

RUN THE RACE WITH GRACE

Open:

*(PowerPoint slide of Usain Bolt)

He has been given the title, “The World’s Fastest Man,” 6 ft. 5 from Jamaica ... Usain Bolt wins gold in the 2012 Olympics

- His training partner, Yohan Blake, showed his speed as well.

*(PowerPoint slide of Oscar Pistorius)

- Though it stirred some controversy ... the blade runner from South Africa (double amputee) Oscar Pistorius, inspired us not to quit when facing difficulty...
 - √ His fame ... “the fastest man with no legs.”
 - √ At 11 months old his legs were amputated.
 - √ His motto: “You are not disabled by the disabilities you have; you are abled by the abilities you have.”
 - √ He grew up in a Christian home and accepted Christ as his Savior at an early age.
 - √ He says: “Christ is the reason for my success and the One that takes me from strength to strength.”
 - √ “Christ makes all the difference. He aides me in my struggles ... believe in yourself ... in the final seconds before a race, I tell myself: I wouldn’t be here unless I qualified, and I know I can do this.”

- * The Christian life is likened to a race:

Hebrews 12:1b-2a NLT ... ¹ let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. ² We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NLT ²⁴ Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! ²⁵ All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. ²⁶ So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. ²⁷ I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

* 3 Things about the race of grace:

(1) You need a pace that is sustainable.

– The Christian life is not a sprint but a marathon.

√ Steady with a burst at the end.

√ Give attention to priorities and establish boundaries.

* 3 things we ask of you:

(a) Participate in a weekly worship service ... time out to praise and focus on God.

Hebrews 10:25 NLT And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

– Sunday morning and Wednesday evening are our service opportunities.

(b) Get involved in a weekly small group: life group/home group.

– It is in this setting you will develop meaningful friendships.

√ Create a friendly atmosphere; the larger the class the more important the organization ... (life guards).

√ Become friends in class and out of class; enjoy hanging together ... (especially critical for the women).

√ Your small group will want to have one social a quarter ... individuals and families can get together more frequently ... consider Wednesday Café.

Matthew 18:20 NLT For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.

→ Come together for spiritual nourishment and encouragement.

(c) Serve in a weekly ministry.

– The church has many members; every believer has been given a gift from the Holy Spirit ... use your gift to help strengthen the Body.

1 Corinthians 12:7 NLT A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

√ Some having speaking gifts and some have serving gifts.

1 Peter 4:10-11 NLT ¹⁰ God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. ¹¹ Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ.

√ You want to find a ministry for which you have passion and enjoy.

- Ex.: Loving preschoolers, guiding children, mentoring students, teaching adults, reaching the lost, helping the hurt, using your construction abilities (Barn Builders), sewing remembrance quilts ...

➤ To help you succeed, we offer training: FBU

Ephesians 4:11-12 NLT ¹¹ Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. ¹² Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.

**** (FBU Video Clip) ****

√ Go over available classes ... Coaches are ready to assist you.

➤ What are we asking? Participate in a weekly worship, connect in a weekly small group, get involved in weekly ministry.

→ Life will bring different challenges: special needs child, aging parents, financial obligations ... you must decide what is a sustainable pace.

(2) You need a life that is significant.

- There are many things to give your time and attention to ... you must choose what is best.
- The runners of the Olympics in Paul's day received a wreath to wear on their head ... fade away ...

√ There is the moment of fame, the pride of victory, your name in spotlights ... yet you are slowly forgotten.

- Live not for material gain but invest your life in eternal matters.

√ Enjoy the work of your hands but learn to be content ... I have enough, thank you, God!

Proverbs 30:9 NLT ... if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, "Who is the Lord?" and if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God's holy name.

- Provide a living but make life count.

→ Live with eternity in view!

Colossians 3:1-2 NLT ¹ Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. ² Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.

? What are you doing that has eternal significance?

Review: A sustainable pace, a life that is significant ...

(3) You will be given a reward that is satisfying.

- Yours will be an eternal reward given by Christ.
- At the end of his life, Paul could say:

2 Timothy 4:7-8 NLT ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. ⁸ And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing.

- ✓ Our work done for the Lord will be rewarded.
- ✓ Do not lose heart but remain faithful.

Hebrews 6:10 NLT For God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other believers, as you still do.

→ God will reward you for your faithful service.

* To fuel the team, to provide the power needed for ministry ... we need to be a praying church.

- Danielle Summers is our new prayer coordinator.

- ✓ Our goal initially is to have 2 people in the prayer room praying for God to work in the service and ministries ...
- ✓ This will be done at 9:00 and 10:30 a.m.
- ✓ See bulletin note for how you can get involved.

Close: As we move into this new season:

- Make a commitment to serve for 1 year, September – August.

Colossians 4:17 NLT ... Be sure to carry out the ministry the Lord gave you.

- Before God can do great things, we must come clean!

Joshua 3:5 NLT Then Joshua told the people, “Purify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do great wonders among you.”

- * I would like to invite ministry leaders to come forward ... come clean and commit.
 - And I want to pray for all of us ...

Message Notes
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