

THE SIMPLICITY OF CHRISTIANITY

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
FROM A RUNNERS PERSPECTIVE



*Changing your Life from an "I have to"
Christianity, to "I get to!"*

by Alli Anne

The Simplicity of Christianity; It's about HIM...

BE STILL AND RUN

The Simplicity of Christianity

*Living The Christian Life
from a Runners Perspective*

**Changing your Life from an "I Have
To" Christianity, to "I Get To!"**

It's about HIM...

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The Simplicity of Christianity; It's about HIM...

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Written by Alli Anne

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT, HOW TO USE, AND THANKS

I want to start out with a thank you to Jesus for giving me a different training block than usual so I could write this and for leading me in what to say and how to say it. I couldn't have done it without Him, for I was stumped many times, and every time He stepped in to encourage me and help me move on. May He get all the glory.

A huge thanks as well to all my friends and family who spent time investing into the making, editing, and sharing of this book, I am truly indebted to you! There were a ton of ups and downs throughout the making and you encouraged me in the entire process.

This ebook, The Simplicity of Christianity; Living the Christian Life from a Runners Perspective, has become one of my most favorite writings! I was challenged, grown, and drawn closer to Christ, learning so much along the way and inspired by many people.

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As I prepared and trained for the Mo Fall Half Marathon in 2022, God kept prompting me to take notes throughout the journey. This was the first time I had a coach and a running buddy, which was perfect timing for the parallels you'll find here.

Each chapter will begin with a testimony from my training and then be followed by the similarities it has to running the Christian Life, finishing with an action step you can take in order to run in the Will of God.

My hope is that by sharing my story and some of the things I have done over the last few years that have made the Christian Life so much simpler, you will be encouraged to draw closer to Christ and embrace the Simplicity of Christianity for yourself.

Living in the Will of God is a hot topic. There are many books and classes on how to find what that is for your life. But it really is not as complicated as people make it out to be. It can be very enjoyable and peaceful if you are able to look at it with the right perspective.

The way I propose in this book, takes time, but the journey will be like none other and very worth it.

I would encourage you to read through the entire book once through to get an idea of what you're getting yourself into. Then go through it again, not rushing, but taking the action steps at the end of each chapter before going onto the next, just as a runner would in their training. They must build an

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aerobic base (a lot of easy miles to prepare their body for harder workouts), then add on some long runs and speed work, finishing with a taper (resting phase) before race day. The Christian Life has the same principles. You cannot wake up one day and have everything figured out. It comes in stages.

In closing, I don't want you to think that because the Christian life is simple that it will be easy. It is not easy. When training for any kind of race you have many highs and lows. You go through depression and victories, injuries and joys. I want you to know what you're getting into before you even get started. Training is not easy! It's simple, but it's not easy.

I love you and pray you are inspired to action, looking to Jesus the author and finisher of your faith, and remembering that your eyes must be kept on Christ in order to finish your race!
Happy Running!

Love, Alli

Hebrews 12:1-3

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CHAPTER ONE

ADMIT YOUR TRAINING PLAN IS NOT WORKING

For the first four years of my running career I ran only 5k races (3.1 miles). I even joined a challenge called 5k Every Day in May. Though it was definitely a challenge, I loved pushing myself on days I didn't feel like running.

But then they came out with 5k Mayhem! It was an event consisting of a 5k every hour for twelve hours straight. Boy was that a hoot. But I finished and was excited to give it another shot the following year.

Yet God had another plan.

I had always thought running a full marathon, all 26.2 miles of pure torture, would be fun. But I had heard so many horror stories and how you had to tackle the nutrition just right in order to avoid the ambulances at the end of the race, that I told myself I'd never run one.

Lesson #1, don't ever say "I'll never do that."

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You've probably guessed that I did run a marathon, and you are correct.

As I approached the year 2021 and wondered what races or events I was going to tackle, I knew 5K May and 5k Mayhem were at the top of my list. Yet I didn't feel peace about this decision, so I began to seek God on what it was He would have me to do. It seemed as though He was giving me permission to do 5k May but said He had something better than the Mayhem in mind.

After struggling with this idea for days I finally gave in and surrendered to it. But now I had to find out what this "something better" was.

As I warmed up for an easy run one morning asking God what the "something better" was, I finally got my answer.

A Full Marathon!

At first I was surprised, but then excited. The 37 miles I had done during 5k Mayhem the previous year had given me enough confidence to know that if God was with me, I could accomplish this great feat of 26.2 miles.

I picked a fall marathon and trained all summer for it, ending up walking much of the 5k May as I knew rest during training was important and didn't want to risk injury.

The big day arrived and God coached me all the way through. I learned so much and enjoyed every moment of it (including the tortuous last 6 miles). It was such a huge

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accomplishment, but it wasn't like, "Oh wow, let's do that again!"

I knew I still wanted to enter another race though.

As I kept my eyes open, there was a certain trail half marathon (13.1 miles) that kept catching my attention. I wasn't sure how trail running would be and I certainly did not know how much longer it would take to run the same mileage as on the road, but I was willing to try, so I signed up.

The training took place in the winter and come March it was still cold and icy. I decided to run the race anyway and my main goal was to finish. I had a blast - despite the major dehydration mishap. I knew immediately that this was what I wanted to do; trail racing had won my heart!

I had finally found a race I wanted to train for. Like REALLY train for. Not just play around and see what happened.

So I began training for the fall version of this same race. I tried for a couple months and realized I was getting nowhere. If anything, I was getting worse. I finally came to myself and admitted to God, "I need help. I can't do this on my own anymore." He reminded me of a guy on the running group I was a part of who had offered to coach me a year prior.


At the time I had declined because I knew I was not ready for the commitment. And besides that, I didn't know what I wanted to do. I felt called to run, but other than God

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encouraging me to run longer distances, I had no other specifics. "Just run," He said.

I decided to reach out to the guy and see if the coaching opportunity was still open.

He said yes!



Many times in life we feel like we can do everything on our own. And the things we can't do, we just assume it's not for us or we find a way to make it work. When this happens, God steps out of the way and lets us do it.

But there has to come a point in a Christian's life when we come to the end of our rope. Before we can move forward we have to admit before God, "I need your help." Then and only then will He step in.

Why does He do this? Why doesn't He just help us automatically without needing us to ask? I used to wonder about this. I didn't understand why a loving God would let me suffer like this.

It wasn't till one afternoon as I talked with a friend that it made sense. Her simple statement made perfect sense and made me be able to look at Jesus in a whole new light.

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She said, "Jesus is a gentleman. He will not force us."

It was like a huge light-bulb moment! Of course He was!

I remember one morning as I ran hill repeats, I was getting frustrated. I asked God, "Why aren't you helping me?" God replied simply, "You didn't ask." I then imagined Jesus standing at the bottom of that hill reaching out to me as my hands were on my knees gasping for breath, but He didn't come to me. He had a look of compassion on His face as He watched me.

