



*Running  
to Win an  
Eternal  
Prize*



**By B. R. Hicks**



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an Eternal Prize**

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# Introduction

Some aspects of the Christian's spiritual race for the Prize of the High Calling in Christ Jesus parallel those of a natural race. Up to a point, we can compare notes with those of a well-trained runner and glean some interesting facts. Yet, beyond the less significant races for which men and women train in this life is a far more complex race, a spiritual one, that must be run in a spiritual realm by sincere Christians.

The race toward the Eternal Prize is set before each person at the time of his spiritual birth, and it continues over the span of the individual's entire lifetime as a Christian. Whether or not a person gains the Eternal Prize at the end of the race depends on how faithfully he observes the rules in God's Word that have been given to help all runners run well.

Every normal, healthy baby is born to be a runner. This innate urge to run begins to manifest itself before a child reaches school age. Almost any time two little boys get together, it is not long before one of them challenges the other to a race.

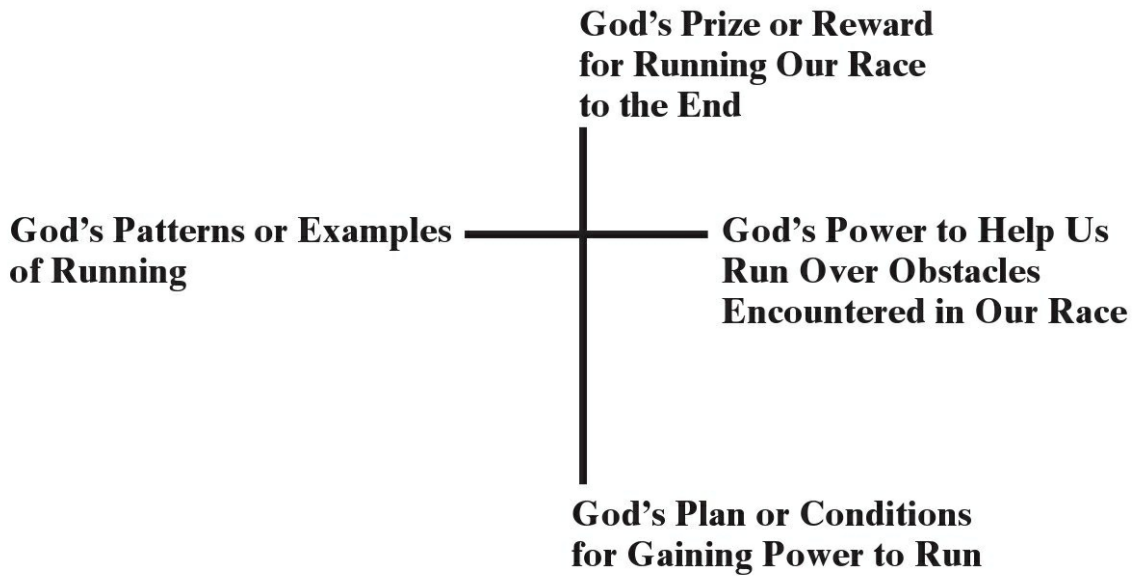
Games involving fast running are a regular part of the rivalry among high schools and colleges. The Olympic games, a revival of contests held by the ancient Greeks on the plains of Olympia, draw worldwide attention and support. Unfortunately, most of the aforementioned forms of racing are done to obtain a corruptible crown of one kind or another.

God did not give us the desire to run so that we could win a natural race. He gave it to us so that we could run to win the race called *life*. Instead of being a child's game, as many people suppose, running is the very business of life. All this business is conducted or run upon one of three tracks: one track belongs to God; one track belongs to Self or the flesh; and the other track belongs to the Devil. At the end of each of these tracks is a different reward.

After being born into this world, we have no choice about whether we run or not. We must run life's race to the end. However, we are not mindless robots. When God created us as free moral agents, with a will or power of selection, He gave us the privilege of selecting the Eternal Reward we want to receive at the end of life's race. Our choice of which of life's three tracks we run upon is more weighty than any decision we ever make. We all start out as sinners, running on the Devil's track, but our race toward the Prize of the High Calling in Christ Jesus begins when we choose Him as the Captain of our life.

Frustration, emptiness, disappointment, and failure are at the end of the fleshly race track, while Death, Hell, and the Lake of Fire await to embrace those who run their full course on the Devil's race track. But, none of us has to waste our vote, our choice, in this manner. Each of us can choose to run life's race on God's track. The Eternal Reward at the end of God's track is the greatest Prize of all time and Eternity. Christians who run this course to its full end will know the exquisite pleasure of being in the Bride of the LORD Jesus Christ.

The spiritual race, just as a natural race, has some rules which must be observed by those who run. There is a Stature of Truth found in God's Word concerning the spiritual race that is to be run on God's track of life. In this Stature are four major Truths laid out in the four points of the Cross. These four points form the chapters in this booklet: (1) God's Plan or Conditions for Gaining Power to Run; (2) God's Patterns or Examples of Running; (3) God's Power to Help Us Run Over Obstacles Encountered in Our Race, and, (4) God's Prize or Reward for Running Our Race to the End.



We need to note, seriously, God's Plan or Conditions for running in the spiritual race He has set before us. Many beautiful Truths in God's Word reveal the necessary requisites for victoriously running the race to the finish line. May the revealed Word in this booklet become a continual, personal Guide to encourage you to hasten in your race for the Eternal Prize — to be in the Bride of the LORD Jesus Christ!

— The Author

# Chapter One

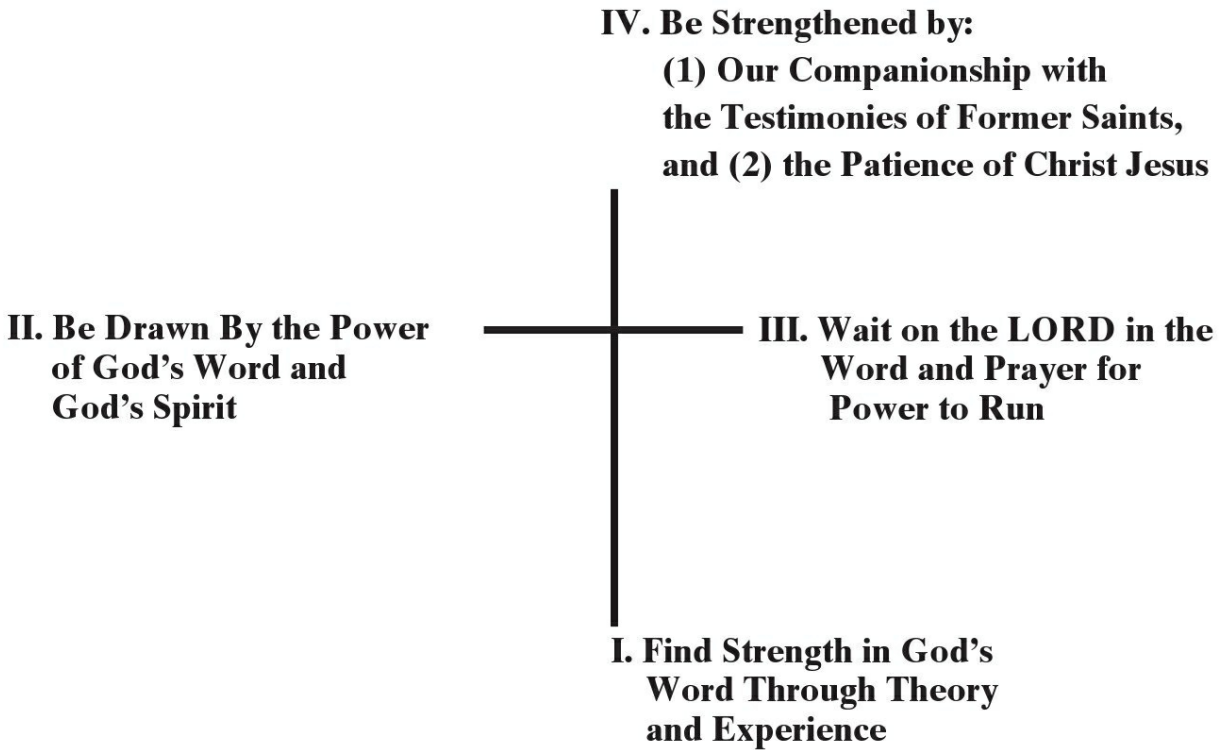
## God's Plan or Conditions for Gaining Power to Run

The word *run* means to walk swiftly, to run, to rush. A spiritual runner is easy to identify; his behaviour shows he is in a hurry to get to his destination.

“What is the point of running?” some may ask. “Why get in a hurry if the race is going to last from the cradle to the grave?”

The answer is simple. The journey to spiritual maturity, to perfection, is a long one. There are many attitudes and dispositions which God has to remove from our heart along the way. There is much work to be done inside us by God's Word and by His Spirit. The Prize will go only to those who run on God's track all the way to the end of this life. If we switch tracks along the way, we never will receive God's greatest Prize — to be the Bride of Jesus Christ. If we want to win, we must get in a hurry to let God condition us to be a racer.

God's list of conditions also follow the familiar pattern of the Cross. Therefore, His Plan for our running the race He has set before us as believers requires us to meet four major conditions: to find Strength by living in and by His Word; to be drawn by the Power of His Word and Spirit; to wait on the LORD for Power to run on; and to be Strengthened by: (1) our mutual companionship with the testimonies of those who have already run the race and (2) the Patience of Christ Jesus. Our constant companionship with the testimonies of overcomers who have gone before us continually will encourage us in the running of our race for the Prize of the High Calling in Christ Jesus, and Jesus' Patience will help us endure until the end.



### **I. Find Strength in God's Word Through Theory and Experience**

The first Plan or Condition God has given to aid us in our spiritual race is for us to live *in* and *by* His Word.

#### **A. Strength from the Theoretical Truth of God's Word**

The Apostle Peter proclaimed that each beginning of a new level of Truth starts with the sincere Milk of the Word.

##### **1. Sincere Milk of the Word**

God's Word exhorts us to assume the duty of maintaining a strong and constant desire for His *beginning* Truth, which comes in the form of the sincere Milk of the Word.

As newborn babes, **desire the sincere milk of the word**, that ye may grow thereby: (I Peter 2:2).

Continual new growth in the LORD Jesus Christ necessitates our receiving the fresh, sincere Milk of the Word, daily. God always gives His sincere Milk of Truth as a result of our fervent and frequent hunger for Truth.

