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Heaven Bound: Win The Race!

By Anthony Mullins

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Billy Graham once said, "Being a Christian is more than just an instantaneous conversion; it is like a daily process whereby you grow to be more and more like Christ."

Nothing is out of reach when you put your heart into it. Think about it. Who sets the boundaries and limits in your life? We tend to define ourselves; establish our own boundaries. With God, there are no boundaries, only greatness. It is easy to forget who we are and why we are here. It is easy to get caught up in the daily grind and lose sight of the end reward; however we must always remember to where we are going.

You were chosen by God, created to fulfill His dreams and purpose. Often times so much focus is placed upon ourselves and our own objectives, we forget the reason for which we were created. Just as you dream, He also dreams. Long before you were created, God had a dream and from this dream came your marathon. For His purpose, you were created. Throughout the Bible, God refers to the race and gives a specific training recipe for victory. Are you ready to be a champion for Him?

First, you must go into strict training in preparation for the race:

Do you know that in a race all runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it for a crown that will last forever. Therefore do not run like a man aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I will not be disqualified for the prize. 1 Corinthians 9: 24-27

These verses tell us that the race will not be easy. It will take hard work, discipline, sharp focus and sacrifice. Sure, it would be easier to sit on the sidelines and be a cheerleader for others. But, I challenge you to join the race and discover what great things God has dreamed for you.

William James said, "Most people never run far enough on their first wind, to find out what they have on their second." The race will be tough and you will face many difficult challenges. Remain steadfast

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on your journey. You will tire, but do not give up. You will struggle, but persevere. I challenge you to look inside yourself and find your second wind. Develop yourself and your skills to success. Prayer, study and worship will help you develop stamina and excitement for the race, even when you think your tank is empty.

Second, you must turn all of your strength and energy toward winning the race.

Not that I have already obtained this, or have been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Jesus Christ took hold of me. I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Phillipians 3:12–13

Putting God first and living a Christian life is a challenge. It will take all of your focus and energy. Keep your eyes on the prize and do not look back; there will be time for reflection at the finish line. In every aspect of your life, keep your mission in focus. Losing sight of the prize could cost you the race. Consider not only "what would Jesus do" (WWJD) but also "what would Jesus think or say?" Let Him coach you to victory!

Thirdly, you must exercise your muscles of faith. Just as you keep your physical muscles strong, your muscles of faith need strengthening as well. Like an athlete, you too must develop a training regimen for Christ. You will be a stronger Christian and live a more fulfilling life. Make time each day to praise Him. Spend time in the Bible. You could read one passage per day or maybe a Psalm or two. Praise Him through prayer or celebrate Him through song. Find time each day for you and Him. It is the thought that counts. It could be as simple as having a special candle in your home that you light in his honor. Such a life will be an example to others, drawing them and yourself closer to the ultimate prize.

Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 1 Timothy 4:7–8

In today's world, physical fitness indicates strength and good health. It does not matter how physically fit you are physical death is inevitable. How many times have you heard of perfectly healthy people dying of a heart attack? Through building spiritual muscles, you will press onward through tragedy and stress to achieve God's eternal favor. With God's training program, you are guaranteed victory.

Finally, you must fight the good fight now and to the end.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—not only to me but also to all who have longed for its appearing. 2 Timothy 4:7–8

Daily, you will face the challenges of the enemy who is bent on tearing apart your faith. The enemy will focus on your passion, knowing if he can destroy it, you will fall away from God. He will offer you shortcuts for the race. He will offer easy success. I caution you. If you take shortcuts during training, you only fool yourself. When the time comes to perform, the shortcuts will only make you a fool. God's

grace is without shortcuts. He offers it freely without an agenda. Luckily for us, He has given us the instructions for success through the Bible. All that is asked is that we follow and serve Him.

God is awesome and His reward unimaginable. He never said that it would be easy. Get in shape. Stay committed to His program and one day in heaven you will receive His promised gift. Keep your eyes on the prize and look to Him in the winners circle.

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The Tour De France, The Worlds Biggest Road Bike Race.

By Alastair Hamilton

The Tour de France is the BIG one; it's the World cup and the Olympics all in one. It has it all, the high mountains, the wind swept northern plains and the heat of the south. It also has the world's media, all the top teams and riders and millions of cycling mad fans watching. The other "Grand Tours" of Italy and Spain are as exciting, sometimes more so, but they don't have the thing the Tour has, that unique Tour ness, that unique French ness.

How it started.

It all started in 1903, when the French daily paper, L'Auto wanted to sell more than its competitor, Le Vélo, who at that time was the only paper reporting on cycle racing. It was suggested to the papers director, Henri Desgrange that they should organise a bike race all round France. The first race was 2,428 kilometres split into six stages and was run off at 25.29 kilometres per hour and out of the 60 starters 21 finished and the race was lead from start to finish by Maurice Garin.

The Heroes.

Over the years there has been a lot of heroes in the Tour de France, you could say all the riders are heroes, to win the race once is hard, but to win it five times is phenomenal. Only five men have done this, and one of these has won it seven times. French rider Jacques Anquetil was the first to win the race five times, Eddy Merckx, Bernard Hinault and then Spaniard Miguel Indurain all equalled him. Then the American, Lance Armstrong started to win in 1999 and didn't stop until he had won it a record seven times in a row. This is all the more amazing as he is a cancer survivor and was given a 50/50

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chance of life; he beat the cancer and went on to beat all comers in the Tour de France.

The course.

The race starts in a different town every year and every other year it starts outside France, the choice of stage towns is a combination of money and sporting considerations, the towns will pay for a start or a finish, but they need to be near a mountain or a cobbled road or be near other town who want to host the Tour. The Towns pay to be the centre of interest for a day, the Tour also brings in a lot of money in tourism and the Towns collect much more than they pay and the world will remember the name of the Town, for at least a day.

The riders.

All the best riders want to win the Tour de France, but they cant, from the 200 or so starters there is a possible five or six riders who can win, the rest are either helping their team leaders or sprint or mountain specialists who want to win stages or points or mountain jerseys, this keeps the race active and interesting from beginning to end.

The BIG Tour.

The Tour is the biggest, but that has its problems, some Towns are not big enough, hotels etc., the television needs more space, the journalists need more phone lines and computers, more and more

people are following the race and the riders can be forgotten about in all the razzmatazz, but its still the biggest sporting event in the world, long may in run!

Alastair Hamilton is a successful writer who offers a truly unique depth of experience in competitive cycling, he also contributes adding technical articles on road bikes (

) to some cycling online magazines. Further

information on components and cycling news at



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