. We have to be intentional if we are going to see results. That intentionality requires a plan for our fitness, and our Father wants to be involved as we develop ours.

Here’s the dirty little secret to a fitness plan: it changes. In fact, it must change as your health improves and your body develops. If there’s an injury, if you get stronger or faster

or lighter or heavier, adjustments need to be made.

Fitness plans also change when life “happens.” Family schedules rearrange, new commitments are made, work responsibilities kick in, and vacations roll around. If you’re struggling with a plan at Week 9 of this 13-week journey, hearing that change is inevitable should be a relief. Runners adjust their plans if they start to cramp or if they’re running when it’s especially windy. You can adjust your plan too.

That said, making an adjustment to your plan assumes you have one. You would not drive across the country without having a plan on how to get there. As 1 Corinthians 9:27 goes on to say, “Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly.” We must take aim.

Having a hard time devising a plan? Pray for wisdom. God gives generously. If you have a realistic plan already, but are having trouble staying committed, pray for strength. God gives generously. Or if you’re doing great on your plan, pray for continued endurance. God gives generously.

Relying on our God who gives generously to His children is always a good plan.

### Prayer

*Father, thank You that out of Your infinite wisdom, You can supply my needs in all areas of my life. Will You forgive me when I don’t seek You or I don’t run to win? Please bring balance to my plans that I might bring You glory at the finish line. Amen.*

### Meditation

God gives generously.

### Daily Spiritual Exercise

As a part of your reading out loud today, include James 1, paying special attention to verses 5–8. These verses talk about wisdom and our need not only to pray for it, but to expect it. God, as verse 5 says, “gives generously.” So pray that His generosity would be poured out over you, expect it, and praise Him when His wisdom comes.