How many times do we miss out on God's strength and loving embrace because we don't ask?

ACTION STEP

Ask yourself these questions before going to chapter two:

1. Do I have a heavy burden in my life that I want fixed?
What is it?
2. Have I tried everything and nothing is working?
What have I tried?

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3. Am I tired of trying on my own? Or do I enjoy the challenge of trying and failing?
4. Am I ready to tell someone anything and everything about my life if necessary to overcome this problem?
5. Am I ready to ask for help? Or do I still have a few ideas I want to try out first? What are my ideas?

You cannot have victory in your life unless you are ready to cry out to God and from your heart say,

“I need your help.

I can't do it anymore.”

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CHAPTER TWO

FIND THE RIGHT COACH

At first I wasn't sure how having a coach would be. I assumed he would be pushy and give me workouts that I felt I had to fit in. I figured he wouldn't be flexible.

I had heard so many stories of how coaches pushed females beyond a healthy state. They were rude, mean, and insensitive.

But that ended up not being the case.

This guy encouraged me to be flexible.

He encouraged me to share what worked and what didn't.

He was willing to work with my needs and schedule.

He never made me feel like he was mad or upset that I didn't get the work in because something came up.

And he never made me feel forced or anxious to get a workout in.


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After all, isn't a coach supposed to help you out, rather than the other way around? I get out what I put in so it shouldn't bother him as much as it should bother me.

As I followed the workouts my coach gave, I began to see slight improvements and I became more confident in what my body could do. He cheered me on when I was excited with the turnout of a workout and he encouraged me when they didn't go so well.

He believed in me when I didn't, which gave me courage to keep pushing through.

His support changed the entire dynamics of my running career.



In reaching out for a running coach, God reminded me of when I reached out for help in my spiritual life.

A friend of mine had listened to my struggles for three years. I always knew she counseled other young women, but it never crossed my mind to ask her for help. I believe it was because I was not ready to admit I needed help, and also because I was not ready to change.

I've learned over the years that the first step we talked about in the last chapter, *Admit Your Training Plan is Not Working*,

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is essential to embracing the simplicity of Christ. But the second step, Find the Right Coach, is almost just as important.

Without the right coach you risk the possibility of them encouraging you to hide your problems, not telling you that one day you will blow up. Or them telling you to just deal with it and move on, that it really isn't that big of a deal. Or they can tell you, "Go home and do this," and it never works. And on and on.

With the wrong coach you also risk the chance of them pulling you farther away from God and into worldly religions (religions that focus on you or people and not God). You risk the chance of getting hurt and not sharing your entire heart, which will make your burdens heavier to carry and life more complicated than it needs to be.

In choosing a coach you need to realize what the simplicity of Christ is...

It's Jesus Himself.

Matthew 11:28-30 - Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Without Christ, we are nothing.

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John 15:5 - I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

It's also important to note that when Jesus is speaking about being the vine and us the branches in John 15:1, He specifically says that He is the TRUE vine, giving the impression that there ARE false vines. Hence, an enemy...

1 Peter 5:8 - Be sober; be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

So in seeking out a coach, be doubly sure that they believe the truth. Lies are subtle and usually seem like truth. Don't be afraid to ask them about their beliefs or their goals. I had the advantage of knowing my coach for about a year before I asked him and my spiritual mentor for three years. I knew enough about them by the time I asked for their help that I was okay with sharing things in areas I needed to.

If you've had the opportunity to know someone for a longer length of time, that's awesome. If you haven't, be sure to look for referrals and watch how they live their lives. Look at the lives of others they have helped too. Obviously the coaches and mentors are not responsible or even to blame for their athletes and friends choices, but you can get a good idea of how they have influenced their lives by watching them.

ACTION STEP

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Keep in mind that accountability and running partners are different from mentors and coaches. We'll touch on this group of individuals later.

Here are a few things you may want to consider when choosing a spiritual mentor:

1. Do they live out the Christian life? Do they walk out what they teach? Hypocrisy (telling someone to do something when they don't do it themselves) can eventually hurt you and make you not want to share openly with them.
2. Do they have consistent daily devotions and prayer time to draw them closer to Christ?
3. Since you become similar to your mentors, is this person someone you would want to be like?
4. Do they listen to you and not interrupt you?
5. Do you feel safe to share anything with them, or are they prone to gossip about others?
6. Do they make you feel loved and cared for? Or do you feel like you're in the way and a burden to them?
7. Do they have a personal intimate relationship with Christ?

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8. Do they spend time in God's Word on a daily basis?

Keep in mind that coaches and mentors are not an absolute for you to grow closer to Jesus and embrace the simplicity of Christianity. Sometimes a Christian's greatest growing point is when they have no one there for them except Jesus. God is the ultimate coach and mentor that cannot be replaced. But I encourage you to make sure you are in God's Word as often as possible because that is going to be God's primary way of speaking, encouraging, correcting, and guiding you.

Remember: A true coach will bring you to Jesus!

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CHAPTER THREE

PICK A GOAL THAT EXCITES YOU

When I began training for the Fall Mohican Half Marathon I was excited! I wanted to PR (gain a personal record) and more specifically I wanted to finish the 13.1 miles in 3 hours and 30 minutes.

Every day I'd wake up excited to get a little closer to my goal. Each workout meant putting more time on my feet which was creating a base with which I could reach my ultimate goal.

You see, though this little goal was on the forefront of my mind, I had something else *more important* I wanted (this is key to maintaining motivation.)

My goal went beyond this Half Marathon to a race I've wanted to run for years, called the Forget a PR. The distances are a 25k (a little over 15 miles) and a 50k (a little over 30 miles). My dream was to one day run the 50k and be able to have a buckle of my own! (The buckles are an ultramarathoner's award.)

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I trained as hard as I could every day and rarely lacked motivation. Easy days were easy. Rest days were rest days. And hard days were hard days.

I even ran a 16 mile run a month from the race because I wanted to be extra ready. Three miles over the race distance!

Through the hard times, I'd remind myself of why I was doing this. It was to get my 13.1 miles done in 3 hours and 30 minutes so I could have a better chance of completing the next mileage which was 26.2.

I'm not the type who signs up for a race just to wing it. I need to have a confident 90% chance of finishing before I will sign up for a race. And I'm so particular about it, I never sign up more than a month ahead of time until I know I'll be able to make it and finish. It all depends on my training, schedule, and the weather. But in my mind, once I start training for a particular race, I consider myself signed up unless everything goes kaput.

I came up with a goal for this half marathon and had done the math according to my ability to finish my ultimate goal – the 50k.

The 26.2 mile run gave you eight hours before you had to be done. And you get ten hours for the 31 miles but with added elevation (more uphill climb).

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I knew that the more mileage there was the longer it took me, so I figured getting my half marathon time farther away from 4 hours would give me a better chance of finishing the full before the 8 hours was up. And once I finished the 26.2 miles, then I could shoot for the 31 miles (50k)!

