

4 Ways to Run Your Race

Introduction. Near the end of his life, Paul said he wanted to finish the race and win the crown (2 Timothy 4:7-8). We're exhorted to "run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1-2). In Revelation 2:10, many were apparently persecuted, but they finished the race — even though Jesus said only a few will finish (Matthew 7:13-14).

Therefore, the question needs to be asked: How can you run the race? In our development to get better and better (2 Peter 1:5-11), I want to suggest four ways you can run your race.

I. Develop Greater Trust in God

- A. Learning His character is the first step in trust (Lamentations 3:21-26).
- B. Remember God's past faithfulness in your life. Psalm 42 shows how the writer is distressed, yet he told his soul to hope in God because future praise is still possible (cp. Psalm 27:1-6, 13-14).
- C. Jesus wanted us to pray to the Father and draw closer to Him (Matthew 6:9-13). Jesus also taught that growing faith overrules paralyzing fear (Matthew 6:24-34; cp. Psalm 56:3).

II. Be Faithful in Worship

- A. Worship deepens our fellowship with God (Psalm 63:1-4).
 - 1. The psalmists taught beautiful spirit in worship (Psalm 27:6; 95:1-2).
 - 2. Christ taught beautiful spirit along with true worship (John 4:23-24).
 - 3. Early Christians practiced consistent, not occasional worship (Acts 2:42).
- B. Worship draws us closer to God and each other; self-willed absence is sin (Hebrews 10:23-25). Those who leave faithfulness to the Lord "crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame" (Hebrews 6:6).

III. Love Your Family

- A. God designed family relationships to enrich our character (Ephesians 5:25).
- B. We should fulfill our duties by unselfish love (Colossians 3:18-21), and manage our households in a righteous way (1 Timothy 3:5).
- C. This will cultivate healthy attitudes while banishing selfish, bitter, and destructive attitudes (Ephesians 4:31-32).

IV. Spread the Gospel

- A. Only the true and adulterated Word can save (1 Peter 1:22-23).
 - 1. Church councils and ecclesiastical tradition can't save people.
 - 2. Latter day revelations also can't save people.
- B. Who will tell people if it's not us (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:4; 20:20-21; Philippians 1:12-18; 2 Timothy 2:24-26)?
- C. We can't be ashamed to uphold the one true gospel. We shine the light by word and deed (Philippians 2:14-16), and we boldly defend God's truth and God's people (2 Timothy 1:7-8).

Conclusion. How can we finish the race? Put greater trust in God, be faithful in worship, love your family, and spread the gospel. Christians are people who leave the past and press toward heaven (Philippians 3:13-14). If we'll finish the race, we'll win the crown (2 Timothy 4:7-8). If you're in sin, start the Christian race! If you've fallen back into sin, resume the race! Christ both calls sinners in the world (John 3:5), and saints mired in sin (1 John 1:9).

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