##### **2. Gold and Honey of the Word**

The Psalmist declared God's Word to be richer than gold and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.

**More to be desired are they than gold**, yea, than much fine gold: **sweeter also than honey and the**

**honeycomb** (Psalm 19:10).

The spiritual riches of God's Word are superior to material wealth and riches. His Word is the only means for obtaining true happiness and everlasting satisfaction; and it produces joyful gratitude for and faithfulness to His Purposive Will.

When Jeremiah found God's Word, it was pleasant food for his soul. Eating it produced joy and rejoicing in his heart.

Thy words were found, and **I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart:** for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts (Jeremiah 15:16).

King David also witnessed about the sweetness of God's Word.

**How sweet are thy words** unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! (Psalm 119:103).

David found the LORD's Word sweet, smooth, and agreeable to his heart and mind. As David made mental and spiritual investigations into God's Word, he found it sweet, pleasant, and satisfying.

In order for us to run the race upward in the Spiritual Stature of Jesus Christ to full spiritual maturity, we continually must feed on God's Word and allow it full Dominion and complete Sovereignty in our heart and life.

## **B. Strength from the Experiential Truth of God's Word.**

Reading or even studying God's Written Word is not enough; the strength and power to run comes when we have a personal *experience* with the Living, Resurrected Christ.

**He is not here: for he is risen**, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And **they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word** (Matthew 28:6-8).

The Word of Christ's Resurrection put a run in the feet of both Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, inspiring them to go and tell what they had heard and seen.

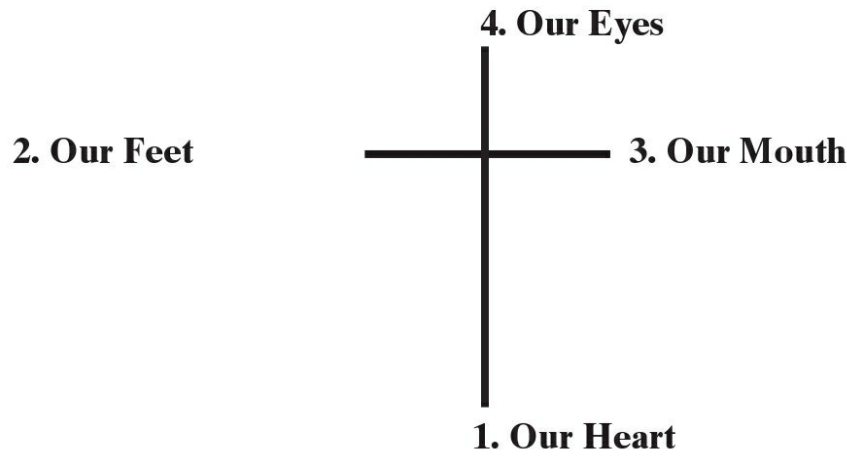
The Word of the Living, Resurrected Christ will put the "run" in our feet, too. Without the Resurrected Word to impart new Life and Strength to us, we never could have enough Power to run this spiritual race to its end.

As we earnestly and daily seek the LORD Jesus Christ in the pages of the Written Word, He puts His Glory on the portion of the Word that our soul needs for the day. The Living Word possesses the Life, the Resurrection Glory, and the Power it takes to change our life and to conform us into His own Image.

Let us consider the Stature of Truth that shows how having a personal experience with God's Word affects us in our spirit, soul, and body: His Word works a change in (1) our heart, (2) our feet, (3) our mouth, and (4) our eyes.

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## God's Word Changes:



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### 1. Our Heart

God's Word affects us, first of all, in our heart. The ultimate Goal of God's Word is to find lodging in man's heart. What good is theoretical "right" in man's head if it is controlled by the "wrong" in his heart? God's Word is a powerful "Gardener" and "Husbandman" Who weeds out corruption in the garden of the heart and beautifies it with the flowers of Grace. The heart that is renewed daily in Christ's Divine Grace grows steadily in His Likeness and Image.

A cleansed, Holy heart becomes a secret chamber for the Heavenly Bridegroom, the LORD Jesus Christ. When God's Word fills our heart, our understanding is filled with crystal clear perception. The heart is the home of the will. Hence, when the heart is enlarged, it influences the will.

I will run the way of thy commandments, when **thou shalt enlarge my heart** (Psalm 119:32).

A heart enlarged by the Truth runs after opportunities to fulfill God's Word and, thus, becomes a doer of His Word. An enlarged heart continually prays for no obstacle of the enemy to deter it nor diminish its speed in being passively and actively obedient. Running in the Way of the LORD's Commandments also gives us a present reward since it makes us a better person.

An enlarged heart is one with expansive, spacious, and extensive understanding. An enlarged heart clearly understands God's Master Plan and His obvious Purpose in all His Commands. Therefore, when a person's understanding is increased, his heart becomes more attracted to God's Commands, and he pursues them with even greater zeal and love.

One of the great, present rewards for the obedient performance of God's Commands is that the heart is drawn irresistibly toward *another* of His Commands. Thus, since the scope of the heart's involvement with God's Word is perpetual, we certainly are left better and spiritually broader persons.

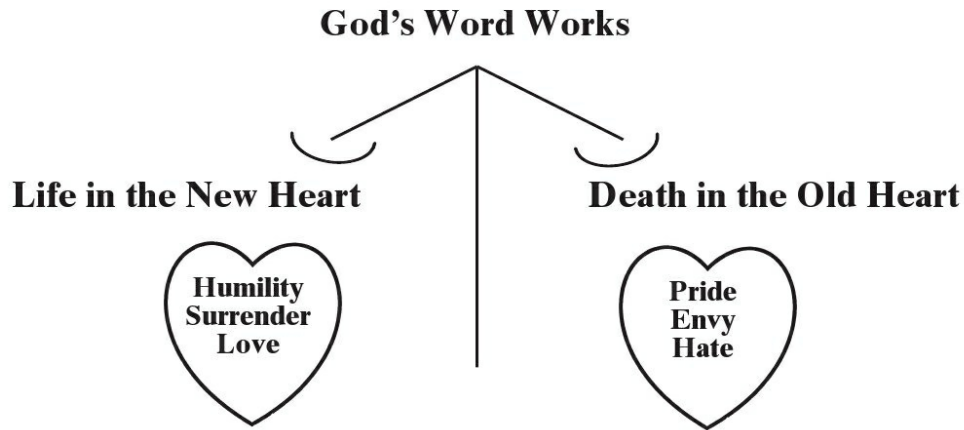
Running in the Way of God's Commandments depends on the enlargement of our heart, just as natural running depends on the increased activity of the heart. When the physical heart beats faster, it is able to supply the body with additional oxygen so that the runner can run faster. Likewise, when the spiritual heart is enlarged, it can accommodate greater portions of Living Truth, thereby enabling the spiritual runner to proceed faster in the Way of the LORD's Commandments. When God has given new depth and height and length and breadth to the heart, it has new vigour and fresh strength to run firmly in the Paths of His Commandments.

Running is an indication of the heart's pleasurable eagerness to obey God's Word of Truth. We should be fleet as

a hart and swift as a gazelle to do God's Purposive Will, as it is revealed in His Commandments. We should *run* to do even the *smallest* of God's Commandments.

Really running to be a *doer* of God's Word involves more than merely *reading* His Word. Many people read the Bible without allowing God to enlarge their hearts in any appreciable measure. Christians who want their hearts enlarged not only must read God's Word, but they also must run to their prayer closet to water, with tears of Intercession and Travail, the precious Seeds of Truth they have gained as they have studied God's Word.

God's Word works within the believer to bring crucifixion and death to his carnal heart; and it feeds his spiritual heart with Life, causing it to grow and increase daily, giving believers Power to run life's race.



It is the continually increasing growth of Truth in our heart that strengthens and empowers us to run in the Way of the LORD's Commandments.

The Commandments relate particularly to God's Governmental Bread of Strength, pictured by the Table of Shewbread in the Old Testament Tabernacle. During the Old Testament Dispensation, the Holy Shewbread was reserved especially for the Priests who were to enter into God's Holy Place after having been prepared by the sanctifying blood, Fire, and Water in the Courtyard. The average Israelite did not have the privilege of going into the Holy Place to eat the Holy Governmental Bread of Strength.

This Principle is true today, too. God's Governmental Bread of Holiness is too strong for the hearts of spiritual babes until they have allowed Christ Jesus to sanctify their hearts, first of all, with His Whole-Burnt Offering Blood and His Peace-Offering Blood; and, second, until they have allowed the Holy Ghost to purge and sanctify their hearts with His Holy Fire; and, third, until they have allowed Christ Jesus to sanctify and cleanse their hearts with the Holy, Obedient Waters of His Name, Death, and Life.

After spiritual babes have been sanctified and their hearts have fed on Christ's humility Truth from the Courtyard, they are ready to enter the Holy Place, by growth; and, there, they feed on Christ's Governmental Bread of Strength so that they can run in the Way of His Commandments. The Priest's Ministry in the Tabernacle moved progressively upward as does the believer's growth in the Spirit and the Word.

The two rows of Governmental Bread on the Table of Shewbread in the Mosaic Tabernacle were each crowned with a cup of Frankincense and Fire, which pictured Christ's Governmental Strength that is crowned with Faith and Fiery Zeal. Likewise, when our heart feeds on Christ's Governmental Bread of Strength in His Word, He crowns it with Faith and Fiery Zeal so that we can run with pleasurable eagerness to be a doer of His Word and His Purposive Will.

It takes hearts that have been strengthened by the humility Truth of Christ's Governmental Bread to bear the Frankincense of Faith and the Fiery Zeal that burns upon this portion of God's Word. It takes hearts that have been enlarged by the Governmental Bread to support the Fragrance of Faith and the Fire of Zeal. Without Christ's Bread of Strength in our heart, our faith soon will weaken, and our fiery zeal soon will become a cold clinker.

## 2. Our Feet

The second part of us which God's Word affects is our feet.

