

## **Perspective from Behind**

### **Ready:**

“We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.” - Romans 5:3-5 (NLT)

**Set** The runners slipped past me one by one. When I looked behind me, I didn't see anyone left. Denial set in. I couldn't possibly be in last place, could I? It had felt like I was running right on pace! I cranked my neck around—something our coach had told us never to do—and, in a panic, again, I saw no one. I couldn't reconcile myself to the thought of finishing in last place. No runner who competes at state their freshman year could possibly finish last at the district meet in their sophomore year. I knew I had to make the decision whether or not to finish the race. The thought crossed my mind that if I dropped out, I wouldn't finish last, but something in my heart told me that that's not what was supposed to happen. The home stretch appeared quicker than I wanted it to, and all I could hear was my dad's voice yelling from the finish line, “Finish like a champ!” After the race, I limped away embarrassed and angry. Little did I know the lesson God was preparing for me during that district meet. I walked away from the race angry, but what I began to understand weeks after the anger subsided was that God works through our trials and failures in order to build our character. God tells us in Romans 5:3-5 that these trials build our endurance, which then builds our character. From that race and on, I took with me the wisdom that neither winning nor losing is what is important to God. What matters to Him is how we finish the race—both in sports and in life.

**Go** 1. Have you experienced failure in your sports career? How did you choose to deal with it? 2. How does what Paul says in Romans 5:3-5 about problems and trials relate to our trials in sports? 3. Click the link below to read 1 Corinthians 9:24-25. How can we apply, literally, what is said about trophies and winning to our own sport?

**Workout** 1 Corinthians 9:24-25

### **Bible Reference:**

1 Corinthians 9



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