

## The Catalina Swim

It was a fog-shrouded morning, July 4, 1952, when a young woman named Florence Chadwick waded into the water off Catalina Island. She intended to swim the channel from the island to the California coast. Long-distance swimming was not new to her. She had been the first woman to swim the English Channel in both directions.

The water was numbing cold that day. The fog was so thick she could hardly see the boats in her party. Several times, sharks had to be driven away with rifle fire. She swam more than 15 hours before she asked to be taken out of the water.

Her trainer tried to encourage her to swim on, since they were so close to land, but when Florence looked, all she saw was fog. So she quit -- only one-half mile from her goal.

Later, she said, "I'm not excusing myself, but if I could have seen the land, I might have made it."

It wasn't the cold or fear or exhaustion that caused Florence Chadwick to fail. It was the fog.

Many times we, too, fail. Not because we are afraid or because of the peer pressure or because of anything other than the fact that we lose sight of the goal. Maybe that's why the Apostle Paul said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

Two months after her failure, Florence Chadwick walked off the same beach into the same channel and swam the distance, 21 miles, setting a new speed record, because she could see the land.

--Beecher Hunter