

## Keep the Pace

n/a

### **Ready:**

*“Do you not know that in a race all runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.”*

- 1 Corinthians 9:24 (NIV)

### **Set**

A few weeks ago my family travelled to San Francisco to support my dad in the Escape from Alcatraz Triathlon. The athletes actually swam 1.5 miles from Alcatraz Island to the shore, completed an 18-mile bike ride and then finished with an 8-mile run.

As my family stood near the shore waiting for my dad to come out of the water, I watched many of the physically challenged athletes finishing their swim. Usually, one or two race assistants would run to the water and help them up to a chair where they would put on a prosthetic leg and continue the race. As I watched these athletes, I realized that the whole time they were getting help, they were itching to leave and start the next section of the race. No, they weren't at the front of the pack, but they were still competing to win.

As athletes, we've heard 1 Corinthians 9:24 over and over again, and that we should “Run in such a way as to get the prize.” But we don't always do that. It can be easy for us to think, “I have no shot of winning. I have all these setbacks from my past that give me no chance.” Or, “Why am I even in this race? I don't belong here.” But the verse doesn't list any requirements that need to be met before running the race. It doesn't say, “Run in such a way as to get the prize, but only if you have everything together and if you feel like it today.” No. It just says that we should run to win. Period. No excuses.

Imagine going to your coach right before a championship game and saying, “Hey, Coach, I don't think I can play well enough to win today; I have the sniffles.” Or, “Hey, Coach, you probably shouldn't put me in. I don't really feel like playing today.” That probably wouldn't go over too well. In the same way, our life is like a championship game. We are always running, and we can't just decide to slow down for a few minutes. What if we decided to only play at half-speed for a few minutes during a championship match? We would get crushed by our competition because they would see our weakness and attack it. In the same way, we need to run and compete for Christ at a race pace at all times, no matter what circumstances we've been through or are currently experiencing. If we slow up for even the shortest period of time, it can be so much easier for sin to strike and get to us while our defenses are down.

Today, think about what pace you're running. Ask yourself if it is one that is worthy of winning or if you're making excuses.

### **Go**

1. Have you ever decided to give up or slow down when playing your sport? What happened?
2. Is there a reason why you may be holding back from running your hardest?
3. Is any excuse good enough?

### **Workout**

Galatians 5:7

Hebrews 12:1-3

### **Bible Reference:**

Hebrews 12



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