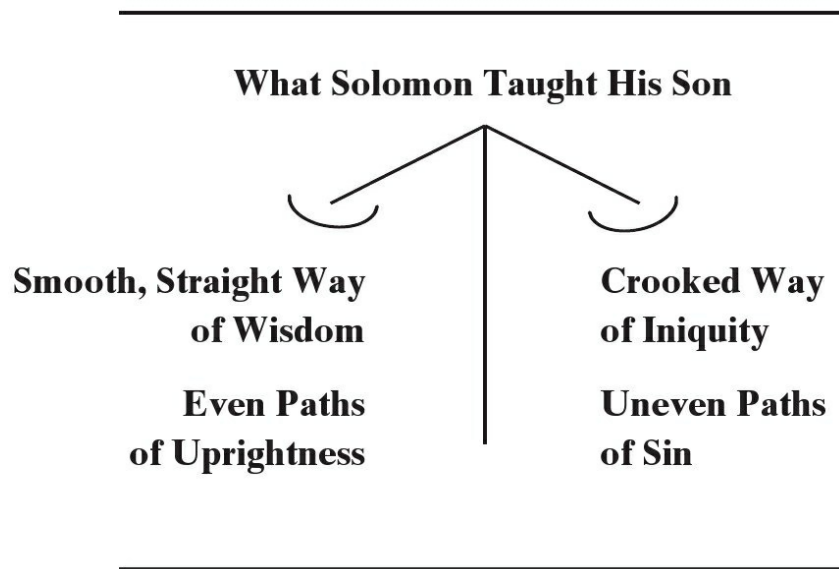
The firm establishment and the standing ability of the whole physical stature of man's body depend upon the feet. Jesus taught, and also demonstrated, the necessity for our having our feet cleansed from all the defilement encountered in our daily walk.

The Priests in the Old Testament had to wash their feet, day after day, at the Laver. This presents a picture of how we must wash our feet (cleanse our walk), daily, by letting the Waters of God's Word cleanse us and show us the Way in which we should walk each day. Christ Himself demonstrated this Principle when He washed the Disciples' feet. If we are to run in the Holy Way of God's Will, we must have clean feet.

God removes all stumbling stones for those who have clean feet to run in the Way of His Wisdom.

**I have taught thee in the way of wisdom;** I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straightened; and **when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble** (Proverbs 4:11,12).

King Solomon taught his son the difference between (1) the smooth, straight Way of Wisdom and the crooked, uneven way of iniquity, and (2) the even Paths of Uprightness and the uneven paths of sin.



Wisdom goes in a straight and unswerving Way toward the Prize at the end of life's race — the Mark of God's Moral High Calling — which is the Bride of Christ. Iniquity goes in a crooked, devious, and intricate way, wandering away from the true Goal of God's Moral High Calling, the Bride of Christ. Lucifer's crooked way is a long, up-and-down road that is a wearisome way, a tiring road. Wisdom's Way is straight and level, and it steadily approaches its Goal.

The path of sin is an easily accessible path when the will makes the wrong choice. But, it is the straight, even Path of Uprightness that always leads to the Prize, the Bride of Christ.

The Way of Wisdom is the Way of the humble Mind of Christ, the humility of the Living Word of God.

Christ's straight, smooth Way of Wisdom or Way of Obedience and Surrender led Him to crucifixion on Calvary's Cross and from thence, down into Death, Hell, and the grave. Christ's even Paths of Uprightness and Resurrection led Him to the Right Hand of God, the place of all Power and Authority.

The LORD Jesus Christ has provided His Blood, Fire, and Water to cleanse and sanctify our feet so that we can walk in the Wisdom of the Obedience and Surrender of His Crucifixion and in the Understanding and Knowledge of the Almighty Power of His Resurrection.

King Solomon taught his son this Way of *Wisdom*, which is understood better when we study the meaning of the word. The Hebrew word for *wisdom* is *yaw-raw*, meaning to flow as water (i.e. to rain), to lay or throw an arrow (i.e. to shoot), to point out (as if by aiming the finger), to teach, archer, cast, direct, inform, instruct, shew, shoot,

through.

King Solomon used every situation and circumstance of life as an opportunity to *instruct* his son in how to humble himself. Solomon's wisdom or humility words were an overflowing stream upon his son's heart and soul. His words of wisdom flowed as water; they fell upon his son as rain. Solomon stood as an archer shooting at a mark, as he continually sent forth his words of wisdom which pointed his son to the Way of Humility.

These direct instructions from the father enabled the son to discern easily between the true Humility of Christ and the false humility of the flesh, which is fostered by inferiority pride.

Knowing his son had been shot through, as it were, with God's humility Word, Solomon prophesied that his son would not stumble when he ran. Solomon knew his son would not trip or miss his step if he ran with clean feet in the Way of Humility.

Those who run with dirty feet, in their own iniquitous ways and sinful paths, do so in an unsteady, awkward manner, showing their weakness and uncertainty. Those who run in the way of pride proceed in a confused, blundering, stumbling manner. Thus, they always encounter obstacles, hindrances, and depressive difficulties. How satisfying it is to the heart and soul to run with pleasurable eagerness in the Way of Humility.

The Hebrew word for *way* is *deh-rek*, meaning a road (as trodden), a course of life or mode of action. Beloved, there is no reason for us to fear the Way of Wisdom, the Way of Crucifixion of the Flesh, the Way of Humility Truth. Christ has run this Way before us. He personally trod this road of humility, and He left it clean and free from all the stones of pride. He sanctified it so that we could run along behind Him without stumbling or losing the Way. Just as Solomon taught his son the Way of Wisdom by being a living example before his face, so also does the Life of Jesus Christ serve as a Living Example that points out the Way of Humility for us.

### 3. Our Mouth

The third part of us which God's Word affects is our mouth.

The heart is for our understanding, knowing, and feeling. The feet are for our going forward toward the Goal. The mouth is for our giving an audible witness of the Truth that is in our heart.

The mouth is for chewing and tasting food in both the natural and spiritual realms.

Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee. O LORD, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee; be thou their army every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble. At the noise of the tumult the people fled; at the lifting up of thyself the nations were scattered. And **your spoil shall be gathered like the gathering of the caterpillar: as the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them** (Isaiah 33;1-4).

The Prophet Isaiah turned away from Sennacherib, the invader, and turned toward Heaven, opening his mouth to express in prayer his heart's confidence in God's Almighty Power. God's Word affected the Prophet's mouth; therefore, Isaiah declared that Sennacherib, who had sown treacherous dealings, would reap treacherous dealings. Isaiah's mouth continued to chew and feed on the Truth that God was Israel's Defense, Arm, and Salvation in the time of trouble. Isaiah fed on the Truth of God's Invincible Might.

There is a beautiful lesson for us to learn from the caterpillar and locusts, to which Isaiah referred. The *pupa* is the quiet stage in the chrysalis. The *caterpillar* is the larva stage of the locust. After the caterpillar feeds and voraciously consumes all green vegetation around him, he transforms himself into a locust while in the pupa stage. This is a picture of how God feeds on the prayers and praises of Truth from His people, then transforms Himself, as it were, into a "Locust" Who runs to devour the enemies of His people. God's Word affects both God's Mouth and the mouths of His People.

Thus, God's Word produces such a strong effect upon our heart that it evokes a strong reaction in our mouth, our sense of taste. However, when we first begin running to God's Word, we are very selective spiritual eaters. We refuse most of God's Word that is beyond our immature doctrines and "baby" ideas and opinions. The taste of God's Mature Word is strange to our carnal palate. Yet, until we have encountered the *Truth* of His Humility, we deceitfully imagine that God's Word must have a *pleasing* taste to our fleshly palate. To a carnally minded Christian, Humility Crucified-Word tastes bitter. Therefore, in our initial experience with humility Truth, we cast it

aside as some strange doctrine, which is to be avoided as one would avoid a plague; and, on the other hand, the Exalted, Resurrected Truth tastes like a wild, visionary fancy.

Spiritual immaturity prevents us from eating all the Word that God has hidden in the low place. Spiritual immaturity also prevents us from partaking of the Truth that the LORD has reserved for those who move higher in Him.

If we want to continue growing spiritually, we must allow the LORD to change our taste to that of a locust's mouth. The locust has a taste for *all* living, green substance on a tree. A locust runs to and fro (a picture of the horizontal, surrendered Will of God), as it feeds on the juicy green leaves in the *low place*, devouring God's humble life. Although the locust finds the food on the low branches of the tree satisfying and pleasant to his taste, he does not remain there forever. He uses his wings to ascend to the top of the tree, according to God's appointed time for him to feed upon His exalted life on the higher branches.

God's Word is also like a locust because it has devouring Power. If we allow God's Humility Word and Exalted Word to abide in our heart, they will devour all our fleshly, carnal desires that oppose His Master Plan and Purposive Will. Then, in turn, our heart will become like a locust that will devour all the Word of God from all the branches (low and high) on the Tree of Life. Thus, God's Word becomes both our Life and the Maintainer of our Life. Then, our heart will be filled with pleasurable surrender and delight, which we can offer up in the form of praise to the LORD Jesus Christ, our Governor and Guide.

There is great joy when our LORD feeds us with the Humility Word of the Crucified Christ; and, there is exceeding great delight when He serves us a portion of the Exalted Word of the Resurrected Christ. It is all God's Word; therefore, we are to love the whole Tree of Life. God's Word produces complete satisfaction in our heart and soul.

#### 4. Our Eyes

The fourth part of us which God's Word affects is our eyes.

The eye is the outward portal that introduces passions, appetites, and inclinations to the soul within. The eyes are common thoroughfares which allow our affections to traffic in and out of the soul. The feelings of love, anger, pride, and avarice all move visibly in the little orbs called our eyes.

The glance of the eye is more powerful than speech. When the heart is filled with the Word of God, the eyes speak with an eloquence and truthfulness that surpass speeches. Sanctified eyes are windows out of which wise thoughts can fly on the Dove's Wings of the Holy Ghost, influencing those who are near and far. Sanctified eyes are small, microscopic mirrors that reflect the clear, crystal perception of the heart and soul.

The eyes have to be separated unto God and to His Moral High Calling if we expect to obtain the Prize. Therefore, when our eyes are gazing on sinful objects, we are out of our Calling and out of God's Keeping. Wanton eyes are Satan's messengers from an unclean heart. Visible eyes are governed in their sight by the invisible eye of the imagination in the soul. Our visible sight is reinforced by the invisible sight of the soul, either for good or for evil.

The eyes are like bold lions; they rove, run, and leap on whatever pleases the imagination of the soul. The eyes do not need an introduction. The unsanctified eye has no respect for the poor, the rich, for a man, for a woman, for virtue, or for God's Commands. We cannot run the spiritual race for the Prize until we allow the LORD to sanctify our eyes. A person's heart and soul cannot run until he sees and understands God's Word.

