

## **The Large Heart Project**

### **Ready:**

"I shall run the way of Your commandments, For You will enlarge my heart."  
-Psalm 119:32 (NASB)

### **Set**

About 13 years ago during college I started running as a way of staying in shape. Over the years, I've come to love the sport, and because of that, the verse above caught my attention, and I have continued to meditate on it.

I recently read a research article about the physical size of a person's heart muscle. The research noted that the size of a runner's heart was measurably larger than the size of an ordinary person's heart. As the runner trains on a regular basis, the heart begins to pump blood with more volume and with more power, causing the heart muscle to strengthen and increase in size. Doesn't that sound a lot like Psalm 119:32? I believe this concept can help our hearts grow spiritually as well.

Much like a marathon runner or elite athlete trains regularly, disciplines his or her body and practices restraint, the Christian, with the help of the Holy Spirit, reads the Bible, seeks God in prayer and aims to live like Christ. Just like the athlete who trains, the person who continues to run in the way of God's commandments finds that, the more they do it, the easier it gets.

Study someone who has an unhealthy heart, and you will find blood clots, cholesterol, plaque and dying muscle tissue. Unless these things are dealt with, they will die. Often the physician will recommend more exercise. With exercise the blood begins to circulate faster, and the particles of cholesterol and plaque are forced out. Over time, the heart becomes healthier and stronger, and it begins to increase in size.

Spiritually speaking, plaque and cholesterol can be symbolic of sin that has established a stronghold in our hearts. Think of all the passions that occupy even little compartments in your heart. Entertainment, personal goals, lust, power, material possessions, popularity, sports, and many other things. In Matthew when Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment, He said that it was to love the Lord with "all your heart."

Our heavenly Father wants ALL of your heart. For a lot of us, the Holy Spirit resides in our hearts, but we keep Him in a little compartment the same size as Facebook or our iPhones. But, if we truly desire the abundant life He promised us, we need to give Him all of our heart.

So, what is the secret to having a large heart? To "RUN" as hard as you can after God!

### **Go**

1. If you were committed to Jesus whole-heartedly, how would your life be different?
2. The Holy Spirit always wants to occupy more and more of our hearts. What things in your heart need to be removed so that He can do so?
3. Great things happen through teamwork. Can you find some other friends in Christ who will help you run in the way of His commandments?

### **Workout**

Matthew 22:36-38

Philippians 3:12-14

1 John 3:20-23

### **Bible Reference:**

Philippians 3



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