

## **200 Meters**

### **Ready:**

*“Then the LORD reached out His hand, touched my mouth, and told me: Look, I have filled your mouth with My words. See, today I have set you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and demolish, to build and plant.”*

- Jeremiah 1:9-10

### **Set**

When I was 13 years old, I entered a city-wide track meet. My younger sister was a talented sprinter, so my parents and I wanted to see if I had the gift too. We lived in a city east of Chicago, and, as I entered the track and went to check-in for my race, I noticed everyone else around me was a lot taller and bigger. At just over 5 feet and 115 lbs., I was what most parents and coaches call a "late bloomer."

As the official called out our names and we lined up in our lanes I started to get a slow, sinking feeling that I shouldn't be there. To my left was a 14-year-old boy who looked like a man. Chiseled arms, quads as big as my torso, sweat pouring down his face—the guy looked like he was gonna hurt somebody. To my right was another man-boy. Sleeveless T-shirt, ginormous calves, and he, too, looked like he was in the mood to destroy someone.

Before I could even think about how maybe I really, really shouldn't be there, the official yelled, "Runners, take your marks." Within seconds the starter's pistol exploded, and the race was on. No time for second thoughts. We...just...ran.

Around the turn and down the straightaway it was painfully, brutally obvious. I was still a boy among men. Soon, all seven runners had pulled away, and I watched each of them cross the finish line. I couldn't run any faster; I couldn't physically do anything to change the events that were unfolding before me. And as I eventually approached the finish line myself, a group of three girls pointed, jeered and laughed, boisterously yelling, "Look at that skinny kid!"

I can't remember much of what happened after the race, but I do recall being in tears on the walk back to the car. With a bright red face and through a mess of snot, I think I shouted at my parents that I would never run track again. At the time, for a 13-year-old boy, it was crushing.

Why do I retell this particular story? Because, eventually, I would return to the track as a distance runner. I ended up running on the varsity team in high school, going to the State meet, getting some accolades in cross country and even earning a college scholarship to a NCAA Division II school. Considering all that success, how could I even remember my first 200m dash? Honestly, I didn't...until over a decade later.

What God revealed to me through this memory is that my demoralizing sprint was far more damaging than I ever realized. It was on that track, after that race, that I accepted a lie: "You aren't good enough." From that moment on I worked as hard as I could to make sure I never had to experience that scenario again. I gravitated toward things I WAS good at. I made sure that I prepared, prepared and prepared some more. Perfectionist became my middle name. Self-criticism was my weapon of choice.

Over the next 13 years, this lie played out in all sorts of ways. From a faith standpoint, I tried to "do" things to earn God's love. I didn't want to let Him down. When I failed, I was distraught, so I'd vow to try harder and harder. Eventually, however, I would fail again, and the cycle would continue. The number of broken promises I made to God during high school and college was unimaginable.

You might not be able to think of a moment when you were fed a lie like this. Like I said, I had forgotten about my moment until recently. But there is undoubtedly lies you've believed and probably ones you're believing right now. These are from the pit of Hell. As a Christian, you are a child of God, intimately known by Him even before you were born. The Creator of the Universe loves you. Did you get that? Read that again. The Creator of the Universe loves you. There is nothing you can do to earn more or less of His love. You have been chosen to do His work. You have the Spirit of God living and dwelling inside of you. You've been completely forgiven for what you've done and what you will do because of the work and sacrifice of Jesus. You are a new creation. The old is gone, the new is here. And in the end, Heaven awaits.

Whatever lie or lies you've bought into, read what God's Word has to say about it. Then, send that lie back to Hell where it came from. May you find comfort, encouragement and rest in the promises of God. May you daily engage the awesome, often untapped, power of the Holy Spirit. And may you break free of the chains of discouragement, guilt and despair. Jesus has so much more in store for you.

## **Go**

What lies are you believing right now?

What does God's Word say about them?

What are some ways that you can experience God's love today?

## **Workout**

John 1:2

John 15:16

Romans 6:23

Romans 8:1

Ephesians 1:7, 13

Ephesians 2:10

Ephesians 3:17-19

Colossians 2:10

## **Bible Reference:**

Colossians 2



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