

## Run Your Race

### **Ready:**

?You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth??  
-Galatians 5:7

### **Set**

This weekend Gary Brasher will attempt to accomplish something that most of us would never even consider, much less aspire to, when he completes a triple-iron triathlon. That?s a full iron-distance triathlon every day for three consecutive days! He will swim, bike and run his way over 422.6 miles in a 72-hour span! It is truly one of the most difficult sporting endeavors ever imagined.

I can still remember my first triathlon. It was many years ago now, and it wasn?t anywhere near the iron distance. In fact, it was a ?sprint? triathlon: .5-mile swim, 16-mile bike and 5K run. And as you can imagine, the name ?sprint? indicates that you should basically be able to ?go all-out? in a race of that distance. But for me, my first race was a debacle.

My goal was simply to finish. I had modestly trained for a few weeks and was pretty confident that I would be able to do it, but since it was all new to me, I really didn?t know for sure. As I prepared for the race, I remember asking a number of friends that were experienced in the sport for advice. They were all a tremendous help, but alongside their training tips and technical advice came one important message from a friend who said, ?Just run your race.? In essence, ?Don?t worry about what everyone else is doing. Don?t get sucked in to the pace of the rest of the racers. Simply run YOUR race.?

I was impressed with the simplicity of the advice, especially since many of these friends had completed in iron-distance events. They knew that I would be tempted to give in to the competitive spirit even though I was not physically prepared to go all-out. They also knew that my adrenaline would be high and that my mental approach to the event would have to control my emotional response to the electric race environment.

As the swim began, I foolishly threw their advice out the window and decided to try to stay stroke for stroke with the strongest swimmers. As a former competitive swimmer, I suddenly believed that I was 16 again and could go out in front and avoid the congestion of all the bodies in the water. Needless to say, that was not the race strategy I?d planned! And the fact that the water was only 60 degrees gave me an instant shock experience that left me gasping for air?something that I wouldn?t really recover from until I dragged myself from the water.

It didn?t take long for me to have my first ?near-drowning? experience as I completely ran out of gas. I nearly had to quit the race because I chose not to run MY race. I got caught up in the

excitement of the event and decided to abandon my plan and do what the other competitors were doing.

In Galatians 5:7 Paul asks the Galatians why they stopped running their race. Jesus had given them a specific race to run—one of freedom, grace and love. Unfortunately, they got sucked back into following the requirements of the Law; they were burdened again by trying to earn God's favor. They'd lost the joy and peace that they'd received through the simple belief and trust in Jesus. Basically, they'd stopped running their race.

For me, it's so tempting to return to my old ways of trying to earn God's favor—to be performance-driven, to be "good enough," to follow the rules, to think that God is only pleased with me when I'm achieving or doing things just right. But this is a burden of slavery. And it's a lie. We are saved by grace, and we are changed by His Spirit. It's not something we do; it's something He alone can do in us.

So, don't get derailed by what someone else is doing. Don't let the emotion of the moment get you off course. Don't let your old ways of doing things make you abandon the new. Run YOUR race. Stick to His plan and let God keep you on the path that leads to life.

## **Go**

1. Have you let yourself get off your race path?
2. Is it easier for you to measure your relationship with Jesus based on what you do rather than on what He is doing in you?
3. Do you think that you can earn God's favor? Why or why not?

## **Workout**

Acts 20:19-24  
Galatians 5:7  
Philippians 3:12-14  
2 Timothy 4:7-8

## **Overtime**

"Father, I pray that You would give me strength to stay focused on the task that You have given me. Keep me from getting caught up in someone else's race or being controlled by my emotions. Thank You for speaking to me clearly through Your Word so that I can hear Your voice, be filled with Your Spirit, and run the race you've given me to run."

Check out [www.tripleiron422.com](http://www.tripleiron422.com) to learn about one man's quest to inspire youth with the message of faith through endurance as he completes three Ironman triathlons in three days! That's 422.6 miles in 72 hours!



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