And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, **that he may run that readeth it** (Habakkuk 2:2).

People cannot run without a vision of the Goal. The Prophet Habakkuk humbly purposed to put his attention upon God. He resolved to watch, to look with his inner eyes, *within*, and to look *outside*, to look *up*, and to look *round about* in order not to miss anything the LORD had to say to him.

When God gave Habakkuk a vision, He commanded him to write it plainly and legibly. It was necessary for Habakkuk to write the vision so that it would be clearly imprinted on his own heart and mind; so that it would be preserved safe and pure; and so that it would be transmitted to others in future ages.

Even now, many generations after Habakkuk penned his vision, all those who see and read it can be inspired to run the race of life in God's Purposive Will. The reason God gave Habakkuk a vision and told him to write it was so

that others could see it plainly and read it clearly and, thus, possess the same vision.

It is not easy to take a vision or a revelation of Truth from God's Word and bring it out from the invisible realm into the visible realm. The Truth that is clear as the noonday sun to one may be shrouded in a dark cloud of mystery to others. Instead of viewing a clear picture, another may feel as though he were looking at the confusing swirls of a child's finger painting. The Light of Truth, seen so plainly by some, may not be evident to others.

This explains why God told Habakkuk to *write* the vision. The Prophet was charged with the spiritual responsibility of making it sufficiently plain so that others could see and understand it as clearly as he saw and understood it. In order to do this, Habakkuk had to go into detail, explaining and describing, in writing, the things God had revealed to him from His Word.

Writing the vision served a definite, twofold purpose. First, the stylus pen which Habakkuk used to transcribe words onto polished tablets of clay became the engraving tool, as it were, to imprint God's Vision deeper into his own heart and mind. Thus, Habakkuk's personal vision of the Living Word increased and became more real to him as he worked with natural words, patiently describing his spiritual experience with God's Word in a way that clearly could be seen and understood by others.

Second, God's Perfect Will was for others to be inspired by reading the vision. Since people read volumes of words without ever being motivated to run toward God, toward His Holy Word, and toward His Prize, there had to be something very special about the words the Prophet penned.

What made the words of Habakkuk's written vision so different from words written by countless other men of his day? Beloved, Habakkuk's visible, written words were from God and, therefore, anointed with the Power of God's Spirit; they also were filled with Habakkuk's personal experience of his invisible excitement, zeal, thrill, and love for God's Word. It was this Anointing of God's Spirit and Habakkuk's spirit that gave Habakkuk's written words the power to impart to others a portion of the Prophet's own desire to run with the Truth. As people read and accept Habakkuk's anointed words, they, in turn, begin to run and to share the vision with others.

So, we have seen that God's Plan or Conditions for running a spiritual race to gain Eternal Life include finding Strength in His Word, which affects the heart with Power to understand, the feet with Power to walk in the Way of Wisdom, the mouth with Power to speak the Truth, and the eyes with Power to see and possess a vision of the Prize.

Next, God's Plan or Conditions for gaining Power to run is for us to be *drawn* by His Power.

## II. Be Drawn by the Power of God's Word and God's Spirit

The Espoused Bride in the Song of Solomon besought the LORD, the Bridegroom, to draw her nearer to Himself and to the Prize of being His Spouse-Bride.

**Draw me**, we will run after thee:... (Song of Solomon 1:4).

The Hebrew root word for *draw* is *maw-shak*, meaning to draw along, to draw out, to sow, to sound, to prolong, to develop, to march, to remove, to delay, to be tall, to continue, to defer, extend, forbear, give, handle, make long, prolong, stretch out. The entire definition has the connotation of dragging along seed for sowing or for the purpose of the seed being *drawn out* by the sower.

The Bridegroom's Espoused Bride longed to be *drawn* by Him until she was planted in His Throne Room as His Spouse or Wife. In her race toward spiritual maturity, the Bride desired that the Bridegroom assist her with His Drawing, Dragging Power so that she could obtain the Prize of becoming His Spouse-Wife.

If we plan to finish our race to spiritual maturity, we must allow the Bridegroom to draw us and drag us when our carnal flesh refuses to cooperate.

At times, in the life of every believer, the carnal flesh rises up like a huge, overpowering serpent, in order to infiltrate the mind and will with its poison by saying, "Well, that does it. I've had it. I'm going to forget about running; forget about the Prize; forget about everything. I'm tired of denying myself; I'm going to do what *I* want to do." This is the time we need to call upon God's *Drawing* Power to drag us on in the race — in spite of our carnal flesh!

The fleshly man is never concerned, nor is he ever interested in continuing to run in the spiritual race for God. Consequently, in order for us to continue in the race to spiritual maturity, we must be acquainted with the Drawing, Dragging Power of God's Word and God's Spirit. Although a Christian who has a real vision of the Prize at the end of the way may experience his fleshly man saying he is not going to run, God's Drawing, Dragging Power will rise

up and come to his Spiritual Man's rescue. Then, it will not be long until his Spiritual Man feels the strong, constraining Power of God's Word and Spirit dragging him back into the race.

The Drawing, Dragging Power of God's Word and Spirit uses the Cords of His Mercy and His Love to drag our Spiritual Man onward while the LORD removes our stubborn, carnal flesh from off its stool of rebellion. Freed from our fleshly man, our Spiritual Man can continue running in the race for the Prize of being in the Bride of Jesus Christ.

All who gain the Prize at the end of the race will shout praises to God throughout Eternity for His Drawing, Dragging Power which was sufficiently strong to pull their rebellious, carnal flesh along in the race until the LORD worked Christ's Crucifixion in their wills and hearts.

After God has worked Christ's Crucifixion in our will and heart, we will run in the race without opposition from our rebellious flesh; and, we will run out of pure love for the Bridegroom.

However, in the beginning of the race, when we are lifted up in the Spirit and experience a measure of running on for the LORD, we can pray, "Jesus, draw me; drag me; I will run after Thee." In answer to our prayer, God will take care of us when our carnal flesh decides to rise up or to sit down by some worldly wayside place.

The LORD will come along with His Dragging Power, crucifying and sanctifying our carnal will until the desire to run again is worked into our will and heart. Praise the LORD for His Faithfulness that pulls and draws us with His Infinite Force and Divine Effort until we reach His appointed Goal. Without the Drawing, Dragging Power of God's Word and Spirit, we would never finish our spiritual race.

God's Plan has a third Condition for successfully running our race of life which is for us *to wait* on the LORD for power to run.

### **III. Wait on the LORD in the Word and Prayer for Power to Run**

We cannot continue to run for the Prize in our spiritual race without learning to wait on the LORD for renewed strength and power. We must learn to remain in the Word and prayer, anticipating a renewal of strength from the LORD.

**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 40:31).

In order for us to complete our journey to spiritual Mount Zion, we must have three basic experiences: (1) flying, (2) running, and (3) walking. We, like Israel, must learn to fly on eagle's wings, soaring upward as we loftily ascend to God's Moral High Calling; and we need to fly in order to surmount the acute dangers involved in escaping the slavery and bondage of this present evil world. When our strength is renewed, we also can run through opposing troops and serpent powers without growing weary or faint. If we learn to fly and to run during our spiritual education, we also can learn to walk during our moral development. Flying and running while we are getting our spiritual education prepares us for the walking experience in our moral development.

Our problem is not always rebellion. Sometimes we desire to run, but our strength is exhausted. Therefore, we are too weary and faint to continue in the race. When we have run as far as possible on the strength of the last revelation we have received from the LORD's Word, we must wait on the LORD for new, fresh revelation of His Truth, which will renew our strength. We cannot keep running on the strength of yesterday's revelation from God's Word; the situations we encounter today may need new Truth in order for us to gain the victory.

There is a time for us to run and use the spiritual strength and energy we have obtained from God's Revealed Word. However, there is also a time for us to sit down and learn to wait on the LORD (the Self-existent One Who reveals Himself) until He renews our strength.

The Hebrew word for *wait* is *kaw-vaw*, meaning to bind together by twisting, to collect, to expect, gather together, look, patiently, tarry, wait for, wait upon. This definitely is an active form of waiting, rather than the passive, indifferent attitude assumed by some Christians when they find their strength to run has gone.

The writer of the Book of Proverbs knew something about the right way to wait on the LORD.

**The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe** (Proverbs 18:10).

When the righteous wait on the LORD, they run into the Tower of the LORD's Name, which is a sure refuge. The

Name of the LORD is a strong Tower that is set on High; thus, it is inaccessible to all the evil dangers that threaten from below.

It is impossible for us to run into a portion of the LORD's Name or Nature which we have not yet received. Our Tower of safety and protection, today, is formed by whatever portion of the LORD's Name or Nature we have laid hold of in our yesterdays.

When our strength is gone, and when it looks as though we are at the mercy of the evil dangers which threaten us from below, we can begin a fresh, new waiting upon the LORD that will bring us new Resurrection Strength from Christ Jesus. When we wait upon the LORD, we can, by faith, bind up our heart in a spiritual Cocoon of Christ's Humility Truth, just as a little caterpillar wraps himself in his cocoon; then, we can wait for a new birth of strength to come into our heart and will, and it will.

As we carefully collect and deliberately gather every Word of past revelation of God's Faithfulness, of God's Goodness, and of God's Mercy, we soon will find ourselves surrounded by a great and strong Cocoon of Humility Word that is like an Infinite Tower of Protection. The winds of the world, the flesh, and the Devil may blow, but they cannot touch the heart that is hidden within Christ's Cocoon of Humility Truth, which offers the protection of the strong Tower of His Name.

The world looks at this Cocoon of Humility in this Tower of Safety and calls it death and destruction. They say, "You will die if you continue waiting in that Cocoon and in the Tower. Why don't you come out and *do* something?" They speak just a half-truth. It is true that our carnal flesh will die in Christ's Cocoon of Humility in the Tower of His Name, *but* we will come forth with new Resurrection Life, Strength, and Glory to continue running in our spiritual race, just as the butterfly comes forth from its cocoon with resplendent glory and the ability to fly, which carries it faster and further than it could attain as a crawling caterpillar.

When we are abiding in the Cocoon of Humility in the Tower of His Name, the LORD Jesus Christ reveals that He Himself is the Source of all Strength and the Source of all Satisfying Life and Love. Once this revelation is ours, we run on in the race with renewed vigour, realizing we know the origin of an endless supply of Strength — the Strength of Christ's Humility.

