

1st Corinthians 9:22-27, "The Race is On"

- The song "The Race is On" by Michael W. Smith originally released in 1984 had some interesting lyrics.
 - ✓ "Come on and go; Leave behind the sin you find; That slows your time"
 - ✓ "Come on and go, You know the race is on"
 - ✓ "Come on and go; Straight ahead be safely led by Him instead"
 - ✓ "Come on and go; You know the race is on"
 - "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize." **1 Corinthians 9:22b-24 (NIV)**. This verse equates the Gospel with RUNNING.
 - ✓ What is your (Our) plan? Running or Picking Daisies? There are different types of races. Do we do something, even if it is wrong?
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➤ Church and Life

- ✓ The race is long. The Pace is slow.

➤ P.A.C.E, Prepare & Perform

- ✓ Feed yourself, run to win. Improve and achieve to win.

➤ Prepare

- ✓ "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 to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore, I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize" **1 Corinthians 9:25-27 (NIV)**.
- ✓ Don't rely on your old trophies. Don't doubt in the dark what God revealed in the light

➤ Perform

- ✓ "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men" **Colossians 3:23 (NIV)**. Do you want to influence others? You have to be around people in order for that to happen.
- ✓ We need to continue to be a great Church that is a welcoming Church.
- ✓ Here is how Waffle House restaurants demonstrate hospitality, it "Starts with friendliness, but they are looking for friends."
 - *Reference: Steve Nordbye, Charlton, MA; source: Ben Goldberg, Time Magazine, "77. Where Hash Browns are Heavenly" (7-11-16).*
- ✓ In old western movies they would swear in the sheriff, "Swear You In" as a Welcome-rs.

➤ Acknowledge! Run **with** God, and then run **for** God!

- ✓ "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight" **Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)**.
 - ✓ Keep God's word at the forefront of your mind. "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" **Hebrews 12:2 (NIV)**. Having faith in God means fixing our eyes on Jesus.
 - ✓ In one of Boston's Songs, it says "Don't Look Back," but we should not look too far ahead. One step at a time (so we are not overwhelmed).
 - ✓ "Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward" **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (ASV)**. If we pray without ceasing, fixing our minds and our mouths on Jesus we will not give way to fear when we are in constant communion with God.
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1st Corinthians 9:22-27, "The Race is On"

- **Be Content:** To be content in every circumstance doesn't mean we wouldn't change some things. If we didn't want that, it would be difficult to always be content.
 - ✓ "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want" **Philippians 4:12 (NIV)**. Paul had lived a life of power, fame, and privilege but then became an outcast for the sake of the Gospel.
 - ✓ With godliness there is great gain. "But godliness with contentment is great gain" **1 Timothy 6:6 (NIV)**. Run your race, beware of comparison, it kills the spirit. Be content not just compliant. Don't just endure, but really embrace it. "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" **Hebrews 12:1 (NIV)**. Do the right things the right way. Our race is before us, not behind us.
 - ✓ **A new thing**, "Look, I am about to do something new; even now it is coming. Do you not see it? Indeed, I will make a way in the wilderness, rivers in the desert" **Isaiah 43:19 (HCSB)**. God is not in the replicating business, not in the "Cookie Cutter" methodology. Be content that our unchanging God is working in new ways and is fully in control!
- We need to **encourage one another with hope**. "But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness" **Hebrews 3:13 (NIV)**.
 - ✓ An illustration: Once someone used Googly Eyes at Youth Camp to encourage the kids.
 - ✓ Keep it light, a lack of encouragement can lead to being hard or even worse deceived. Do not grow weary in doing well for others. Don't wait to receive encouragement be the one to give it! Throw a mini-Parade for someone and watch their reaction.
- **In Closing:**
 - ✓ The race is long, and the Pace is slow. Be a marathon Runner like Cliff Young, the race is on.
