

## **Heart of a Competitor**

### **Ready:**

"The godly walk with integrity; blessed are their children who follow them."  
-Proverbs 20:7

### **Set**

Ready. . .Set. . .Go! They were off. Sixty runners were headed for the first hill.

Junior high cross country is an adventure. In this particular race, the 1.5-mile course ran through woods and hills, around playgrounds, and all over a park. Jay, a seventh-grade boy, was leading the field about halfway through the race. As they headed into the woods, Jay and the runner behind him approached a turn. Jay went on one side of the cone, and his competitor the other. The race continued, but Jay turned around.

Many people use the word integrity, but few truly understand it. The word itself is defined as "moral character, honesty and being sound throughout." In his Psalms, David talks much about integrity and relates it to the heart. He communicates that integrity is a heart issue and that it affects everything we do. It involves doing the right thing when no one is looking. That is a big challenge for all of us to follow.

Jay had turned around because he believed he went on the wrong side of the cone. As he turned around, his competitor distanced himself from Jay and the rest of the runners. But Jay had known to do the right thing. He was raised by godly parents to understand that no matter what the cost, you should always do the right thing.

Jay used tremendous energy to get back up to second place after many runners had passed him on his detour. He battled until the final turn and finally raced for the finish line. He did not win the race, being defeated by a teammate in the last 10 yards, but he did finish third. After the race, Jay said, "I wanted to stop and cry because I knew I had made a wrong turn, but I could not give up." His effort may not have won him the race, but his character and integrity showed many people the true heart of a competitor for Christ.

Jay made the right choice at the right time in the right place. Can you say the same? Coach isn't watching, but are you going hard? The office will never miss that extra paper or materials you slide in your briefcase. Mom and Dad aren't home, so you can do whatever you want on the computer. Opportunities to sin happen daily, but we must remember that there is always Someone watching and waiting for you to make the right choice at the right time in the right place.

### **Go**

1. Did you ever have to make a decision like Jay had to make?
2. How would someone say your integrity measures up?
3. Today, are you living for God in what you do, say and think?

### **Workout**

Deuteronomy 8:2

Psalm 25:21

Romans 5:4

**Bible Reference:**

Romans 5



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