



CHAPTER EIGHT
STAYING FOCUSED

The art of running is not complete without mentioning this ancient quote from one of my favorite movie actor:

“The successful warrior is the average man, with laser-like focus”.
(Bruce Lee)

In the journey of life, we are called to run our race with perseverance, keeping our eyes fixed on the price that lies ahead. Just as a runner must stay focused on the finish line in order to reach their goal, so too must we stay focused on the ultimate price of eternity with Christ. In the book of *Philippians*, the apostle Paul writes of the importance of pressing on towards this goal, straining towards the mark for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (***Philippians 3:14***)

In the book of **Matthew 6:22**, Jesus tells his disciples

“The eye is the lamp of the body. if your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light”.

This powerful statement serves as a reminder that our focus and attention shape our internal landscape, affecting our physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Just as the eyes serve as a gateway to the soul, the things we choose to draw on and invest our energy in have a profound impact on our overall state of being.

When it comes to the art of running, staying focused is crucial to achieving peak performance and reaching our goals. In a sport that requires both physical endurance and mental fortitude, maintaining a clear and undistracted mind is essential. As runners, we must learn to harness the power of our thoughts and direct our gaze towards the vision of success that lies ahead.

Friends, in the pursuit of running excellence, it's easy to become consumed by external distractions that pull us away from our goals. Whether it's comparing ourselves to other runners, worrying about our performance, or allowing negative self-talk to cloud our minds, these inner battles can hinder our progress and rob us of the joy of the journey.

However, by grounding ourselves in the timeless wisdom of scriptures and drawing strength from the words of Jesus, we can cultivate a mindset of focus, purpose, and resilience. The light of God's truth can guide those through the challenges of the race, helping us to stay on course and endurance, just as a lamp illuminates a dark room.

The Book of **Hebrews 12:1**, clearly reminded us of the importance of staying focused on our run of faith.

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us”.

Just as a runner must shed unnecessary weight and obstacles to move swiftly towards the finish line, so too must we release the burdens of doubt, fear, and distraction that threaten to derail our spiritual journey.

Brothers and Sisters, as we lace up our running shoes and set our sight on the path ahead, let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the ultimate example of endurance and perseverance. In the book of

Matthew 6:25, Jesus urges his followers not to worry about their material needs, but to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. By prioritizing our spiritual well-being and aligning our priorities with God's will, we can run with freedom, purpose, and joy.

Running is not just a physical exercise-it is a metaphor for the Christian life, a journey of faith, perseverance, and transformation. Great friends, just as a runner trains diligently to strengthen their muscles and improve their endurance, so too must we discipline our minds and hearts to stay focused on the things that matter most. Let's take a dive into **Philippians 4:8-9**, the apostle Paul offers a blueprint for mental discipline and spiritual growth:

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is amicable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy think about such things. Whatsoever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me-put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you”.

Furthermore, as we navigate the twists and turns of the race, let us fix our eyes on the prize of our

calling in Christ Jesus. Let us run with perseverance, casting off the weight that hinders us and embracing the freedom that comes from surrendering our fears and doubts to God. May the light of God's truth illuminate our path, guiding us towards the finish line with strength, grace, and unwavering faith.

In conclusion, the art of running is more than just a physical activity-it is a spiritual discipline that challenges us to stay focused on our goals, persevere through obstacles, and run with endurance towards the prize that awaits us. By grounding ourselves in the wisdom of scripture and drawing strength from the words of Jesus, we can cultivate a mindset of faith, courage, and determination. So let us fix our eyes on the light of God's truth, casting off the distractions that threaten to pull us off course, and run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Amen.