

Running Life's Race

by John Isaac Edwards

Saturday, May 7, in downtown Indianapolis, Indiana, thousands participated in the 40th running of The One America 500 Festival Mini-Marathon, one of the premiere half marathons in the country. Are you aware that our lives as Christians is like running a race?

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor. 9:24-27).

1) The Race Is Open To All. Jesus invites, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden...” (Mt. 11:28). The Lord commissioned the apostles, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk. 16:15). Paul wrote Titus, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Titus 2:11). The Bible closes with the invitation: “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth

say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17). Whosoever



will may take part in the greatest race of all!

2) One Must Enter The Race. It's not enough to just hear

about the race or to think or talk about entering it. One must enter! With the Indy Mini, one must meet the entry requirements to participate in the race. The entry requirements of life's race include five steps: *First, one must hear the gospel.* God said, “...This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Mt. 17:5). *Next, one must believe in Christ.* Jesus declared, “...for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (Jn. 8:24). *Then, one must repent of his sins.* The Lord taught, “... except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Lk. 13:3, 5). *Next, one must confess Christ.* Jesus instructed, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Mt. 10:32). *Finally, one must be baptized.* Acts 2:38 records, “...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” This steps puts us into Christ (Gal. 3:27) and the one body (1 Cor. 12:13), qualifying us to run!

3) One Must Run. One can't just enter the race, stay in the corral and not run, and expect to obtain the prize. We must run! Paul appealed to the Corinthians,

“...So run, that ye may obtain” (1 Cor. 9:24).

4) One Must Run Within The Proper Course. One must run the One America Mini Marathon Route. Suppose a person mapped out his own 13.1 mile course and finished it ahead of the fastest runner in the Indy Mini. He then shows up at the Mini Marathon to claim his prize. Do you think they are going to award him the prize? Of course not! We must run within the proper course, and our spiritual race course is within the Lord’s church. “There is one body...” (Eph. 4:4), “...which is the church” (Col. 1:24). It is God-planned (Eph. 3:10-11), Christ-built (Mt. 16:18), Christ-headed (Eph. 1:22-23), blood-purchased (Acts 20:28), and Heaven-bound (1 Cor. 15:24).

5) One Must Run According To The Course Regulations. Participants who do not adhere to the course regulations are disqualified and asked to leave the racecourse. The same is true when running life’s race. Paul said, “And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully” (2 Tim. 2:5).

There are rules and regulations to be observed. “Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule...” (Phil. 3:16). The Bible is the rule book!

6) One Must Run With Patience. Hebrews 12:1-2 records, “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” It takes a lot of endurance and perseverance to run life’s race! As one is in the corral getting ready to run, there is a lot of excitement and enthusiasm. It’s not long but what aches, pains, and fatigue can begin. There will be points where you see other fellow-runners who have quit running. It’s like Paul asked the Galatians, “Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” (Gal. 5:7). There are other participants who inspire you. There are those who hand you a cup of cold

water. There are those who offer words of encouragement to you — you can do it, you’re doing great, you’re half way there, just another mile! Those small things are a BIG help! The Lord said, “...he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Mt. 24:13).

7) One Must Finish. We have to run till the race is over. And the greatest feeling in running is crossing the finish line! Paul said, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:7-8). The incorruptible crown at the end of life’s race will trump any corruptible crown one might obtain! (Rev. 2:10).

As one crosses the finish line of the Indy Mini, he goes to the family reunion area in Military Park. You may spot a loved one who comes running and throws his arms around you with tears in his eyes. What a day of rejoicing that will be at the end of life’s race!

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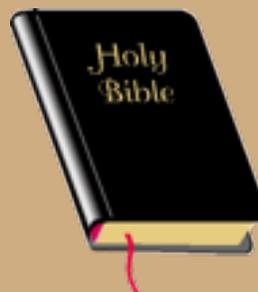
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