

## The Hay Is in The Barn

### **Ready:**

“My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands in you ... then you will understand the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God.”

-Proverbs 2:1, 5

### **Set**

The day before last year’s Kansas City marathon, I was meeting with Chris Anderson, our National Director of FCA’s Endurance Ministry. I was fired up for the race but a bit anxious about trying to run a PR. As I was reflecting back on my training leading up to the race, I mentioned to him that I wished I’d done more long runs, more speed work, more conditioning, more everything. I was feeling the pressure. He smiled real big, leaned across the table and said, “Dan, at this point, the hay is in the barn. The race is tomorrow. Nothing you can do now.” Focused on the race and not fully understanding his point, I thought to myself, “I don’t have hay or a barn.” He helped me out and explained that it meant the work had been already done and that there was no more time to cram. The formal training was over and there was no looking back—nothing more to do but execute on race day. Now I just had to use what was stored up and let it work itself out during the race.

As I raced the next day, I thought about using my hay and the investment I’d made over the months leading up to the race. The hours of training that I had put in now revealed whether or not I would PR. Those days I didn’t feel like getting in the 20-mile training runs but did anyway were paying big dividends. As I cranked away in the last two miles of the race, I began to pull away from the group that I had been running with the entire race. I immediately thought back to the race the year before when my pack had left me in the dust as a result of my lackluster training. There had been no hay in the barn when I’d needed it. But this year was different. There was plenty of hay in the barn, and I was blessed with a PR. It was good day of running! I ran well on race day because I trained well months before.

Ever since that day, Chris’ comment has often rattled around in my head. It’s a powerful principle. I thought if this is true for my running life, it is even truer for my spiritual life. The spiritual hay is the Word of God, and the barn is my heart. Sometimes, however, we fall into the trap of wanting a spiritual PR without putting in the spiritual investment. I know for me that I sometimes want God to show up and do something miraculous without me having to invest the time to know Him better. We think God will do His miraculous thing anyway, so what does it matter if I really press in and get serious about my walk? If I love Jesus more, does that change anything? And what does it even look like to love God more? If I connect with Him daily and rely on Him to direct me throughout the day, will it really make a difference?

Proverbs 2:1 says to store up His commands. (i.e. Put hay in the barn!) We must dive into the

Word so that our lives can be governed by truth and motivated by love. For me, spending daily time in the Word is more about the future than today. Yes, I draw on His Word daily, but when it comes to my training times, it always comes back to what I invested months earlier. I have come to realize that I will never regret spending too much time with Jesus. You never hear people saying they invested too much time in their walk with the Lord. Instead, I hear almost daily from followers of Christ, "I wish I could spend more time in the Word, but..." We all have our reasons, but not one of them is a good one.

Today, ask yourself if there is spiritual hay in your heart. Have you put in the time? Are you expecting great things with no spiritual sweat? Would you make varsity without ever picking up the ball? At mile 24, what would you have left in the tank? Start today. Carve out the time. Make an investment. Go deeper. It might be the single most important decision you make! When the strain comes, will you be able to draw on God's commands that were stored up months ago? Start putting spiritual hay in the barn today. Your tomorrow depends on it.

## **Go**

1. How do you put spiritual hay in your barn?
2. When it comes to reasons why you don't spend time in God's Word, what are your excuses?
3. How do you make sure you don't fall into a rut when you spend daily time with the Lord?
4. Why does your tomorrow depend on today?

## **Workout**

Deuteronomy 5:29

John 14:21

Hebrews 6:1

1 John 3:22

## **Overtime**

"Father, I desire to store Your commands inside of me so that I will understand the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God. I want to put spiritual hay in my heart so that I can be stronger tomorrow. Today, I will pursue You, Lord. I want to linger a little longer in Your presence so that I hear from You. Help me to go deeper in my walk with You. In Your name I pray. Amen."

## **Bible Reference:**

1 John 3



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