



“Now if you are going to win any battle you have to do one thing. You have to make the mind run the body. Never let the body tell the mind what to do. The body will always give up. It is always tired morning, noon, and night. But the body is never tired if the mind is not tired. When you were younger the mind could make you dance all night, and the body was never tired... You’ve always got to make the mind take over and keep going.”

George S. Patton, U.S. Army General and 1912 Olympian

Discipline and dedication. Two values fast going out of fashion in a world fixated on pleasure, leisure and the quick fix.

We’re a generation seduced by YouTube dreams. Easy success, unearned rewards, instant celebrity. Everyone wants to be a millionaire, but few of us are prepared to put in the effort required for self-mastery.

Perhaps it’s time for commitment to make a come back.

Running teaches us that we can do more than we think. Running shows us that with a bit of dedication, commitment and discipline, we can move beyond our limitations. Running reminds us that life is about choices. Hard choices, cold-light-of-day choices, considered choices. The choices we make flow from the values we hold. Passion and emotion may motivate us to run, but it’s our choices, our mind, that keeps us on the path.

Running literally is mind over matter.

Ultimately it’s our choices and commitments that build our characters. We are a product of the decisions that we make. Discipline, perseverance, commitment, self-control. All these virtues are their own reward, for they allow us to become more, to grow, to take on greater substance.

So here’s the challenge: Are we willing to live every day with a strong sense of discipline, following practices that come from good choices, and allowing our values to lead to commitments?

Use the following exercises to begin to grapple with Self-Mastery. Read the **Training Notes** for inspiration, then set about the **Activities for Running** and the **Applications for Life**.

Training Notes: 1 Corinthians 9.24-27

You've all been to the stadium and seen the athletes race. Everyone runs; one wins. Run to win. All good athletes train hard. They do it for a gold medal that tarnishes and fades. You're after one that's gold eternally. I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got. No sloppy living for me! I'm staying alert and in top condition. I'm not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it and then missing out myself.

Paul of Tarsus, The Message Translation

Activities for Running. Things to do while you're on the road.

Stick with your training plan, expand it out to include your diet, and other aspects of • healthy living.

Keep a record of your progress. What are your accomplishments? What areas will you • target to improve?

Use running to increase your mental toughness. Practice mind over matter. Practice • allowing your discipline to dictate your performance, not merely your feelings.

Application for Life. Things to do when you're off road.

Examine your inner life as you run. Where do you feel tempted to quit, where are you • weak? Are you naturally tenacious, or do you tend to wimp out at the first sign of tiredness or difficulty? Translate that into your every day life, your relationships, your work, your responses to God. Actively work on your mental toughness for life. Practice making choices, working out your values, and sticking with them.

How disciplined is your approach to your inner life? Have you established daily patterns • for spiritual formation? Consider some of the classic spiritual disciplines – prayer, study of Scripture, service, meditation, fasting, giving. Create a plan – a spiritual rule, if you will – that builds these into your every day life in a disciplined and focused way. Remember, just like running, your ability and desire to hold yourself to a discipline increases as you stick at it. So get into training.

Find someone to hold you to account. Share your choices, your disciplines and your • commitments with them. Ask them to support you and keep you on track

'Love Running Manchester gratefully acknowledges Philip Jinadu www.woodlandchurch.net for providing the Running High material.'