Did I bore you with that calculation?

Probably so.

But why?

Because it's not your thing.

This goal doesn't excite you in the same way it does me. It doesn't give you the same motivation as it does me to get up at 4 or 5 every morning to get my run in before the day starts, or to skip out on ice cream before a long run because I know it causes GI issues (digestion problems).

This was *my* personal goal. Something I wanted to do but figured I never would. There has been something about these trails that just drew me to them. I want to run them and I want to eventually do all 31 miles of it.

So I decided to train with that big goal in mind...

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One thing I have come to realize about life is that people need a reason for why they do what they do, otherwise they have no life, joy, or pep in their step to get it done. Without that much needed motivation, life loses its excitement.

I'm not saying all of the Christian life is going to be joyful and fun, but I am saying that your focus, your goal, and your reason for living should excite you. It should give you motivation to keep going even when the going gets tough. It should keep you focused, help you make the right choices, and keep you on the right track.

In Hebrews 12:2 it tells us why Jesus was able to persevere with the calling God had placed on His life. He had the same feelings of sorrow, pain, and abuse that we do and yet because He kept the reason - His WHY - before His eyes, He was able to push to the end.

One thing I have learned about finding a goal that excites you, a reason, or a why behind what you do, is to get it from God. Before you were born He created certain works for *you* to do on this earth - works that *only* you can do because of your unique life.

As I write this I have decided to run the 25k (15.5 miles) of my goal race – aka the Forget a PR 50k. As long as my training goes well and I'm able to sign up on time, I'm gonna go for it.

But I seem to keep asking myself, "Why do I want to run this race? And do I really want to run this race? Or do I want to

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stay on the lower end of the races and do maybe a 10k (6 miles) to get in some more trail racing experience?" Because I seem to constantly be asking myself this, I have a very hard time motivating myself to get my workouts in, especially during busy seasons, when I'm tired and just want to eat chocolate in front of the TV - and popcorn, you can't forget the popcorn.

Since I don't have a deep reason WHY I want to run this 25k, I lack motivation, the cold weather seems to affect me more, I procrastinate so much that I run out of time to do it anyway, and I sleep in because who wants to get out of the warm covers in the winter or after a long week of work?

I'm going to be honest with you. While writing this book, I lack motivation because I don't know WHY I am writing it. The enemy keeps whispering that, "No one is going to benefit from this, so why do it?" and I agree with him.

I wrote an entire 12 week devotional in 12 weeks, so I keep wondering why I don't have a seven chapter book done yet. My goal was by the end of October, at the latest, the end of November, yet tomorrow is December first and I'm not even halfway there. Deep down, I know why.

It's because I don't have a good enough reason to finish.

I keep allowing the enemy to draw my eyes off of Jesus, who led me to write this in the first place, and onto self-condemnation and pity.

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"I'm not good enough."

"Why me? It's too hard."

"So-and-so would be way better."

"No one is going to read it anyway."

And on and on it goes.

Everyday, social media threatens to take precedence, devotions full of complaining and daydreaming take hours of my morning, and repeating to myself the lies of Satan seem to be tossed around in my head.

The enemy knows that if he can get me just busy enough or stalled long enough at just the right times, that I won't move forward.

Once I had realized this and started using my time more wisely, the enemy quickly turned around and attacked my core.

He seemed to whisper now, "Are you sure this is really what God wants you to do?"

Now, he had me. By attacking my core, I no longer was able to move forward inch by inch. I froze. I now doubted my reasoning for *why* I was doing everything I felt the Lord leading me to. Deep down, I knew the answer, but I ignored it, because after all, What if I wasn't hearing God correctly??

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Just like during a hard season of training, when nothing seems to go right or the onset of an injury threatens to sideline your workouts and we must remember why we are training in the first place, we must do the same for our Christian life as well.

Why do you do what you do?

ACTION STEP

Before going onto the next chapter mentally answer why you do the following and add in your own as needed. No need to write anything down just yet.

1. Why do I go to work?
2. Why do I brush my teeth?
3. Why do I eat breakfast?
4. Why do I sleep at night?
5. Why do I eat supper?
6. Why do I eat?
7. Why do I drink water?
8. Why do I care for my family?
9. Why do I take care of my pets?
10. Why do I do devotions?
11. Why do I read?
12. Why do I drive?
13. Why do I clean the house?

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- 14.** Why do I make money?
- 15.** Why do I have friends?
- 16.** Why do I _____?
- 17.** Why do I _____?
- 18.** Why do I _____?
- 19.** Why do I _____?

Now I want you to do the same thing, but answer why you *don't* do things.

- 1.** Why don't you smoke?
- 2.** Why don't you cheat?
- 3.** Why don't you lie?
- 4.** Why don't you walk?
- 5.** Why don't you run?
- 6.** Why don't you eat healthy?
- 7.** Why don't you sleep in?
- 8.** Why don't you drink water?
- 9.** Why don't you read the Bible?
- 10.** Why don't you _____?
- 11.** Why don't you _____?
- 12.** Why don't you _____?

Obviously all of these may not apply to you, but you should get the gist.

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Take a sheet of paper and write down a list of everything you do from the time your eyes open in the morning to the time they shut at night. Then next to each one write down why you do them.

Now get another sheet of paper and write down what you wish you did or what you feel the Lord is asking you to do from the time your eyes open in the morning to the time they shut at night.

Compare the two and ask yourself what is stopping you from doing what you really want to do by looking at why you do what you already do. Don't overthink it. It could be as simple as a lie you believe or that you are too busy and need to reprioritize.

Or it could be that you haven't submitted to God's will because you think it won't be as fun or fulfilling as your own. Let me tell you girl, that ain't the truth at all. I believed that lie for so many years and wish I would have submitted sooner. If this is the case for you, go back to chapter one and make sure you straighten that out first, because I don't care how good of a reason you have for why you want to do something, if you aren't doing what God wants, you'll always have to go back to the drawing board. Christianity isn't about us, it's about Christ. It's about letting the Spirit of God work through us to accomplish His desires on earth.

In editing this, I wanted to add something that God has been teaching me about our goals. Sometimes we can feel led down one path, thinking it will end up in one place when

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really it's leading us somewhere else. I've found that one of the biggest motivators for living the Christian life is Jesus Himself.

Christianity isn't about us. It's about HIM.

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CHAPTER FOUR

PUT ONE FOOT IN FRONT OF THE OTHER

One Saturday morning I was planning for a long run between 8-10 miles. I headed out the door and when my watch said an hour had gone by I was ready to quit.

But I decided to go to my minimum goal for that day - 8 miles.

The watch clicked over at 8 miles and I felt decent so kept going with the plan to reach 12 miles.

Then I decided to go to 14.

Then since I was so close, 15.

But wait, why not finish out a 40 mile week at this point and add a half mile!