The last Condition for us to meet in order to have power to run our spiritual race to the finish is to *find strength* from our continued companionship with the testimonies of former saints and the Patience of Christ Jesus.

#### **IV. Be Strengthened by: (1) Our Companionship with the Testimonies of Former Saints and (2) the Patience of Christ Jesus**

We cannot continue our race to spiritual maturity and the Prize without the accompaniment of the testimonies of the Old Testament saints and without the Patience of Christ Jesus in our soul.

Wherefore seeing we also are **compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses**, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and **let us run with patience the race** that is set before us, (Hebrews 12:1).

New Testament Christians are compassed about with the overcoming saints from the Old Testament Dispensation who were brought up from Death and the grave when Jesus Christ arose from the dead. Their overcoming and their glorious Resurrection are constant reminders to us that we, too, can finish our race. Their testimonies of attainment are a constant source of strength to us in our race.

Every Christian has a race set before him. If we, as believers, hope to reach the appointed Goal at the end of our race, we must lay aside every weight of inordinate affections for this present world and the sins of our disposition that do so easily beset us. We must run the race with Christ's Patience because we will encounter much service, much suffering, and many duties requiring active and passive obedience.

The Greek definition of the word for *patience* is cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, constancy, enduring, patient continuance (waiting). It is derived from a word that means to stay under (behind), remain, to undergo, i.e. bear trials, have fortitude, persevere, abide, endure, take patiently, suffer, tarry behind.

We never can finish the race toward spiritual maturity unless we also take along the Patience of Christ Jesus as our running companion. Every day brings new testings, temptations, and trials. When faced with obstacles and delays, the flesh is tempted to do one of two things: either to quit running or to run ahead of God.

Discouragement and despondency counsel us to drop out of the race rather than to suffer one more problem or

bear one more trial. If Christ's Patience is our companion, He will begin to anoint our mind with His cheerful, hopeful Thoughts that fill the will with a flaming and burning desire to endure running on to the end of the race. We will hear Christ's Patience saying, "You can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth you." Christ's Patience always reminds us of the Truth.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: **but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able:** but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it (I Corinthians 10:13).

It is not pleasing to God for us to despair in the midst of temptations and sufferings because our trials, testings, and temptations are always proportioned according to Christ's Strength and Patience. God is faithful not to allow our present suffering to exceed our present possessions of Christ's Strength and Patience. The way of escape is through the Crucifixion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ Jesus. Therefore, let us go to Christ's Cross and Death and leave all our inimical thoughts and ideas to be crucified and buried so that we might escape through the Door of His Resurrection Glory and Power.

By the help of Christ's Patience, we can find God's provided Way of escape. Thus, we can continue running in our spiritual race. However, sometimes our fleshly zeal prods us to try to run faster than God has ordained, or to run in the way of our own will, instead of running in the Way of the Humble Footprints of Jesus Christ. This is when Christ's Patience ministers His restraining reminder: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.... The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways:..." (Proverbs 14:12,14).

Christ's Patience reminds us that the heart of the deceived man always imagines it is pursuing a straight path that will lead him to his desired goal of spiritual happiness and material success. But, the deceived man discovers, too late, that he has been led to an early death and destruction.

"The ways of death" indicate the many paths which direct man's deceived heart out of the race and away from the one straight, high road that leads to the Prize, the Bride of the LORD Jesus Christ. The deceived, backslidden heart becomes so filled with its own ways that it feels no fear about the consequences of defecting from the true spiritual race.

Christ's Patience is a constant, restraining reminder of the death and destruction that await us when we either run ahead of the LORD or lag behind to take our own way. By having Christ's Patience, it is not long before we start confessing the Truth: "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). By illuminating our mind afresh and anew concerning our inability to direct our own steps, this icy Humility Truth chills our burning desire to run ahead of God. Hence, the LORD again will fill our heart with a surrender and contentment to remain under His Headship, to remain behind Him, the Governor and Guide, and to run in the right direction He has set before us.

Although God's Course may seem to be the long way around, and although we may be forced to move at what appears to be a snail's pace, our traveling companions (the testimonies of saints and Christ's Patience) will be there to impart strength, fortitude, and perseverance to us. Thus, with patience, we can endure whatever burden God puts upon us, and with patience we can continue to bear it for as long as He sees fit. Our burdens, our trials, our temptations cannot knock us out of the race if we have the right companions running with us.

God's Total Plan or Conditions for Gaining Power to Run are as follows:

I. *To find strength from the theory of God's Word* — the sincere Milk, the Gold, and the Honey of His Word; and to *find strength from the experiential Truth of God's Word* which will (1) enlarge our heart; (2) direct our feet to run in the Way of Humility; (3) change our mouth or appetite so that we can eat Humility Truth or Exaltation Truth with equal delight; and (4) anoint our eyes with a clear vision of the Prize.

II. *Be drawn by the Power of God's Word and Spirit* as we spend time in study and prayer. His Mercy and Love will pull us along in spite of our rebellious, self-willed flesh.

III. *Wait on the LORD in the Word and prayer for Power to Run.* We must learn to run into the Tower of the LORD's Humility Name that has already been revealed to us and wait for Him to renew our strength. Whenever the LORD reveals Himself to us in a greater way, we always receive the portion of Strength that goes along with the particular revelation that He gives us.

IV. *We must choose the right running companions.* If we take the testimonies of former saints and also take Christ's Patience with us, they will encourage us when our inferiority pride would cause us to stop; and, they will remind us of the Truth when our superiority pride would take us out of the Way of Humility. Praise God for giving

us exactly what we need in order to run and win life's spiritual race!

Our next chapter covers the second point on the main Stature of Truth about Running by giving examples from the Word of God of what running is all about.

# Chapter Two

## God's Patterns or Examples of Running

A pattern is a proposed model or prepared imitation to give us a picture of the real counterpart. A pattern reveals what is to be copied or imitated; or, a pattern is an example to be followed. God desires that we follow the Patterns or Examples of Truth which He has revealed in His Word so that we can become like the LORD Jesus Christ, the One True Image. Then we, too, can become patterns for others to follow of every Virtue and every Grace in God. If we follow God's Supreme, Excellent Patterns of Truth, we, too, can become a fit example which will serve as a model or pattern for others.

Patterns are a part of our daily life. The clothes we wear, the car we drive, the home in which we live, and the store in which we shop were all once patterns on a drawing board. Every wise builder knows a good blueprint is an absolute necessity. This is true because our sense of sight takes in 84 percent of our perception. We work better when we can *see* what is to be done.

God is aware that our need to see goes beyond the natural realm; and this is why He has provided a sevenfold Pattern of how to run spiritually. The first Pattern God gave for our running is for us to run like the sun.

### I. Run Like the Sun

The sun is faithful to run the daily race his Creator sets before him. If the sun ever failed in his faithfulness to run continually in his appointed race, the Earth would be left in darkness and death.

Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for **the sun**, Which **is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race**. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof (Psalm 19:4-6).

A man uses a plumb line in construction in order to insure that everything will be straight. Likewise, God has used His *Divine* "Plumb Line" to insure the accuracy of His celestial structure, which is stretched out so that it is visible to the very ends of the Earth. The precision of His Word is evident to all observers over the entire Earth.

God's heavenly luminaries control, set boundaries, and fix limitations for the development of every existing thing on Earth. The heavenly luminaries speak loudly and eloquently of God's great Wisdom and the great precision of His Work.

In the sky, God pitched the tent for the sun, encasing the sun in a protective cloak, which acts as a shield to filter out some of its overpowering rays. Otherwise, the Earth and its inhabitants would be burned to a cinder.

The sun is like a handsome bridegroom coming forth from his bridal chamber. Just as everyone comes out to greet a natural bridegroom when he appears, so does all creation joyfully await the fresh, new rising of the light of the sun. A bridegroom who has left his bridal chamber yearns and longs to return to it as soon as possible. Similarly, the sun rises in the morning from his tent beneath the horizon; and, then, he eagerly returns to sink beneath the horizon at the close of his daily journey.

The sun humbly runs his daily course, leaving all the governmental control of his light and the powerful, radiant rays to his Creator. The sun runs his daily race according to God's Purposive Will, not in a proud display of his own power which quickly could destroy all created life on the Earth. Under the Creator's Command, the sun runs like a mighty warrior and rejoices for the opportunity to war against the darkness, for he has confidence in his God-given strength that he can run his course with no interference.

Indeed, the sun does not behave rebelliously against his Creator's Master Plan. Every morning the sun rises just

as clearly and brightly as he did the morning before.

The natural sun shines down on the thistles as well as on the grass and the trees; he shines on the wicked and on the just because he has a nature that faithfully shares what God has put within him.

The sun is in love with God's Will. Just as a bridegroom comes out of his chamber on his wedding day, desiring to look upon his beloved bride, so the sun comes out every morning, shining with excitement. The sun comes out glowing with anticipation like a bridegroom, looking to be made one with his bride. The sun is faithful to run the daily circuit of God's Will, just as Christ, the Heavenly Bridegroom, faithfully ran the circuit of His Father's Will while here on Earth.

If the natural sun can manifest such excitement over running the circle of God's Will, how much more should we rejoice over the privilege of being counted worthy to run in the circuit of God's Will, traveling in the way which He has appointed us to go?

We cannot continue running very far in our spiritual race unless we obtain the Sun's "Bridegroom" excitement and thrill over God's Will. The flesh grows tired and weary; it gets angry and disgusted with people who are always ungratefully taking and taking, without ever showing any degree of appreciation. But, a Bridegroom-kind of love for God's Will strengthens us to continue, in the manner of the sun, running and sharing with others what God has given us.

Bridegroom-Love for God's Will takes away the murmuring and complaining from our heart. Hence, we stop looking at other people and worrying and fretting over what they may be doing or not doing. Our eye remains single, turned toward Christ Jesus, the One we love. It is our delight and thrill to do His Will every day. *He* is the reason for our excitement, rather than what we do or where we do it. Beloved, let us run like the sun!

The second Pattern in God's Word which is for our instruction in running is for us to run like Waters out of the Rock.

## II. Run Like Waters out of the Rock

Waters from the rocks always run humbly downward to the low place, never upward to the high place.

He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused **waters to run down** like rivers (Psalm 78:16).

