

## **Be Careful. Stay on Course.**

### **Ready:**

“Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk — not as unwise people but as wise.” --  
Ephesians 5:15

### **Set**

For the trail runner whose races take them on all types of terrain, staying on course is essential. Normally, plastic streamers hanging from branches and arrows painted on the ground mark the route. Regardless, one thing is sure: Finding your way to the finish requires attention, discernment and focus.

An ultrarunner myself, I was once at mile 94 of a 100-mile race when I passed a struggling runner who asked whether I would mind some company for the last few miles. The long descent traversed back and forth across the mountain. Continuing on, we increased our chatter. Eventually, I realized the roar of the river was not getting closer as it should. Distracted, we'd turned left rather than right at a bend in the trail. We had to turn and run several miles back up the mountain. Sure enough, there were streamers marking the correct direction. Our focus had failed.

This kind of situation is not uncommon in races, in life and in our spiritual walk. Though veering off course can be like a sudden change in direction, most often we are gradually pulled off course without even realizing we are headed the wrong way.

Focus and discernment are skills that we must develop through time spent with God and in His word. It takes intentionality to stay on God's path for us. Be careful, then, how you walk!

### **Go**

- Describe a time when you were “pulled off course.” What could you have done to prevent that?
- In what ways can you keep your focus on God and His direction for you in life and as a competitor?

### **Workout**

1 Thessalonians 4:1–9; 1 Peter 1:13–25

### **Overtime**

“God, You desire us to follow Your paths. Give me the discernment I need to follow Your markings and not lose focus. Grant me the power to live carefully and attentively. Amen.”



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