

Strength on the Trail

Ready:

“I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me.” - Philippians 4:13

Set

It was my first trail race. I had run many road races, all on smoothly paved roads, but this was going to be different. The trail I would be running was notorious for its uneven terrain, rocks, downed trees, protruding roots and mud holes. Say to any trail runner, “Potawatami,” and immediately they start spewing advice.

Before the race, a running friend of mine suggested that I get a road bracelet. You know, the ones where you can have all of your emergency info engraved on a wrist band. “Great idea,” I thought. “Not only will I have my emergency info, but I can also include a Scripture verse to encourage me!” Not sure of which verse to choose, I asked my pastor to suggest one. He immediately responded with Philippians 4:13. It was perfect! Then came race day. I got dressed, put on my wrist band, and smiled as I spotted the Scripture. “Yes, Lord,” I said. “I can do all things because You strengthen me.”

Midway through the race, I was running down a wet, leaf-covered hill, going as fast as I could to make up some time, when my foot caught on a protruding tree root. In what seemed like slow motion, I flew through the air, and then came down like a giant fly-swatter. I went “splat” on the ground! Ouch! At first I couldn’t breathe, but it only took a few seconds for me to find my breath again.

Soon, a fellow runner helped me up, assessed my skinned knees and elbows, checked to be certain my wrist was not broken and told me that as soon as I could take a deep breath and hold it for two seconds, I could resume running. I probably should have told him or her (I was so disoriented that I didn’t pay attention) how much my ribs hurt, but I didn’t. Turns out I had broken a few. That was when I looked down at my wristband. I saw the Scripture and, immediately, I knew I could finish. After all, Christ was the One providing the strength I needed.

My finishing time was nothing to brag about, but I did finish. Broken ribs, injured wrist, skinned knees, and a God so merciful that He strengthened me to the end! Will I run “Poto” again? Just watch me! But, better yet, watch my God—the One who gives us strength whenever we need it. Today, whatever you’re going through—whatever challenges you face—remember the often quoted Philippians 4:13 and know that you can do whatever He calls you to do because He will provide the strength, which comes from His unlimited supply.

Go

1. How can we know the difference between trusting in His strength versus our own?
2. Philippians 4:13 is a powerful verse, but it can be misused when we try to apply it to things God never asked us to do. How can you know when you are operating in God's plans or your own? What is the difference?
3. When have you been "down" and watched as Christ lifted you up?
4. How do you call on His name when you need His strength?
5. What do you tell others about the strength our Lord Jesus Christ provides for us?

Workout

Zechariah 4:6 Psalm 121 Colossians 1:11



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