When Israel was going through the wilderness after leaving Egypt on the way to Canaan's Land, God brought forth flowing Waters from the Rock for His Name's Sake in order to quench the thirst of His people. He caused Waters to descend like rivers. As the flowing Waters descended, they grew into a mighty torrent that resembled a rushing, running river.

When the Rock was smitten in the wilderness, it provided Live-giving Water for God's people. The first smiting of the Rock was done according to God's Perfect Will.

God, in His abundant Goodness, caused the Waters to pour forth copiously out of the Rock. He did not send His Water forth in small drops, giving only a scanty supply; He sent forth the Waters in abundance. The Waters hastened to run down to the low place in order to share their Life-giving Substance with God's people.

Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and **thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink.** And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel (Exodus 17:6).

Out of the smitten Rock flowed an abundant supply of Water to satisfy God's thirsty, murmuring multitude.

Later in her journey, Israel came to another place in which there was no water. Again, she murmured against God and against her leaders. On this occasion, God intended that Moses *speak* to the Rock. Instead, Moses disobeyed the LORD's Command and smote the Rock twice (Numbers 20:7-11).

The people were wrong. They murmured against their God-given leader. The leader was also wrong because he rebelled over the people's rebellion. Yet, neither of these two wrongs caused the Rock to withhold His Running Waters. The Rock, Christ, was acquainted with His Father's Supreme Headship over *all things*, including apparent injustices. The Rock did not allow the wrongs of man to prevent Him from continuing to send forth His Running Waters.

May we, too, learn the secret of the Rock's Submission and Obedience. By recognizing and staying under

subjection to God's Supreme Headship, even when others decide to smite us outside of God's Perfect Will, we can continue giving the Running Waters of Life, with their overflowing Mercy, to the rebellious and to the thirsty.

The third Pattern or example for running that is found in God's Word is for us to run like springs in the valley.

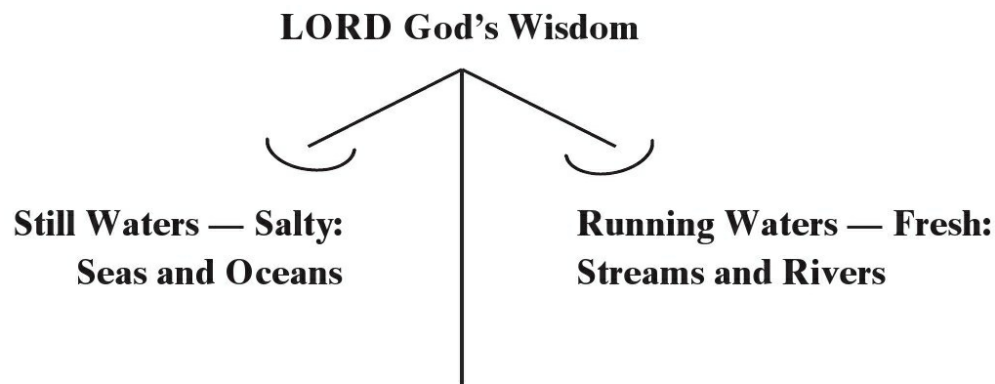
### III. Run Like Springs in the Valleys

God sends His flowing springs in the valleys to run between the hills, transforming the low places into fruitful, life-giving pastures and gardens. After ministering in the valleys, the little springs run on to their final destination, which is the ocean.

He sendeth **the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills** (Psalm 104:10).

In His wise design, God engineered the world's water supply to serve all His creation's needs efficiently. He enclosed the seas and oceans and made them salty in order to prevent the putrefaction of all the plant and animal life which die inside them. Without salt, these mammoth bodies of water would become huge, stagnant swamps.

On the land, however, God provided rivers and streams of fresh, cool, running waters to serve the needs of man and animals by cooling the air, providing irrigation for crops, and being a source of drink and energy. God's wise design frees these running rivers and streams from any threat of stagnation and decay.



God uses the rivers and streams to run between the hills and to flow between the mountains on their way to the seas and oceans. There, God commands His sun to draw up the waters, distilling them into clouds of fresh waters. Then, He orders His clouds to dispense their life-giving waters upon the earth, the rivers, and the streams. Thus, God, as the Supreme, Sovereign Ruler of His Law of Circularity, governs both the still waters and the running waters.

A spring has its origin in the valley many miles from the ocean, although the ocean is its ultimate destination. However, before the overflowing water from the spring can reach its destination and become a part of the mighty ocean, the spring water is forced to do a lot of running. Inevitably, the course of its journey is seldom straight and smooth. The hills stand as mighty giants to try to hinder the spring water from reaching its goal. Scornfully, the haughty hills look down on the little streams of spring water with the accumulation of dirt and filth which they have picked up in the course of their journey. In ridicule they say, "Who do you think you are? You are too small and insignificant ever to make it to the ocean. How do you think you ever can support the great ships that sail the seas? Why, you can't even cope with the waste dumped in you."

The discouraging words from their inimical obstacles do not stop the streams of spring water from running toward their goal. A stream of spring water knows it is being fed by the endless supply of clean, pure water from its original source. What others may think about the present size, appearance, and ability of a little stream of spring water can neither defile its source nor change its destiny. The little stream runs on with undaunted determination,

always bubbling and running to the low place among the foothills, as it flows on toward its final destination.

Unfortunately, when it comes to running on for God, many Christians do not possess the same class of determination as the little stream. They allow themselves to be terrorized by what other people say or think. When the Way seems too hard and appears too long, they become discouraged and make a choice to stop running onward and upward in their spiritual education and moral development. Then, instead of running to the low place in Christ Jesus and leaving the world, the flesh, and the Devil behind, they choose to become bogged down somewhere short of their Goal.

This does not have to be our fate, for Jesus Christ, the Living Spring of Humility, will impart some of His Zeal and Determination to us so that we can run the race to its finish. When Christ's Determination springs up within our soul, beloved, we can run regardless of what may stand in our way.

The little stream of water in the natural realm always finds a way to overcome an obstacle, either by running around it or under it. Likewise, in the spiritual realm, no distance around an obstacle seems too far, and no place seems too low to descend to in order to go beneath an obstacle, as long as we know it is not hindering us from reaching the Prize.

Believers who run like the spring water will know the overwhelming satisfaction of being joined eternally to God, for they will be a part of the Bride of the LORD Jesus Christ.

Next, God desires that we run like a river of oil, and His Word gives us an example of this kind of running.

#### IV. Run Like a River of Oil

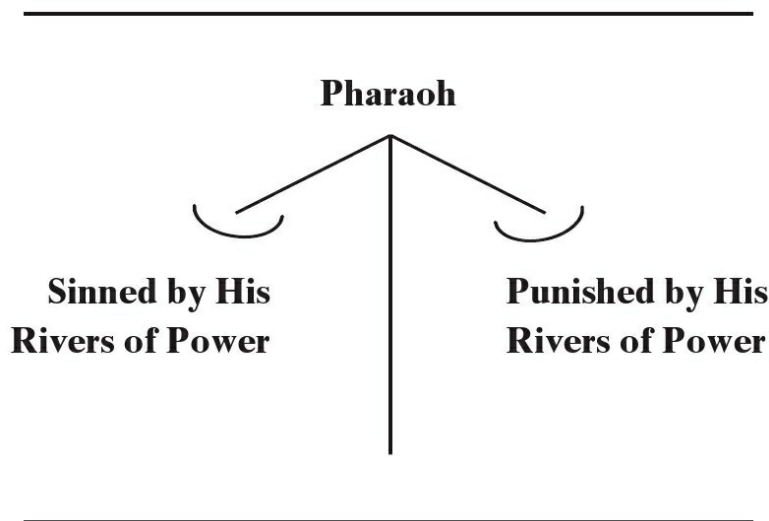
God desires that our spirit run like a river of oil when His Judgments are being poured out against our enemies.

Then will I make their waters deep, and cause **their rivers to run like oil**, saith the Lord GOD (Ezekiel 32:14).

God declared Egypt's desolation would be so great that her waters of sorrow would be undisturbed by sinful man. Egypt's waters of mourning would flow smoothly and softly like rivers of oil. God used this figurative expression to signify that there would be such a great grief, heaviness, and sadness that even the rivers would run softly and silently like mourners or rivers of oil.

God prophesied that Egypt would fall about one and one-half years after Jerusalem's fall. Thus, Israel would be able to look back retrospectively and see how vain and foolish was their trust in Egypt.

Pharaoh, the Egyptian, imagined himself as a destructive lion among the nations, proudly roaming in their midst to terrify and frighten them into subjection. In reality, he was a dragon in the waters or seas. Egypt's ruler was like a proud, careless crocodile, blowing his brutal waters of destruction from his nostrils. Pharaoh sinned by his waters of power, so God punished his waters of power.



After God had punished Pharaoh and his rivers of power, his rivers of power did not run with the sound of a bubbling stream that is running in God's Will toward its goal, the ocean. Instead, his rivers of power were humbled, so they ran silently and softly before their Creator, like rivers of oil.

God watched the Egyptians as they proudly and ruthlessly defiled their peaceful waters with greedy conquests that were not in God's Will. The LORD, in His Faithfulness, judged Egypt's noisy, proud rivers until they ran like rivers of oil, humbly, in silence and smoothness, according to His Purposive Will.

In the same manner, man's carnal mind, outside the fence of *El Shadday*, is like the greedy, careless crocodile. The flesh likes to run in its own way, like a noisy, bubbling brook. Then, when God's Judgment starts falling, it continues to run about, clamorously saying, "This is not fair. I do not deserve this."

This is not the way God wants His children to run during a time of Judgment. He wants them to follow the example of Egypt's rivers that ran smoothly and silently, like rivers of oil. A soft and smooth spirit is one that is humbling itself; and it will flow forth with gratitude and praise for God's Chastisement and Correction. A river of oil never exalts itself with proud waves, making itself noticeable with its noise and clamour. It neither claps its hands for its own glory nor points its finger against God's Righteous, Just Judgments. Instead, it is anointed with reverential fear of the LORD that makes it glad to stay in the low place and run smoothly and quietly in God's Way toward its goal, as it gratefully praises God for His Judgment.

May the LORD grant each of us the Wisdom to run in His Will like a river of oil, smoothly and silently and with gratitude.

The fifth Pattern or example of running that God has given in His Word is for us to run like the Bridal Army, if we are to obtain the Prize at the end of our spiritual race.

