



“Running is a big question mark that’s there each and every day. It asks you, ‘Are you going to be a wimp or are you going to be strong today?’” Peter Maher, Canadian Olympic runner

“It is time for us all to stand and cheer for the doer, the achiever - the one who recognises the challenges and does something about it.” Vince Lombardi, legendary American Football coach

Running is a physical activity, no doubt about that. It makes demands on you – on your energy, on your strength, on your muscle.

And yet, it also *gives* you energy, strength and muscle.

Running develops your strength as well as demanding it. As you train, you can literally see yourself progressing. Things that were once difficult slowly become less so. What you once could not do, you now find you can. Running reminds us that we all have untapped potential, and that if we’re prepared to expend effort and energy then we can fulfil that potential.

Muscle grows and develops as you use it, and only as you use it. So it is with our ability to know God, to grow in grace, to open ourselves up to His transforming love. It’s almost as if prayer itself is a muscle, waiting to be built up. Our capacity to know God is not fixed. We can grow it.

It’s easy to live life without fulfilling anything like our potential. We find some things difficult and so give up, rather than pushing through and seeing our capacity grow.

We’ve looked at four areas of our inner life – motivation, meditation, mastery and muscle. Together they make up who we are. And our capacity for each area can be grown and developed if we’re prepared to push through. With application and effort we can see more of our potential as human beings fulfilled.

Jesus once said that the greatest commandment was that you ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart (motivation), all your soul (meditation), all your mind (mastery) and all your strength (muscle).’

This series of 4 exercises has simply been about exploring what it might take to love more fully, and thus become more whole.

Here is the final set of challenges. Read the **Training Notes** for inspiration, then set about the **Activities for Running** and the **Applications for Life**.

Training Notes: : Isaiah 40.27-31

Why would you ever complain, O Jacob, or, whine, Israel, saying,

“God has lost track of me. He doesn’t care what happens to me”?

Don’t you know anything? Haven’t you been listening? God doesn’t come and go. God lasts. He’s Creator of all you can see or imagine. He doesn’t get tired out, doesn’t pause to catch his breath.

And he knows everything, inside and out. He energises those who get tired, gives fresh strength to dropouts.

For even young people tire and drop out, young folk in their prime stumble and fall.

But those who wait upon God get fresh strength. They spread their wings and soar like eagles, They run and don’t get tired, they walk and don’t lag behind.

Isaiah the Prophet, The Message Translation

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

Learn to pray with your body. Make your running a form of prayer. Practise the presence
• of God, allowing Him to be present in your movement.

Let your running reflect a conversation with God – give body and physicality to prayers •
of longing, dependence, desire and dreams.

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

Write down ways in which you can love God with all that you are. Think about what it •
means to love God with your heart (motivation, will, purpose and focus). Think about
what it means to love God with your soul (inner life, emotion, creativity, relationships,
your identity). Think about what it means to love God with your mind (intellect,
discipline, choices, commitment). Think about what it means to love God with your
strength (energy, action, practice, involvement with the world).

Remember that authentic Christianity and love for God involves your strength. Get •
physical for God. Care for people, work for justice, feed the hungry and be good
news for the poor.

Write down 3 things that you have learnt from running that you want to transfer in to •
the rest of your life and your relationship with God.

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