I began to ask myself, "How did I go from wanting to quit at mile 4.5 to finishing the workout with a grand total of 15.5 miles?"

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In mile one I had decided to joyfully play the cards I was dealt. Every time something negative happened I thanked God for everything around it.

Some of the problems were: 97% humidity, tight knees, sore feet, drank too much so I had to use the bathroom, hungry, thirsty...

I was listening to my body and strangely felt super strong during the entire workout with lots of energy. My mind just wanted to quit on me.

I believe 100% that I was able to finish that workout with no real physical problems because I had conquered my thoughts.

About a month later I planned a 12 mile loop ending with slightly rolling hills. I struggled with negative thinking the entire time.

I walked way more than I was planning, the sun was extra hot, I ran out of water too soon, and I had like no extra energy.

But I was determined to place one foot in front of the other because I knew I would eventually make it if I pushed through. I knew if I took the shortcut home that I would regret not going the entire loop. It was a time to practice taking one step at a time when I didn't feel like it.

It's during hard moments like these that I have learned patience and endurance. This 12 mile loop was the longest loop I'd done without doing laps close to home since marathon training a year earlier. Short one mile laps give me

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a way of escape in case something goes wrong and I decide to quit. Loops force you to finish your workout because that's the only way you'll get home.

As time goes by I realize more and more how important my mind is to pushing through tough times. I am continually amazed by the Ultra-marathoners (anywhere from 30 – 200+ miles) because they talk of hallucinations (you see things that don't exist) and just the all around battle between them and their mind. They constantly have to just put one foot in front of the other. And most of them would probably admit, once you dig yourself into a negative thoughts hole, it's hard if not nearly impossible, to get back out.

One of my biggest breakthroughs recently has been to try and access the power my mind has over my body. My favorite prayer when the urge to quit comes over me is:

“Lord, give me grace to tell my flesh no and your Spirit yes.”

The results have been amazing and I can't wait to see what happens as I continue praying this prayer!

When I began long distance training in early 2021 I lost a lot of my speed and ability to run without walking. It took all I had to finish those long weekly mileages and long runs, so walking became a huge part of my workouts. I finished my first Marathon (26.2 miles) in September of that year and went on to complete two trail half-marathons (13.1 miles) the next year with a lot of climbing.

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But after my last half (October of 2022) I realized I ran around 14 miles due to the directors having to redirect the route in order to dodge trees that had fallen during a storm. Once I did the calculations I was ecstatic to find out that I had made my goal of running 13.1 miles in 3 hours and 30 minutes!

Now it's off to the 25k, if I can shake this injury that won't go away...



One of the hardest things I have trouble with is enjoying the journey. I can get so caught up in the “one day” I’m training for. Before I know it the race is over and I’m in post-race depression. An actual symptom that is quite common among long distance runners.

I get through this depression by planning for my next race and pushing through the feelings. By the time the depression leaves, I’m focused on that “one day” I’m training for and the cycle continues.

This is very common among humans in general. We start out as kids who can't wait for our birthdays or that grand holiday called Christmas. We can't wait for school. We can't wait to get out of school and get a job. We can't wait to get married

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or start that dream career. We can't wait to advance to the next position in work or have a child of our own.

We can't wait, because our flesh wants more and more, being rarely satisfied and content where it's at.

Putting one foot in front of the other isn't just about moving towards our goal one step at a time or making it through another day. It's about enjoying the journey so that we can take that next step. It's about slowing down and seeing God at work in the lives of those around us. It's about enjoying the race before it's over.

I've often found that those who rush through life look back later on and wonder what they did. They missed so many little opportunities and blessings along the way because they were so consumed with that "one day" they were shooting for.

Sometimes, taking the next step is all we have the energy to do and that is okay. Sometimes, we may need someone to hold our hand and help lead us to that next step because we are too weak to go alone, and that is okay too.

I have recently found that my greatest encouragement and strength comes when I fall on my knees before God and tell Him I can't do it, I need Him to do it through me.

Whatever your next step is, focus on running it with God. Focus on accomplishing it by God's side. The Christian life is a lot more simple than we want to make it out to be. Our

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mind is our biggest obstacle. Our mind overcomplicates things and makes them worse than they need to be.

The first step to conquering the mind as a Christian is to realize the truth of our one mission in life...

God's primary goal for us is to be reconciled to Him.

He wants a relationship with us.

Then after that, He just wants to do life with you.

He wants to be there holding you when you cry.

He wants to laugh with you.

He wants to encourage you when you're discouraged.

He wants to motivate you when you're depressed.

He wants to love you in ways that are special to you.

He wants to see you do great things.

He wants to see you grow and change into the person He longs for you to be.

And He wants to help you do that.

No actually, He wants to do it *in* you...

You see, Christians are so focused on the doing that they forget they are a being - a human being. They forget that they

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are sinful and can't do anything righteous on their own, no matter how much they try.

It *has to be* Christ in us.

We have to let *Him* do the work.

We can do nothing without Him, but we can do all things through Him. (See John 15:5 and Philippians 4:13)

The Christian life is simple, because all we have to do is live in a relationship with Jesus and let Him do the work.

All we have to do is acknowledge Him in everything, focus on God, and then take little steps of faith in obedience to His leading. And sometimes that obedience is as simple as blessing the person right in front of you

The Christian life is about HIM... in us... to others. One step at a time.

ACTION STEP

What action steps do you know God wants you to be taking now?

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Are you enjoying the journey? If not, how could you begin to?

If you are in a season of just taking one step at a time, take a moment to write out a prayer to God about everything you're feeling during this time. What frustrates you? What encourages you?

What testimonies in the Bible can you relate to most? Why?

When was the last time you allowed God to love you? If you've never tried it, I encourage you to ask Him to love you today and then keep your eyes peeled for His answer. Ask Him to open your heart to receive His love.

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What are all some things you can be thankful for in this season? Many times hindsight is 20-20 (perfect vision) and we can understand why certain things happened. What can you thank God for knowing that things will make more sense down the road?

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CHAPTER FIVE

DEAL WITH INJURIES ALONG THE WAY

Going into my last half marathon, I was super excited to see how a real training block would affect my time. I went into taper (the rest period before the race where you run a lot less to let your legs recover) with a slight feeling of something being off with my body. But I figured it would heal before the race.

Come race day I didn't feel anything wrong with my legs and was very pleased.

However, during one of the times I was running downhill, something seemed to pop in my right leg. I felt a little discomfort in that foot and babied it down the rest of the hill. At the bottom it felt okay and so I continued running normally. I didn't have a problem with it for the rest of the race.

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A couple weeks later though, I noticed some pain on the back of my right knee and my feet and calf hurt. I took a few days off hoping it would just go away.

Unfortunately, it didn't.

For several weeks now, I've been dealing with plantar fasciitis (inflammation on the tendon that runs from the heel on the foot to the base of the toes) in my right foot and some kind of weird issue behind my right knee. It was also affecting my entire leg with tightness, but a little stretching has been helping that.

