

For the Love of the Game

Ready:

“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.” – Psalm 118:24

Set

The runner struggled against the wind, each gust threatening to sweep her off the mountain. The trail was covered in ice, the air she breathed frigid. Her legs felt like concrete. But for this ultrarunner, there was no question about continuing. The sport required long, hard miles even when the fun meter dropped below zero. Pain and suffering. Isn't that what sport is all about? Maybe not.

Making fitness gains requires a level of discomfort that forces the body and mind to places they've never been. The distance athlete builds a formidable aerobic base of conditioning by running many miles. Hill repeats and intervals push lactate and anaerobic thresholds further. She conditions her quads on downhill assaults. None of these activities are pleasant, but they are necessary.

But pity the athlete who loses sight of the joy in the midst of the fight. What if Eric Liddel, the Scottish Olympian depicted in *Chariots of Fire*, had not looked beyond the pain to remember the simple joy of running? Would he have been able to say, “I believe God made me for a purpose, but He also made me fast. When I run, I feel His pleasure.”

When the going gets tough, let's remind ourselves of simple things. Be thankful for the ability to run, jump, and throw things. Delight in feeling the wind rush by as you dash along. Listen to your heart pound as your body miraculously responds to the demands. Remember, “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Go

1. For what can you be thankful?
2. Recall a time you got bogged down in training. Why did you miss out on the joy?
3. What might happen to an athlete who loses the joy of the game?

Workout

Psalm 59:16

Psalm 92:4

Psalms 95:1

Overtime

Lord, help me to find joy in this sport You have given me. I am forever grateful. Amen

Bible Reference:

Psalms 59:16

Psalms 92:4

Psalms 95:1



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