



CHAPTER ONE

THE STARTING LINE

Once upon a time, during my high school days, necessity dawned on me that I had to represent my 'School House' in a marathon race during our annual inter-house sport competition. As I stood at the starting line of the race, my heart pounded with excitement and anticipation. I had been preparing for this moment for months, training diligently to ensure that I was in peak physical condition. The sun beat down on my skin warming my muscles and filling me with energy. I felt ready.

Like Abram in ***Genesis 12:4***, I was embarking on a journey into the unknown. Just as God had called Abram to leave his home and go to a land that He would show him, I felt called to push myself beyond limits and see what I was truly capable of. I knew that the road ahead would be challenging, but I also knew that with God on my side, I could overcome any obstacle. Then the starting gun sounded, I took off with determination, my feet pounding the pavement beneath me. The cheers of the crowd filled my ears, urging me on as I raced towards the finish line. I felt alive, free, and completely in my element. This was where I belonged, I felt most at home.

Scripture tells us in *Ecclesiastes 9:11* that:

"the race is not the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all".

(Ecclesiastes 9:11)

I knew that victory was not guaranteed, no matter how well I had prepared. I would need to rely on God's strength and guidance to see me through to the end.

As I neared the halfway point of the race, my legs began to feel heavy, my breathing ragged. Doubt crept into my mind, whispering that I didn't have what it takes to finish. But then I remembered the words of *Isaiah 40:31*:

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

(Isaiah 40:3)

I knew that God would give me the strength I needed to press on: With renewed determination, I pushed through the pain and kept running, one foot in front of the other. I focused on the road

ahead, refusing to let my doubts and fears hold me back. I knew that God had a plan for me, a purpose for this race that was greater than anything I could imagine.

After much gasp for breath, as I crossed the finish line, exhaustion washing over me in a wave, I felt a sense of accomplishment unlike anything I had ever experienced. I had pushed myself beyond my limits, relied on God's strength, and emerged victorious. Just as Abram had trusted in God's guidance and stepped out in faith, I had followed His lead and come out on top.

In that moment, I knew that running was not just a physical exercise for me, but a spiritual one as well. It was a way for me to test my faith, to grow in my relationship with God; and to experience His power in my life. Likewise, as Abram had been blessed for his obedience and faithfulness, I too felt blessed for following God's Call and trusting in His plan for me.

As I caught my breath and looked back on the journey that had brought me to this point, I knew that the starting line was just the beginning. There were more races to run, more challenges to face, and more opportunities to grow in my faith and

reliance on God. And I was ready, eager to see where He would lead me next.

Each step I took in that race felt like a step closer to God, as if He was guiding me every step of the way. The race had not only tested my physical endurance, but also my spiritual strength. It had shown me that with God by my side, I could accomplish anything.

The same way Abram had been called to leave his comfort zone and trust in God's plan, I too had been called to step out in faith and rely on Him completely. Just Like Abram, I had been rewarded for my obedience and trust.

On getting to the finish line, as I walked away, a sense of peace washed over me. I knew that this race was just one chapter in the greater story that God was writing for me. I was eager to see where He would lead me next, what challenges He would place in my path, and how He would continue to shape me into the person He intended me to be.

In that moment, I realized that every race I ran, every challenge I faced, was an opportunity for me to grow closer to God, to deepen my faith, and to experience His love and grace in a tangible way. It was a reminder that God's plans for me were greater than anything I could imagine, and that as

long as I continued to trust in Him, He would continue to lead me on an incredible journey.

With ecstasy, I looked forward to the next race, the next challenge, the next opportunity to grow in my faith; I did so with confidence, knowing that God was with me every step of the way. With Him as my guide, there was nothing I couldn't accomplish.