

Running the Race

By Ken Birks, Pastor, Teacher, Author

We have a great race before us. Every generation of believers is called to recognize the moment they live in and respond with faith, courage, and obedience. We are not placed in the race by accident, nor are we left to run without direction. God has set a course before us, given us His grace, and called us to press on with endurance until His purposes are fulfilled in and through our lives.



As we stand on the threshold of all that has been secured for us in Christ, our hearts fill with vision, expectation, and anticipation. Yet amid that excitement, we must pause and remember a sobering truth: the Christian life is not a short sprint fueled by emotion, but a lifelong race marked by endurance, perseverance, and unwavering faith.

The road before us is glorious, but it is not without challenge. It will lead through moments of great victory and seasons of deep testing. Mountaintops will inspire us, and valleys will refine us. There will be opportunities to grow, sacrifices to make, burdens to release, and trials that reveal whether our faith is anchored in Christ or in circumstances.

Life calls us to stop and examine ourselves. What weights are we carrying that God never intended us to bear? What distractions are slowing our pace? What sins have quietly wrapped themselves around our hearts, threatening to hinder our progress? The race set before us requires spiritual discipline, intentional focus, and a continual dependence on God's strength.

The writer of Hebrews gives us a compelling vision for the journey when he proclaims, *"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who*

for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”¹

As we enter a season of intensifying spiritual activity in both the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness, this is not the hour for complacency, distraction, or spiritual passivity. It is the hour for preparation. The days ahead will require more than good intentions and occasional devotion. They will demand men and women who are spiritually fit, deeply rooted in God's Word, sensitive to the Holy Spirit, and unwavering in their commitment to Christ. This is why we must honestly examine ourselves now. The challenges before us will reveal the strength of our spiritual foundations. Tomorrow's pressures will expose the disciplines we cultivated or neglected today. What we become in private will determine how we stand in public. What we develop in seasons of peace will sustain us in seasons of conflict.

The prophet Jeremiah sounded a warning that is as relevant today as it was in his generation. He said, *“If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, in which you trusted, they wearied you, then how will you do in the floodplain of the Jordan?”²* These words compel us to stop and think. If present challenges easily discourage us, how will we respond when greater demands arise? If smaller battles exhaust our faith, how will we stand when the conflict intensifies? If we struggle to maintain our devotion in times of relative peace, how will we remain steadfast when the waters begin to rise?

God speaks these words not to instill fear, but to awaken readiness. He calls His people to a higher level of spiritual maturity, endurance, and dependence on Him. The race before us is too important, and the stakes are too high to carry unnecessary weights, tolerate compromise, or drift into spiritual apathy.

Now is the time to lay aside every weight. Now is the time to strengthen weak hands and weary knees. Now is the time to deepen our prayer lives, sharpen our discernment, and anchor ourselves more firmly in God's presence. For the call of heaven is not merely to survive the days ahead, but to run with endurance, contend with faith, and finish the race with our eyes fixed upon Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

¹ Hebrews 12:1-2

² Jeremiah 12:5

The days ahead will not simply reveal what we believe; they will reveal who we have become. Therefore, let us prepare ourselves, not with anxiety, but with holy anticipation. The same God who calls us to run the race also supplies the strength to finish it, and those who remain steadfast in Him will not merely endure the season ahead; they will emerge stronger, wiser, and more fully conformed to the image of Christ.

This same call to endurance requires more than inspiration. It requires honest evaluation and intentional discipline. To run the race God has set before us, we must confront the very things that hinder our progress. Whether they are areas of bondage, deeply rooted strongholds, emotional wounds, lingering disappointments, unhealthy attitudes, or matters of the heart that have gone unaddressed, we cannot afford to drift along and simply accept them as part of who we are. What we tolerate today may become the very thing that limits us tomorrow.

The Holy Spirit is calling the Church to a season of spiritual conditioning. Just as an athlete disciplines every aspect of his or her life to perform at his highest level, we are called to submit every area of our lives to Christ's Lordship. The days ahead will not be navigated successfully by casual believers or half-hearted devotion. They will require focused disciples who are willing to lay aside distractions, confront compromise, and pursue holiness with determination and purpose.

Yet we do not do this out of obligation. We do it because of the great love our Lord and Savior has imparted to us and the wonderful prize before us. A glorious inheritance awaits those who remain faithful with a crown that does not fade, a reward that cannot perish, and the joy of hearing our Lord say, *"Well done, good and faithful servant."*

The Apostle Paul captured this urgency and resolve when he wrote: *"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. They do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we to an imperishable one. Therefore, I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus, I fight not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."*³

³ 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

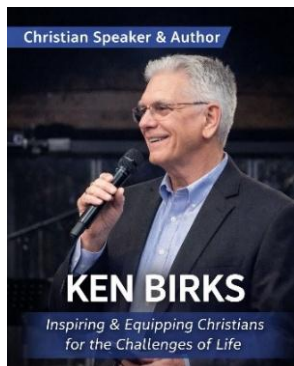
These words should make each of us stop and think. Are we running with purpose, or merely moving through life? Are we pursuing Christ with intentionality, or are we allowing lesser things to consume our strength and attention? Are we training for the race set before us, or assuming that yesterday's victories will sustain us for tomorrow's battles?

This is not a time for uncertainty. It is not a season for spiritual complacency. The hour calls for believers who are fully surrendered, spiritually alert, and prepared for what lies ahead. The race is real. The opposition is real. The stakes are eternal. But so is the reward.

As we move forward, let us do so with both holy expectation and sober resolve. The days ahead will require more of us than the days behind, but God has not called us to run this race in our own strength. He has given us His Spirit, His Word, and His grace to sustain us every step of the way. Therefore, let us lay aside every weight, confront every hindrance, and embrace the discipline necessary to become all that He has called us to be. May we not drift into complacency, but press on with endurance, courage, and unwavering faith. When our race is complete, may we stand before our Lord with joy, knowing we ran with purpose, fought the good fight, kept the faith, and received the imperishable crown reserved for those who faithfully endure to the end.

The call to action is clear: Examine our hearts, strengthen our walk with God, deepen our prayer lives, and renew our commitment to His Word. Refuse to ignore the areas God is highlighting. Refuse to settle for spiritual mediocrity. Let today be the day you release every weight, break agreement with every hindrance, and surrender every area of your life to the lordship of Christ. Commit yourself anew to the race set before you. Run with passion. Run with discipline. Run with endurance. Run with your eyes fixed on Jesus. The greatest days of God's purpose are not behind us but ahead, and those who prepare now will be positioned to stand strong, run well, and fulfill all that God has ordained for their lives. **The race has begun. The prize is eternal. Let us rise and run to win.**

About Ken Birks



Ken Birks has walked with God through seasons of quiet wonder, deep refining, and unexpected grace — journeys that have shaped both his faith and voice. From early moments of sensing God's nearness to years of learning to listen more closely, Ken has discovered that the Lord often speaks in whispers, rhythms, and poetic impressions.

Out of those sacred encounters came a desire to write — not to impress, but to invite. To invite others into the same stillness, the same clarity, the same holy encouragement that has carried them through life's valleys and mountaintops. His devotional poetry and other writings flow from a heart that has wrestled, worshiped, and been transformed by God's presence.

Today, Ken writes to help fellow believers pause, breathe, and rediscover the treasures God longs to place within them. Ken's hope is simple: that every reader will feel the Father's nearness, hear His voice more clearly, and walk with renewed courage into the calling He has lovingly prepared.

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