I have been able to cautiously continue running, but I keep telling myself that I need to get rid of this before training starts in a few weeks for my 25k.

The thing I hate most about the onset of injuries is figuring out when it's okay to run through them and when it's not. I've realized that the only way to tell is to try. I have been prioritizing strength training, a few walking sessions, and taking more rest days than normal. So far it's working. I barely have any discomfort anywhere except my heel occasionally and my feet when I get out of bed.

When recovery starts happening while I'm still able to continue running is my happiest moment. Sure, I love running without issues, but I've come to love the pure fact that I can still move forward while healing. We call this active recovery.

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Injuries come in all shapes and sizes. I've had my share over the years, but have also been blessed to have very minor problems and not that many to deal with.

Injuries have always been something that causes me anxiety, especially an injury before an approaching training block (12-40 weeks before a race when you have specific workouts to prepare you for that race), or an injury *during* a training block.

One thing I have learned about injuries and set-backs is that they can be turned into blessings.

I have found that it reminds me to focus on what is most important, gives me a break from training to focus on other things, and allows me to realize how much of a gift running is.

But one of the things I have loved about injuries is active recovery. Being able to still workout during the healing of an injury is so challenging and causes me to really make sure I focus on what is important.

In the Christian life, we get hurt, sadly quite frequently- someone makes fun of us, tells us not to do something when they do it themselves, talks about us behind our backs... the list could go on forever.

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Remember, John 15:5 says that Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. Our job in Christianity is as simple (and yet very complicated) as abiding in Christ. Think of how a branch abides in a grape vine. It simply rests in the vine, allowing the life from its roots to fill it so that it can produce fruit.

Oftentimes we go through life with pain and injuries telling ourselves to suck it up and deal with it. Imagine what would happen to a runner if they just sucked it up and dealt with it. They would either permanently damage their body or increase the damage already done.

We cannot effectively be used for the kingdom of God unless we are allowing Jesus to heal our pain. We must go to Him and tell Him what is going on and then ask Him to heal the damage that was done.

As He heals the pain, He may ask you to forgive someone or repent of (ask forgiveness and turn from) a certain sin. In order for an injury to heal, you must do what the doctor tells you. In order to then regain strength, you must follow the exercises your PT (physical therapist) prescribes.

The same is true in our Christian walk.

We must follow Jesus' guidance in order to recover.

Then, and only then, will we be able to continue running the Christian life with energy and passion.

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ACTION STEP

Make a list of the people who have offended you and write down how they hurt you and how it made you feel. Use as many specific words as possible.

Go somewhere where you can be alone with God and tell Jesus all about these offenses. Let the tears come because that is part of the healing. If you don't let the pain out, you will never heal. Be as specific with God as you possibly can. Specifically ask Jesus to heal the pain.

Do this as often as needed till there is no pain left when you think of the offenses.

Because we live in a sinful world, it is very unlikely we will ever be able to prevent spiritual injuries in the same way we could physically. Injuries are inevitable.

But, there is good news!

The closer we draw to Christ and His Word, the harder it is to get offended, thus less injuries to worry about!

“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.” – Psalm 119:165

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CHAPTER SIX

REALIZE THE BLESSING OF HAVING RUNNING BUDDIES

One of the things I was praying for at the beginning of this training block was a running buddy. I was used to running alone but heard so many benefits of having someone to workout with.

Since there was no running group in town, I joined an online one which was 30 minutes away. With gas prices, I knew I couldn't afford to drive that far with other spendings in my life.

I met a few people online but never had a connection with any of them. I knew God would answer my prayer at some point, I just didn't know when or how.

I ended up asking questions about volunteering at a race an hour away and another lady was doing the same thing. Somehow we found out we lived in the same area and after mentioning that she was the wife of a police officer I decided

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to do some investigation through an ex-policeman to see if she was a legit person.

Come to find out this lady lived literally like right around the block!

We met for a run in the area and then from there continued meeting about once a week. Being as we both have similar easy paces it wasn't hard to run together at all. The only difference was that she could run faster, but I could run longer, so we seemed to balance each other out pretty well.

Trail running became a possibility for me through her because I was cautioned by people to not run alone on the trails. These trail runs I believe helped me PR in the race and allowed for some easy, enjoyable times in nature.

We made many memories together and one of my favorites was getting lost a couple times after a bad wind storm on the trails.

When people seemed to rave about running buddies, I never imagined how encouraging it would be, especially since we were both training for the same race. There is nothing like two people chasing after a common goal that makes life a little more exciting.

Accountability was also something I really enjoyed. Being able to talk about a common interest and share stories from our races, as well as being able to have someone to communicate with as the clock ticked by was relaxing and fun.


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Having to work with another person's schedule taught me how I need to be more flexible and creative. Being okay with having to cancel runs due to weather or other issues was something God knew I desperately needed because of my past.

I've had people through Facebook groups become accountability partners, but it was totally different having an in-person relationship. It created closeness and made life more enjoyable.

And to be honest, if I want to remain comfortable, I like running alone better. I don't have to worry about what she thinks about me or slowing her down. Yet, not only has running with her become something I look forward to every week, it has also helped me to look past any self-pity or self-consciousness I may have.

Having a running buddy has become one of my most prized blessings!



Over the last seven years I have had the privilege of building friendships I never thought I'd have. During this time, I have grown so much closer to the Lord than my entire life combined and I fully believe that these friends played a huge part in that.

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Accountability has been one of my greatest tools in recent years and it reminds me of Proverbs 27:17, "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

When I first became a Christian I lost many of my friends. Not because of my faith but because this was before social media was easily accessible and cell phones were even a thing. We lost communication through moving around and therefore our relationships died.

I struggled through my Christian walk like no one's business. I struggled with lying about reading my bible every day. I hardly ever prayed. As I got older, church was just a headache, a place full of hypocrites and rules. I hated being conservative. Wearing head-coverings or skirts was not a conviction of my own...

It wasn't until I met a special friend at the age of 21 who poured her love into me that I began really growing in my walk with the Lord.

Do you know what she did?

She listened.

She rarely ever told me what I should do unless I asked.

She never told me, "this is how it is."

She just listened.

She asked questions and was always there for me.

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Though our friendship, through busyness on both our parts, has dwindled a little over the last year, she is still one of the most precious gifts God has ever given me.

I still know that if I were to ever need anything, she would be there and this has been a huge blessing.

But, despite how much I love her, no friendship has been as special as the one with a friend with whom we share a common struggle, a common desire, *and* a common goal.

Actually just last night she gave me a taste of my own medicine...

A while back, I had begun to learn to trust God and surrender to His plan no matter what was going on and she desperately needed that in her own life. I was happy to share with her what God had led me to do so that she could experience the same freedom I had found.

The last several months however, I have been struggling with trusting God and fully surrendering to Him again. I had completely forgotten even HOW to surrender because I was so hurt and scared, consumed with thinking about the future.

