

Be Strong #28

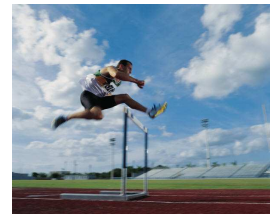
Face Down to Finish

Have your children ever run track? Maybe? Maybe not! If not, hopefully you have spent time watching runners run; most likely you have watched the Olympics' track and field competition in the past. Stop, right now, and watch the YouTube video of a girl running a 300-meter hurdle race. Just click the link and watch this amazing race. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGx7tdvtdvI&feature=email>

Did you watch? If you didn't, what you are about to read will not make as much sense. Now, set this video up alongside Hebrews 12:1-3.

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

Everyday of our lives is a hurdle race! Everyday is one lap in the scheme of all our days. What hurdles are you facing today? Obstacles or challenges that have the potential of tripping you up, causing you to fall face-down? Obstacles with your vocation, with financial challenges, with gigantic personal hurdles. Hurdles in your family, in your marriage, with your parents or with your children. What hurdles have been so huge that you have been stopped in your tracks? Hurdles that have even set you on the sidelines for a few hours, or days, or years?



When a young person begins to train for a hurdle race, they run between hurdles, and as they approach each hurdle they shuffle their feet and slow down enough to make sure they can jump over the hurdle. They focus on each hurdle. But as a runner continues to train, their coaches will challenge them to find their stride and run through each hurdle keeping their eyes fixed forward. It's a beautiful thing to watch an Olympic runner glide through a race as if there were no hurdles on the track at all.

So, what kind of hurdles are you facing today? There are hurdles of our own choosing, hurdles from the enemy himself, and hurdles from the Lord. Not temptations, but trials and difficulties to overcome. Why would God allow these in our lives? James tells us that they are there to challenge and strengthen our faith, (James 1:2-4). Peter adds to that by declaring that the end result is praise and glory to God (I Peter 1:7). How are you handling your hurdles today? When these

challenges face you each day, whether it's a dead car battery or a child that's dealing with their own sexual orientation, where do you go for help? Maybe there have been hurdles that have caused you to fall flat out on your face, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. While flat out on the ground, we have no place to look but up! And when we do, we see them and hear them cheering us on from the stands. "Get up! Don't stop! You can make it, it's not too late! Run baby run!"

How do you prepare for each day's race? A runner gets up, eats a good breakfast, puts on the right running outfit, laces up his running shoes, stretches and mentally prepares for the race. As followers of Christ we must do the same. As we sit with Him each morning, looking to Him for direction each day, we eat His word, we put on our spiritual outfit, and we lace up our spiritual shoes, and we fix our eyes on Jesus. The more consistently we turn to Jesus each morning---each day---the stronger we will become until one day, like the Olympian, we won't even break stride as we run through each challenge, heading to the finish line, head up, eyes on Jesus. So today, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Remember there is no hurdle that you will face today that you and the Lord are not able to overcome, no matter what it is. So set an example for your children and run like the wind! Remember you are their parents! Be strong!

In His Joy!

Jerome

Eph. 2:10