

WEEK 9 PREVIEW

Running the Race

A race seems simple enough. Start digging a little, though, and you quickly find there's a lot to it. A race has different stages: start, middle, "the wall," and the finish. A race has many components: pacing, water breaks, the crowd, the racers, and the reward. Let's not forget the spectrum of emotions that come with it: uncertainty, excitement, nervousness, exhilaration, doubt, dread, and triumph.

That's why a race is the perfect analogy for what we're doing in our lives. Like a race, life requires a strategy. Float through it without intention and you'll find insignificance at the finish line. Just like a race, life is hard. Fighting the flesh might get easier, but it's never easy. A race is brief. In light of eternity, so are our lives.

This is why the New Testament uses the race analogy several

times. It's easy for us to relate it to our Christianity. We see it in Acts, Galatians, 2 Timothy, Hebrews, and perhaps most notably in 1 Corinthians 9:24:

"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." (NIV)

The race Paul is referring to here, of course, is the Christian faith. Yet once again, we can also apply principles found in Scripture to our fitness. When we do, we find perfect instruction, conviction, and encouragement to guide us throughout this journey... a race in its own right.

Daily Spiritual Exercise: Out Loud

We are in the heart of the "fortitude phase" of Week 9. This might seem like a strange practice, but for your Scripture reading and prayers, talk to God out loud . . . not just in your heart. There's something about hearing yourself speak aloud that helps reinforce what you're actually saying. We need all the reinforcement we can get!