Then last evening, as I shared how I was struggling, my friend lovingly reminded me of what I had shared with her. And though I'm not completely surrendered to Him this morning, it certainly did help quite a bit.

But, then I have several other friends with whom we share common goals. One of them is keeping me accountable for

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writing this little book and what makes it even more fun is that she is trying to write one at the same time, so we are able to relate in special ways.

I have another friend as well who we are staying accountable together for scripture memory. And still another who we just started with journaling once a week.

Accountability I believe is one of the strongest motivators - besides knowing why you want to do something - that God created. Especially if it's two ways, and even better... if it's a common struggle or goal that the two of you share.

The nice thing about accountability is that it doesn't have to start out deep. It can simply be something like a hobby that you have been trying to pursue or a goal you've been wanting to accomplish.

Don't be afraid to ask someone to keep you accountable, without having them want to be kept accountable by you. Not everything in life has to be two-ways. Sometimes it can be better to be kept one-way at the time or with a certain person.

ACTION STEP

Who do you know that could become an accountability person?

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Who do you know who you can reach out to just be friends with?

Who do you know who has a common interest for the Kingdom that you could encourage each other in?

Write down your desires for a running buddy in this life and begin laying those requests before the Lord. Follow His leading and ask for His courage to ask those He brings to mind.

Be sure that when you ask, this is only for you unless the person has directly told you that they would like to work on something and it is something you would like to work on as well. Treat others as you would want to be treated. Don't be rude. Don't be pushy. Don't be judgmental. And especially, listen to God's guidance.

Also, ladies, be careful with online friendships. Don't give guys or possible guys posing as women the benefit of the doubt. In-person can be just as dangerous too, so make sure you have similar acquaintances, know them well enough to know that they are not predators, or best yet, you have come to trust them.

Something to also keep in mind is the person's character. My running buddy, now a friend, is one of the sweetest ladies I know. She is bubbly, yet calm, and full of life. Remember that the people you spend the most time with are who you will become. You will pick up on their character, good and bad. Evaluate their character to make sure this is someone you

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wouldn't mind having them rub off on you a little, because they inevitably will.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

RUN YOUR OWN RACE

The day had finally come!

As the excitement started to dawn on me, I was tempted to become anxious, but determining to reserve as much energy as possible, I tried to remain calm. I knew I'd need it.

Leading up to big races, you have to do what runners call "dress rehearsal". We have to try out what clothes we want to wear during the race. Decide how to fuel before, during, and after the race. Practice the warm up we want to use and decide what water pack to carry.

The goal is to be well prepared come race day. We have been training for this for 12-40 weeks and minimizing as many nuisances as possible is the way to go.

Now of course there will always be unexpected things that happen and we may not be prepared for them, but we can use as many instances in our training as possible on how to handle things that pop up with wisdom and efficiency.

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Leading up to this race, I tried to handle every circumstance as if it was race day. Rain, little pains, tiredness... I embraced them as practice workouts that would make me stronger.

One of the biggest mistakes I hear of with runners is that they ask people for advice only a week or so out from a race. This is the time we are to be resting and letting our bodies recover from all the hours and weeks of training, NOT to be changing or adding anything. I've heard so many stories of people who regretted doing new things too close to a race, or even during a race.

When it comes to running, it takes a toll on our bodies. That's why we train - to cause our bodies to adapt to each new level of training so that it becomes normal and not a cause for it to become upset. Our bodies are amazing creations and extremely adaptable. But it takes time.

For this training block I was determined to be different from all the other runners I knew I'd come across during the race. My dress, nutrition, warm up, style of running, when I'd walk, how I walked up the hills, etc. It was all what my body knew. If I decided to change anything at the last minute, my body would most likely not react to it in a positive way.

Now that it was race day, I looked around at all the people who were warming up. There was a variety and no one was the same, just as I suspected. Some people had water vests, some had handheld water bottles, some had none. Some were in shorts, some in pants, some with coats, and some with tank tops.

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When the gun went off, some people took off, some walked, and some jogged. I ended up starting many paces behind my friend, but decided to run with her for the first few miles, so I sprinted to catch up. I knew most people thought I was crazy, but hey, I've done sprints in training during the first few minutes of a long run and it has woken my legs up, so I knew it was okay.

The one thing I did struggle with not being myself was straight away in the beginning. I knew my friend ran her first half faster than her last half. This was not something I typically did. But my desire to run with her for the first few miles overpowered my will and I decided it would be worth the risk. Did it kill me in the end? I'll never know. But it was still worth it.

Throughout the race there were several times I was tempted to do what others were doing. I had to keep reminding myself to do what my body was used to and what I had trained for.

During the second half I felt bad for all the runners around me because my strength is in running the downhills, and weakness is in the inclines. Whereas they all hiked the uphill faster than me and jogged the downhills slower. This caused a lot of passing by the same people and vice-versa. I had a hard time with this, wondering what others were thinking, but if I wanted to win "MY" race I had to remind myself, "It doesn't matter what others think. I need to run my race."

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Another time I thought I probably looked like an idiot was when I had to walk the 182 steps around mile 9. My legs were already becoming stiff and with over three miles left, I knew I needed to save some energy. So I turned my side toward the top of the stairs and began climbing up sideways. After several stairs, I switched sides, again going up sideways. I switched back and forth till I reached the top, keeping both hands on the railing the entire time to help pull my way up. I made it and was able to start running again much quicker than if I had decided to climb the stairs like a normal human being.

I had determined to run the entire 13.1 miles with the mindset of, "Run Your Own Race", and I had succeeded. At least until my watch said I reached the 13 mile mark and the end was not in sight as it should have been.

God created everyone with specific tasks He wanted them to accomplish on earth.

Looking back throughout history, normally these works only consist of one or two significant things, surrounded by a lot of little mundane tasks that seem meaningless in our eyes.

Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

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Think of Ruth. She lived a normal life. Nothing was really out of the ordinary. Her husband died and she decided to stay and take care of her mother-in-law.

But her son ended up becoming the great-grandfather of King David. Her life was seemingly normal but played a huge part in the history and lineage of a great Bible character and even Jesus Himself.

Elijah lived the normal life of a prophet with two big events – the sacrifice on Mount Carmel and praying for rain after seven years of having none.

Esther lived the normal life of a Jew and then a queen with one major event – saving her people from death.

Daniel lived a pretty cool life but only one big event – being thrown into the lion's den.

God used each of these people, as well as all the others throughout history where they were at.

If you haven't noticed yet, you are the only you. There is no one else like you. Never has been, never will be. Your family, friends, nationality, gifts, talents... make you a unique individual.

Throughout our entire life there are people we admire, look up to, and want to be like. I don't think it's possible for a human to go through life without this.

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But God wants us to become more like His Son in character, while being who He created us to be. He wants to use us to be a light for Christ right where we are at.

