



“Man is a goal seeking animal. His life only has meaning if he is reaching out and striving for his goals.” Aristotle, 384 – 322 BC

“By losing your goal, you have lost your way.” Friedrich Nietzsche

What is it that gets you through a run? How do you motivate yourself to push through to the end?

Running is hard. It takes guts and commitment. And nobody does it unless they've got something to aim for, a motivational goal to achieve.

Maybe you promise yourself a treat when you finish. Maybe you aim at the person ahead of you and try to catch them. Maybe you focus on a familiar landmark in the distance, or just concentrate on making it to the next lamppost. And then the one after that. Maybe you race against yourself, trying to bring your times down, your pace up. Or maybe you just want to lose a few pounds.

Whatever it is, we all need a goal. We don't run because we've nothing better to do. We run because we're motivated.

And yet how many of us live *life* unmotivated? How many of us just drift aimlessly through the years without any overarching goal? Are we missing out on all we could be, because we fail to find the right goals to aim for?

JC Penny, the famous American retailer, said, “Give me a stock clerk with a goal and I'll give you a man who will make history. Give me a man with no goals and I'll give you a stock clerk.”

Goals release energy. They drive us forward, help us achieve more. They provide us with a vision of our preferred future, and they're absolutely vital if we want to live well. Many of us are used to applying goals to our careers and our work, but few of us have strong, motivating goals for our lives, our relationships and our inner worlds.

Use the following exercises to think about your life goals. Read the **Training Notes** for inspiration, then set about the **Activities for Running** and the **Applications for Life**.

Training Notes. *Philippians 3.12-21*

I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong: By no

means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward - to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back.

So let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision - you'll see it yet! Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it.

Stick with me, friends. Keep track of those you see running this same course, headed for this same goal. There are many out there taking other paths, choosing other goals, and trying to get you to go along with them. I've warned you of them many times; sadly, I'm having to do it again. All they want is easy street. They hate Christ's Cross. But easy street is a dead-end street. Those who live there make their bellies their gods; belches are their praise; all they can think of is their appetites.

But there's far more to life for us. We're citizens of high heaven! We're waiting the arrival of the Saviour, the Master, Jesus Christ, who will transform our earthy bodies into glorious bodies like his own. He'll make us beautiful and whole with the same powerful skill by which he is putting everything as it should be, under and around him.

Paul of Tarsus, The Message Translation

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

Consider your running. What are the goals that motivate you? Could you increase your • performance by deliberately focusing on more compelling, more inspiring goals?

Think about your motivation in running. Do you tend to doggedly persist at things, or do you • start off fast then quickly peter out? Do you have a naturally stubborn streak, or do you tend to quit too easily? What are your strengths and what are your weaknesses? And what does this tell you about your response to life's challenges? What can you learn from your experience running, and how can you grow and develop your character as a result?

Imagine that your running is linked to the things that you value most in life. What would make • you run the hardest? Is it running towards the promise of a million pounds, to save a loved one, or simply to escape fears pursuing you? What does this tell you about yourself and what are the implications for life in general?

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

Think through what is really important to you. What do you want to become and what do you • want to achieve – in your character, in your relationships, in your faith? Think about the things that you'd like people to say about you at your funeral. This is what you're aiming for in life.

Write down the 3 goals that are most important to you. •

Ask yourself: Am I actively pursuing the goals that are important to me in life, or are they just • theoretical ideals? Am I running the right course, towards God's goals for me, or have I chosen 'easy street'?

Share your life goals with a close friend. Ask them to share their perspectives, and invite them • to support you in your goals, to hold you to them and challenge you where necessary. Do the same for them.

Richard Foster, author of 'Celebration of Discipline', maintains that 'goals are discovered, not • made'. Are you confident that you've discovered God's goals for your life? If you're not, then make some time to pray this simple prayer, maybe as you run:

Dear God, share with me your dreams for my life. Help me to meet the potential you've placed in me. Let me discover the goals and plans you've prepared for me. I want to run towards you.

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