

Running in the Wrong Race

In 1990, Georgene Johnson of Cleveland, Ohio, was a bit depressed after turning 42. She decided she wanted to be in better shape for the second half of her life.

So Georgene began exercising, then jogging, then running. She decided that what she really needed was a goal on which to focus, so she entered herself into a 10K (six-mile) race and began training.

The day of the race she was pumped and ready to go. She arrived early and was soon distracted by all the other runners as they prepped and stretched. Before you knew it, the horn sounded for the runners to line up, and Georgene followed the pack to the starting line and they were off.

Four miles into the race, with no turnaround in sight, Georgene asked a fellow runner when they could expect to start heading back. “He just kind of looked at me strangely, like, ‘Are you for real?’” It was then that she realized she was not in the 10K race at all. She was in the Cleveland Marathon!

Both races shared the same finish line, but the 10K was set to start 15 minutes after the marathon. Because she was early (and distracted), she lined up too soon. So she just kept running, looking for someone to help.

Twenty-six miles later, Georgene crossed the finish line. Her previous longest race was just eight miles. It is reported that when asked what went through her mind as she faced the challenge, she replied, “This is not the race I trained for. This is not the race I entered. But for better or worse, this is the race that I am in.”

No doubt, there will be moments when you find yourself a bit overwhelmed by your circumstances. It won't be a race you've trained for. It won't be a race you've entered, but it will be the race you're in. At that point, you will have to decide what you are going to do.

The author of Hebrews offers this advice:



Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God Hebrews 12:1-2 ESV).