So I encourage you. Don't try to be like someone else. Don't wish you could have so-and-so's life. God can't use you the same as He planned if you were someone else. Embrace who you are, who God created you to be.

Run the race set before you, not what's set before someone else. If I trained for a 13 mile race, but tried to run my friend's 50 mile race, what do you think would happen? One, I don't think I'd make it, and two, if I did make it, I certainly would not be very good at it.

God has set before each of us a race he wants us to run. When the gun goes off we must stay in our own lane otherwise things will not go right.

Find your race and run it!

ACTION STEP

Answer the following questions with an honest heart. Don't worry about what others think. And don't overcomplicate it. Right down all that comes to mind. You can pray about your answers later, get counsel from godly authority, and add or change things where He leads.

1. Where do you feel God leading you to serve others?

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2. Where do you feel God has blessed you that you could then bless others?

3. What race do you feel God has set before you?

4. Remembering that God may not answer in the way that you hope He will, I encourage you to start seeking Him about where He wants you. Where does He want your focus and attention?

5. What little mundane things do you have trouble accepting as part of God's will?

6. When and with what have you been tempted to run someone else's race? What was the outcome?

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7. What gifts and talents has God given you that you could start using for His glory?

8. What are some ways that you can begin following God's lead in your life right now?

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BONUS CHAPTER

RECOVERY

When my watch showed I had run 13 miles in what should have been a 13.1 mile race, I began to analyze the situation.

One thing stood out to me and struck me with dismay.

The end was not as close as I thought it was. The finish line should have been in sight by now.

Because I had run this trail twice before, I knew I still had *at least* a half mile left, if not an entire mile. It took all I had to keep my mind focused on moving forward knowing I wasn't going to finish in my 3:30 goal.

My legs almost refused to move and without the help of a stick up the last few hills, I may not have made it. I had gotten my eyes off of Christ and onto my broken expectations. Everything began collapsing from there and I lost all my energy.

I had given up and my race was no longer simple.

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I tried everything I could to keep my mind on Christ as Hebrews 12:3 says, but the disappointment grew and it overtook my body.

You may be thinking that I was probably just tired and ready to quit after 13 miles of running on difficult trails with hills I was not used to, but that was not the case. I was feeling pretty good and had a slight hope that I could at least PR (personal record). I saw no signs of my body quitting any time soon.

It wasn't until I lost all hope of reaching my goal that my mind gave up on me. My body then immediately followed suit and locked up. It wasn't gradual in any way, but rather a moment that had no time in between - an instant change.

By the time I crossed the finish line I was sore but glad I was done. I had no emotion other than disappointment. But I couldn't do anything about it, so into recovery I went.

Recovery is one of the things I have come to enjoy. I learn so much more than while I'm actually in the training or race. I'm able to connect the dots and make a plan on how to better train for the next one.

It wasn't till days after this race that I began putting together all the pieces of the last 15 weeks. They say hindsight is 20-20 (perfect vision) and I believe it. God began opening up my eyes to everything He wanted me to know about the struggles of this training block and how it corresponds to the Christian life.

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One of the most important things God taught me was to not be so quick in jumping to conclusions. Now that my head was on right, I realized my friend ended up getting over 14 miles during this race. My watch was always behind hers and it had shown I completed 13.87 miles. So I decided to do some calculations.

I kept my watch's mileage just to be safe and subtracted the time it took me to run the extra .77 miles.

I was ecstatic to find that I really had made my 13.1 miles in 3 hours and 30 minutes, just as I had hoped!

I become frustrated now for allowing the unmet expectations (or so I thought) to distract me from fully running my race.

Recovery seems to always have a way of bringing clarity. Clarity, that if taken to God, can help you move forward in a positive way.

Don't throw the gift of recovery away.

Learn from it.

Let God use it to draw you closer to Him.

God uses it every time to teach me more than the entire training and racing experience combined. He can for you too.

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Though the Christian life is simple, it is not easy.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is that we believe in His name and what He has done for us. It's realizing we are a sinner and that sin is not allowed in heaven. But because God wanted us to be in heaven with Him, He sent his Son, Jesus, to pay the price for our sins and be our sacrifice. All we must do is realize this as truth in our hearts and ask Jesus to cleanse our lives through His blood so that we can someday stand before a Holy God and all He'll see is the blood of Christ over our sin. This will satisfy the justice that must be done for sin and He will gladly receive us into heaven, because our debt had been payed on Calvary.

But it doesn't end there.

God didn't send His Son to earth *just* so we could go to heaven. He sent Jesus so that He could have a relationship with us.

He wants to know you. He wants to talk with you. Comfort you. Love you. He wants to be there for you.

A lot of people are angry at God because, "How can a loving God have allowed such-and-such to happen?"

I don't blame them for thinking this because I've been there too.

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But my outlook on WHO God is was completely changed by a simple truth that a friend shared with me once...

Jesus is a gentleman.

He will never force Himself on us. Never make us feel forced. And never force us to do anything. EVER.

Therefore, *everyone* has the free choice to do whatever they want to do. Even if you feel you were dragged to church as a kid, most likely no one tied you down and drug you to church. Even if you feel you were forced to conform to certain rules as a teenager, you were probably not tied to a chair in order to obey them.

Think of it this way. You obeyed them and did what they asked simply because a part of you either wanted to avoid the consequences or truly wanted to honor your parents' request or perhaps even both.

Yes it most definitely feels like people force us to do things, but we ALL have a choice.

If you were abused at any point in time, yes, being on the offended side was not your choice, but it was *their* choice and now it's *your* choice how you deal with that and respond. Do you think it was necessarily Jesus' choice that He was beaten to a pulp, made fun of, and spit upon? I think not. He was crying in agony the night before his crucifixion that if there was another way, He would prefer that. But He ended those prayers by saying He wanted to do the Fathers will.

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God did not force Jesus to do the things He did. He willingly did it for the Father and for us.

But if you're like me, there is also another side. Sometimes it *feels* like we are forced to obey God's voice. Let me shed some light on that perspective by asking you a question that helped me.

Do you think it's possible you feel forced because your sinful nature is strong, *but* deep down you *truly* desire to do what He is asking you? With the mixture of God's Spirit trying to encourage you to obey, your own voice inside your head, and the sin within you, is it possible that this makes you *feel* like you *have* to listen?

The entirety of the Gospel is simple. Acknowledge you're a sinner in need of a Saviour and accept a Holy God's love gift – His Son's payment for your sins – by simply believing in your heart and telling Him you want to be in a relationship with Him.

Now comes the difficult part, but it is still simple.

This is the part of the Christian Life that everyone wants to overcomplicate – God's Will for you while you're on earth, now that you are a child of His.

This is where running in the will of God needs to become simple.

This is where the gospel gets to play out in your life in a special way that is unique and exciting for you.

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You know those gifts, talents, interests, dreams, and desires God gave you? Or that job that you hate so much? Or the simple servant-hood tasks that consume your day to day life? Or those things that really upset you? The things you are really passionate about? ...