## V. Run Like the Bridal Army

God desires that we learn to run like Christ's mighty Bridal Army against all the forces who would oppose the KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

When Jesus Christ returns to the Earth, He will come not as a lowly Babe in a manger, but He will be accompanied by His Bridal Armies who will be wearing White Linen Garments. This Army, which the LORD Jesus Christ will command at His Second Coming, will be made up of many Armies of Saints who are in the Bride of Jesus Christ. They all will follow Christ's Conduct. Clothed in Dresses of White Linen — their purity and righteousness — they will resemble Him, and their White Horses of Faith will be like unto His White Horse of Faith.

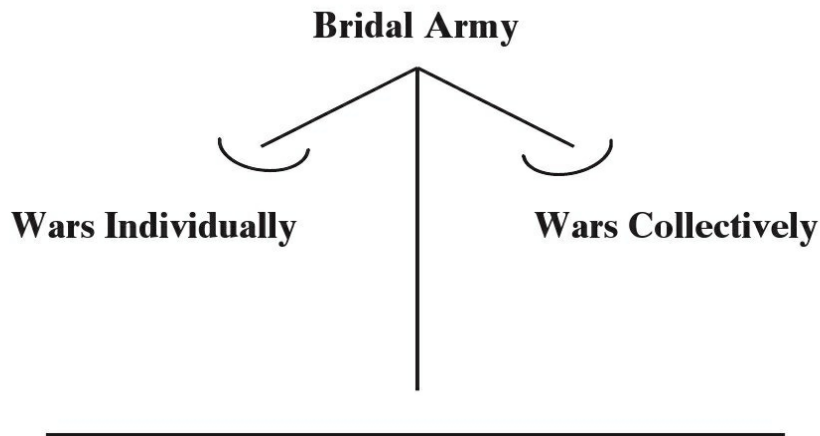
And the *armies* which were in heaven **followed him upon white horses**, clothed in fine linen, white and clean (Revelation 19:14).

The identity of these Armies remains a mystery until we find in God's Word which of His saints will be clothed in White Linen.

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and **his wife** hath made herself ready. And to her [the Lamb's wife] was granted that **she should be arrayed in fine linen**, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints (Revelation 19:7,8).

In Eternity, some saints will wear White Robes (Revelation 6:9-11; 7:9). Other saints will wear White Raiment (Revelation 3:5; 4:4). Only the Bride of Jesus Christ will be privileged to wear White Linen. Her Clothing will be the visible evidence of her spiritual maturity. Since she will be the only one who will have attained mature Spiritual Stature during her lifetime on Earth, she will be the only one who will be given the privilege of joining Jesus Christ when He descends from Heaven to make war against the Antichrist and his wicked armies.

By prophetic vision, the Prophet Joel saw how the LORD's Bridal Army will run like mighty men of war, like a mighty military formation of infantry in close and deep ranks, joined together as a great shield. This irresistible infantry will press forward under the command of their great Captain, the LORD Jesus Christ. Not one person in this Bridal Army will leave the ranks, nor will one obstacle be insurmountable to them. Each will pursue his own responsibility for the destruction to be wrought, while acting in perfect unison with the whole Army.



The great mystery of working and warring together is for each person to keep his separate path and way and not entangle his way with that of others, while still being perfectly united with the mutual mission and the mutual message of the whole Army, whose goal is to help implement the specific Purpose of the Bridegroom, the LORD Jesus Christ.

**They shall run like mighty men;** they shall climb the wall like men of war; and **they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks:** (Joel 2:7).

The resurrected Bridal Army shall run like mighty men. The Hebrew root word for *mighty* is *ghib-bore*, meaning powerful, warrior, tyrant, chief, excel, giant, mighty, strong, valiant man.

There will be no spiritual babies in the LORD's Mighty Army. All shall be powerful warriors, harsh in their war against evil, and champions of righteousness. All of them shall burn with the same chief thought — to see the Cause of Christ excel and triumph. All of them shall be mighty, strong, valiant men of war. They shall run, looking for the enemies of Jesus Christ in order to destroy them.

If we hope to run in that glorious Bridal Army of Jesus Christ, we must start running like that now. This means that we must let Jesus clothe our heart and mind with the White Linen Righteousness that runs like a mighty man of war against the flesh.

Resurrected "Linen" Righteousness burns with fiery zeal to see every evil, rebellious thought, word, and deed brought under subjection to Jesus Christ. We never will run over someone else's wall of pride until we have White Linen that climbs over *our own wall of pride* and destroys it.

Next, God's Word tells us to run like the Word of God, which is the sixth Pattern for how we should run.

## **VI. Run Like the Word of God**

The Commands of God's Word run hastily and quickly to perform God's Purposive Will in controlling the Universes and in ministering to the needs of His creatures.

He sendeth forth his commandments upon earth: **his word runneth very swiftly** (Psalm 147:15).

God dispatches His Word earthward; then how swiftly His Commandments run! He commands the clouds to dispatch their raindrops to the Earth, and how swiftly they fall! He commands the seeds of Earth to drink, and how quickly they grow!

The forces of nature, like obedient servants, hasten to perform their appointed tasks without the slightest restraint or hesitation.

The Hebrew word for *swiftly* is *meh-hay-raw*, meaning to hurry, promptly, hastily, quickly, shortly, soon, with speed, swiftly. This is how the Word of God runs to keep the Unity of the Divine Purposive Will within the Godhead.

God the Father, God's Word, and God's Spirit war against the world, the flesh, and the Devil, but they do not war against each other. There is perfect Unity and agreement between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. When God the Father issues a Commandment for the Word (His Son) to go forth into the Earth, the Word (His Son) does not rise and say, "Now, wait a minute, Father. I do not feel like going forth just now. Are We not one in Authority?" Certainly, this is not the response of the Word, God's Son, to His Father's Commands. He runs promptly and swiftly to obey and to please His Father (John 8:29).

Beloved, the Word, Jesus Christ, is always prompt and quick to obey the Father and the Holy Ghost. He runs swiftly to accomplish that which He is sent to do. Why? Because God's Word loves the Unity and the Harmonious Relationship He has with the Father and the Holy Spirit more than He loves positions of exaltation and honour. He always makes haste to maintain perfect Unity within the Godhead.

Such an example of God's Humility-Obedience should break our stubborn human will and fill it with a desire to be like Jesus Christ. Often, instead of running swiftly to obey the LORD's Command, we stand around arguing and giving all our carnal reasons for *not* doing His bidding. Although we exalt ourself momentarily, we soon learn that pride always fractures and breaks the Unity between our heart and God's Heart.

Once the Unity is broken through our disobedience, it cannot be restored except through humility-obedience. We can pray and repent all day about being proud and rebellious, but grief of the Spirit and the Word is healed only when we start saying, "Jesus, I'll obey You. I'll go anywhere You want me to go. I'll say whatever You want me to say. LORD, I'll do anything to keep the Marriage Relationship between my heart and Your Heart.

Christians who learn to run swiftly in humility-obedience, just as the Word of God does, grow strong in a class of humility that brings particular pleasure and delight to God's Heart.

We can run only so far in our spiritual race for the Prize until it is necessary for us to learn to run promptly and swiftly to do the Father's Will, just as the Son does.

The seventh and last Pattern or example God has given for our running is for us to run, always looking for the Crucified Christ.

## VII. Run, Always Looking for the Crucified Christ

Mary Magdalene ran boldly, without shame, looking for the Crucified Christ, and to her surprise and joy, she found the Glorious, Resurrected Christ.

**The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early**, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. **Then she runneth**, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. **So they ran both together:** and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home (John 20:1-10).

Mary's reason for coming to the tomb was to minister out of her love to the Crucified Christ. Her reason for running to tell Peter and John about the empty tomb was to find someone who would help her locate the LORD's Body. For a time, it seemed that she had found the right people because Peter and John ran to the tomb to investigate her story. John saw the empty tomb and believed that the LORD Jesus Christ had risen from the dead. Peter, however, after looking around in the tomb for awhile, returned to his own home mystified by what he had seen.

The departure of the two Disciples did not cause Mary to give up the search for the Crucified Christ. Weeping, she remained at the tomb, where she later saw and talked with two Angels clothed in white. Yet, this glorious appearance did not satisfy Mary, for her soul was desperate to see the Crucified Christ, the One she loved.

After Mary had turned from all earthly and Heavenly creatures, a Stranger appeared and began questioning her about her tears and her search. Although she supposed Jesus to be the gardener, she besought Him earnestly to tell her where He had laid the crucified Body of her LORD. Mary was neither fearful nor ashamed to confess that she

was looking for the mutilated Body of Jesus. Not until Jesus said, “Mary” — as only He could say it — did she realize that she was looking into the Face of the Resurrected Christ.

Glory to God! The one who started out running, looking for the *Crucified* Christ, was the first one to see the *Resurrected* Christ.

Jesus Christ died and was buried just *once*. So, we cannot go to His physical tomb, as Mary did. We can follow her example, however. We can run looking for Christ’s Crucifixion of our flesh rather than seeking for carnal, temporal exaltation, glory, and power.

Real heart-hunger is what touches God’s Heart. He will move Heaven and Earth, if necessary, in order to meet the desire of the heart that sincerely wants to know *Him* personally. We need not worry about *seeing His Power*. The Resurrection Glory comes to the soul who runs with his or her heart looking *to see the Crucified Christ*.

In summary, the Patterns or examples God has given in His Word which show us how we should run are as follows:

- **We must run like the sun** — enveloped with Bridegroom Love and excitement, obediently doing our Owner’s Will.
- **We must run like Waters out of the Rock** — recognizing God’s Supreme Headship in every situation and in every suffering.
- **We must run like springs in the valleys** — filled with consistent determination never to stop short of our Goal of being in the Bride of Christ.
- **We must run like a river of oil** — anointed with the Reverential Fear of God so that we can be grateful for His Judgments.
- **We must run like Christ’s Bridal Army** — clothed with burning zeal to see all our flesh brought under subjection to Jesus Christ, as we work together with Him to subdue our enemies.
- **We must run like the Word of God** — swiftly and obediently, in order to keep Unity with God’s Headship.
- **We must run, always looking for the Crucified Christ** — seeking Him, personally, rather than striving for temporal exaltation, glory, and power.

The next chapter covers the third point on the main Stature of Truth about running, which is the three degrees of Power that God gives to help us run.