God wants to use those to glorify Himself so that He can draw others into a relationship with Him.

But still, that sounds complicated doesn't it? Because now you're probably wondering how you're supposed to glorify God in all you do?

I didn't understand the vastness of the simplicity in Christ until recently. It's kind of like a dessert with many hidden layers. You think you've tasted its richness, but then you put your fork in for another bite and discover a flavor that far surpasses the previous ones.

Most people accept Jesus as their Saviour and go on with their life, living in what they refer to as "freedom in Christ". But with this outlook, we are entirely missing that tootsie roll hidden within those old-fashioned lollipops. Jesus being our Lord.

All throughout my teenage years, I was afraid to give Jesus all the parts of my heart. I gave Him a little bit here and there and enjoyed the comfort that His Word gave me. I couldn't understand what God's love was all about until I met my mentor friend at 21. It wasn't until around the age of 25 that I completely gave my heart to Jesus and told Him I wanted Him

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to be the Lord of my life, not just my Savior. I wanted to give Him everything. Since that day I have grown closer to God like never before and experienced what seems to be the abundant Christian life Jesus came to earth to give us.

It was then that I realized the Christian life is super simple and doesn't have to be as complicated as people make it out to be. God said He would give me my desires as I delighted in Him, committed my way unto Him, and trusted in Him. But He also said to redeem the time and glorify Him in *all* I do – even in the simple things like eating and drinking.

I realized one of the most important things for me to do was to focus on my relationship with Jesus and ask God to change my desires to match His. Then I began praying that God would grant me the desires that were changing because I wanted them more than anything I had ever wanted before. The dreams He replaced mine with were similar at heart, but the arena and practice was different and I gained an excitement to see God glorified in this.

My passion is to encourage Christian ladies around the world to realize that the Christian life is not complicated. It's hard, but it's simple. God's primary goal for sending Jesus to earth was to reconcile (restore friendship) with us as His children. He wants us more than anyone on this earth ever could. He wants so desperately for us to allow Him to love us. He wants us to live the abundant *life* that He offers. He doesn't want us to live in fear, despair, discouragement, or depression.

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And the great thing about accepting Jesus as our Lord? He knows us better than anyone. He knows what is best for us and sometimes we don't realize that as truth until days, weeks, or years later. But it is the truth!

Overtime we realize that the promises in scripture are true. But in the meantime, we need to *choose* to believe that what God says is true, and then later we will understand. And the more we understand, the easier it becomes to trust and obey.

You want another piece of good news? When Jesus rose again three days after His crucifixion, He spent a little more time with different people on earth before He ascended to heaven. One of the promises He gave during that time was that He would send the Holy Spirit to them, to live in them, to be their comfortor and guide.

And power, to do the will of God!

We cannot live the Christian life on our own. It's impossible. We must surrender our lives to the Lord and allow Him to work in us through the Holy Spirit inside of us. That's where the simplicity comes in. We must abide in Christ and then simply obey whatever He asks of us. He then does the work that we can't do.

Christianity is then not us, but HIM! We must pray earnestly that God would work through us and in the lives of others. We must ask Him to fill us with His Spirit which is of power, love, and a sound mind.

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The Christian life is not about us, it's about HIM.

The Christian life is not about us, it's about HIM.

The Christian life is not about us, but about HIM.

More of HIM, and less of me.

We are the vessel, the clay, that must only be willing to be used, surrendered to the work of the Holy Spirit inside of us if we have accepted Jesus as our Lord and Saviour.

Christianity is all about Jesus, and that's why it's simple, because it is not us.

ACTION STEP

Look up the following verses that have been referenced to throughout this book and write down anything you feel the Lord speaking to you on. Remember that God's voice will never contradict scripture. There have been two times that I can remember thinking I heard something from God but it turned out to go against scripture. I encourage you to have someone in your life that will help you understand if something you hear is from God or not. Sometimes the Bible is not very clear on a matter, so it can be challenging. Search the scriptures for yourself and ask God to guide you into all truth.

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“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

-Acts 17:11

When you are done writing down what you feel the Lord is speaking to you on, write down what the first step is. What can you start doing right now to act on what God has said?

Remember, keep it simple.

Write down *one* step.

Do that *one* thing.

Then when you're done, ask God for the next step.

Sometimes it takes a while for Him to give you the next step. That's okay. Don't stress. This is the training ground for where He eventually wants to take you.

Enjoy this season of your life. Learn all you can.

Then, when He gives you the next step, obey His leading.

Repeat.

- Ruth 4:13-17
- I Kings 18:1-46
- I Samuel 2:2
- I Samuel 15:22-23

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- Esther 3:8-9:22
- Psalms 32:8
- Psalm 37:4-7
- Psalm 90:12
- Psalm 119:165
- Proverbs 3:5-6
- Proverbs 16:7
- Proverbs 19:21
- Proverbs 27:17
- Proverbs 27:20
- Proverbs 29:25
- Ecclesiastes 1:8
- Ecclesiastes 2:24
- Isaiah 55:19
- Jeremiah 1:5
- Jeremiah 29:13
- Daniel 6:1-28
- Matthew 6:25-34
- Matthew 10:26-31
- Matthew 11:28-30
- Matthew 16:24-27
- Matthew 22:37-40
- Matthew 27:30
- Luke 11:46
- Luke 22:39-44
- John 3:16
- John 5:39
- John 14:16

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- John 14:26
- John 15:1-7
- John 16:13
- John 16:17
- John 19:1-3
- Acts 17:11
- Romans 5:8
- Romans 6:23
- Romans 8:32
- Romans 12:9
- 1 Corinthians 9:24-27
- 1 Corinthians 10:31
- 1 Corinthians 12:7-11
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
- 2 Corinthians 3:18
- 2 Corinthians 5:17
- 2 Corinthians 11:3
- 2 Corinthians 12:3
- Galatians 2:20
- Ephesians 2:10
- Ephesians 5:15-17
- Philippians 4:13
- Colossians 3:1-4
- Colossians 4:5
- 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- 2 Timothy 3:16
- Titus 1:2
- Hebrews 4:9-10

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- Hebrews 12:1-3
- Hebrews 13:5
- James 1:22
- James 3:16
- James 4:6-7
- James 4:10
- I Peter 2:15-16
- I Peter 5:7-8
- I John 1:9

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WRAP IT UP

ABOUT US

Be Still and Run actually started out by being a personal blog of what God taught me (Alli Anne) when I went for a run. Running everyday for 31 days straight really got me started in realizing how close the sport of running resembles the Christian life.

As I sat one afternoon doodling a little logo and trying different word phrases for a website title, little did I know that when Be Still and Run came to mind, that God would expand it into something i never dreamed it'd be.

Through BSR, I hope to encourage ladies around the world to live the abundant Christian life they were called and created to live.

BeStillandRun.com