# Chapter Three

## God's Power to Help Us Run Over Obstacles Encountered in Our Race

Running, in both the natural and spiritual realms, has power to increase our energy. Running in the natural realm puts energy to work, and energy begets energy. Because power is created by running, a runner is enabled to do what he is too weak to do if he only sits or walks.

Spiritual running will do the same things for us. As long as we are running according to the Patterns given in God's Word, nothing can stop us from going on for God and reaching spiritual maturity in Jesus Christ.

God's Word reveals three degrees of Power that are available to those who run. The first degree of available Power is the Power to run through a troop.

### I. Power to Run Through a Troop

Our enemy has powerful forces we cannot overcome merely by standing still or walking. We must *run through* them in order to continue moving closer to our Goal.

For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD [Jehovah, the One Who reveals Himself] my God will enlighten my darkness. *For by thee* [the Revealed Word] **I have run through a troop;...** (Psalm 18:28,29).

In the course of our journey, we come face to face with many enemy troops. Sometimes the world with its many alluring attractions is like a band of robbers, for it uses its enticements and carnal thrills to steal our Bridegroom-Love, to steal our time and attention. Sometimes our own flesh bands together with ignorance and rebellion to keep us from humbling our heart. Other times, fallen Lucifer appears personally — either as Satan, the Devil, the Serpent, or the Dragon (Revelation 12:9) — along with a part of his demonic army with which he wars against us.

Any one of these troops, let alone all of them together, is too strong for us to overcome if we just stand still. This is why we must run with the LORD, the Revealed Word. He is the One Who has the Power to run through and divide the enemy troops. Glory to God!

We do not have to overcome *all* the world at once. Neither do we have to overcome *all* the flesh or *all* the Devil's power at once. As we run, letting the Light of the Revealed Word lighten our darkened understanding, we see clearly which portion of the troop is standing in our way, today.

Our Running Power does not originate in our flesh. It comes out of God's Revealed Word. Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ [the Revealed Word of Truth] which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). We can run through any troop by joining ourself to the Revealed Word. "...Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world [or the flesh or the Devil]" (I John 4:4).

The second degree of Power available to us is the Power to leap over a wall.

### II. Power to Leap Over a Wall

Many times in our spiritual race, we meet obstacles and hurdles that can be overcome only by leaping over them.

...and by my God [*Elohim*, the Creator] **have I leaped over a wall** (Psalm 18:29).

There came an occasion in David's life when it was necessary for him to leap over a wall. This obviously was not

an ordinary wall, such as the wall on an obstacle course. It is possible to run around that kind of wall because it has an end. In this verse, the Hebrew word for *wall* means a wall as “going about” or enclosing. In other words, it refers to an encircling wall which has no apparent avenues of escape.

Occasionally, we come to a place in which it seems that instead of our meeting one troop at a time all the troops of the world, the flesh, and the Devil join hands, as it were, to form a united and impenetrable wall of opposition against us. Although we may cling desperately to every bit of Truth in us, every way of escape seems blocked.

Beloved, for those of us who have known the indescribable pleasure of having our heart joined in a spiritual Marriage Union with the LORD’s Heart, it is like experiencing the torments of an inferno to be placed in a position in which there seems to be a wall between the LORD and our relationship with Him. It is terrorizing torment not to have sufficient Power to leap over the wall that stands between us and our Bridegroom. The only way of escape is to lay hold of enough of God’s Word and Humility, as we keep on humbling ourself and going down, until we get small enough to find a new portion of Christ’s Crucifixion and His Resurrection Power which will enable us to escape by leaping over all the enemies’ opposition. Then, we can continue running toward the Prize.

We must not allow ourself to be swallowed up by the death and hell of our present circumstances just because we cannot see a way out. On the contrary, this is the time to start calling on God [*Elohim*, the Strong One, the Creator], the One Who has Power to create a way where there seemeth to be no way.

When Jesus Christ, God’s only Begotten Son, went to Death and Hell for you and me, He faced what to the flesh was an impossible situation. His actions at this time are recorded in the eighteenth Psalm. Some people say this Psalm relates to David’s deliverance from Saul, but prayerful study of this portion of God’s Word reveals that the projection of the meaning goes far beyond David’s personal “hellish” experience. This prophetic Psalm tells of the time God the Father left His Temple in Heaven in order to deliver His Son from Death and Hell. It tells of how the Father literally shook Heaven and Earth and laid bare the foundations of the world. God never did this for anyone except His Son, Jesus Christ. King David’s vision of the Son’s experience of suffering in Hell was so real to him that he wrote as though it had happened to him personally.

In Hell, Jesus’ Soul (*Nephesh*) could have had every reason, according to carnal reasoning, to disbelieve God’s Word, God’s Nature, and God’s Power had He not been God’s spotless Lamb. He was compassed about by the sorrows of Death; floods from ungodly men washed over Him; the sorrows of Hell encircled Him; and the snares of Death prevented Him. *If Jesus had been like many Christians today, He would have said, “God, You are not fair to make me come to such a miserable, ungodly, unholy place. I have been clean and righteous and humble all my life. Why should I have been cut off from the land of the living, cut off from my generation? I’m tired of keeping myself unspotted. This is more than I can bear. I’ll just give up and become one with all the corruption and death around me.”*

Praise the LORD, Jesus never acted like that. When Jesus had humbled Himself as far as His Father had purposed for Him, and no further, and when He could find no way out, He raised His Voice to the LORD God and began crying for the Father to come with His Creating Power and Resurrection Glory and create a way out of His distress in Death.

The Glory of the Father’s Personal Presence coming down into the midst of Hell is what sprang up in the Son’s Heart, filling Him with Glorious Resurrection Power to leap over the wall; Power to leap out of the place of Death and Hell; Power to stand up with Resurrection Life; and Power to run on in the Father’s Will.

God still has the Power to create a way for us to overcome in our personal experiences of what seems to be Death and Hell. Instead of murmuring, complaining, and accusing His Justice, we should start calling on the LORD Jesus Christ, calling on the LORD God, the One Who has the Humility Nature and Power to create new ways for us to go on for Him. Resurrection Leaping-Power comes to those who keep running, even in Death and Hell.

The third degree of Power available to those who keep running is the Power from the Mercy of God.

### **III. Power from the Mercy of God**

It is the Power of God’s great Mercy from His Holy Name that enables us to stay in the race. Therefore, all Glory for success in being able to keep running goes to the LORD’s Merciful Name.

So then **it is not** of him that willeth, nor **of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy** (Romans 9:16).

Our Power to run for God does not proceed out of our proud, fleshly will. Left to itself, our will is exactly like everyone else's will — it constantly strives for the high place. If we have a desire to run in the Way of Humility, today, it is because God's Mercy provoked the "spirit-to-run" in us. Christians who run until they attain the Prize of being made One with Jesus Christ will spend Eternity praising God for His Infinite Mercy, Love, Patience, and Long-suffering that made it possible for them to be in the Bride of Christ.

The fourth and final point on the main Stature of Truth about *running* explains the Reward we will have if we are successful in completing our race.

# Chapter Four

## God's Prize or Reward for Running Our Race to the End

Every kind of race in the natural realm offers a prize in order to encourage candidates to join in the race. Likewise, God offers a Prize to all who join His spiritual race and who finish in His appointed time.

Know ye not that they which run in the race run all, but **one receiveth the prize?** So run, that ye may obtain (I Corinthians 9:24).

God has a Reward to give in return for service done, whether it is done *for* Him or *against* Him.

Those who have run the race to gain the full Spiritual Stature of Jesus Christ will be rewarded with the Prize of being His Bride. The LORD will recompense overcomers for every pain they have endured and will repay them for every suffering they have encountered in running life's race.

The Prize at the end of life's journey, which we can attain by God's Mercy and Grace, is for us to be in the Bride of the LORD Jesus Christ. Many people are running so slowly, as though they have Eternity to gain this glorious Goal. They run for a while and sleep for a while. They take countless side trips into the world, stopping frequently to fight with other brothers and sisters along the way. But, with each lost day of spiritual progress, they are taking the risk of running out of time to reach the Goal.

In one way, the spiritual race is diametrically different from a natural race because there is just one winner in a natural race. However, in the spiritual race, the Prize can be obtained by *all* who run well and who lay hold of the full Stature of Christ during their allotted time in this world. But, we must persist constantly, diligently, and vigorously in our course. The contest is not in trying to outdo one another, but for each one to overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil, and lay hold of the Stature of Jesus Christ.

Paul clearly informed us that, if we run half-heartedly, we will become a castaway from the Prize.

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: **lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway** (I Corinthians 9:26,27).

We cannot give Jesus Christ just half of our heart's energy and remain in the race, or we will be discarded. We cannot take the way of our flesh without becoming rejected and disapproved as a runner in the race toward the Prize. This does not necessarily mean that the person who does not obtain the Prize loses his soul and goes to Hell. The word *castaway* means to be unapproved, rejected. Rejected from what? Rejected from being in the Bride of Christ. It is possible for us to be rejected from being in the Bride, beloved, from knowing the Eternal Joy and Pleasure that will go to those who have gained spiritual maturity in Christ by Stature, but that does not mean that all who fall short of complete maturity will be lost, for some Christians will be rewarded thirty-fold, some sixtyfold, and some a hundred and twentyfold.

Jesus Christ soon will appear to catch away His Bride, the mature One, along with the rest of the overcomers who will make up the Wedding Party. If we hope to be among those who win the Prize, we must set our face, like flint, toward the Goal. We must run with our whole being — body, soul, spirit, heart, and will.

In this study, we have seen *God's Plan* or Conditions for Gaining Power to Run; *God's Patterns* or Examples of Running; *God's Power* to help us Run Over Obstacles put in our way by the world, the flesh, and the Devil; and *God's Prize* or Reward for Running Our Race to the End.

This lesson should inflame our heart with new determination to run quickly in the way of God's Word and Spirit so that we may advance rapidly in our growth in the Stature of the LORD Jesus Christ and lay hold of the Prize —

being the Bride of the LORD Jesus Christ — God's Eternal Reward for *successfully* running life's spiritual race to the end.

Remember, Jesus Christ is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. He is the One Who gives us the Glorious Vision of the Prize; He is the One Who will help us attain spiritual maturity in Him; and, He is the One Who will help us run in such a way as to gain the Eternal Prize of being in His Bride. Although time is short, beloved, we can make it — if we RUN, RUN, and keep on RUNNING!

