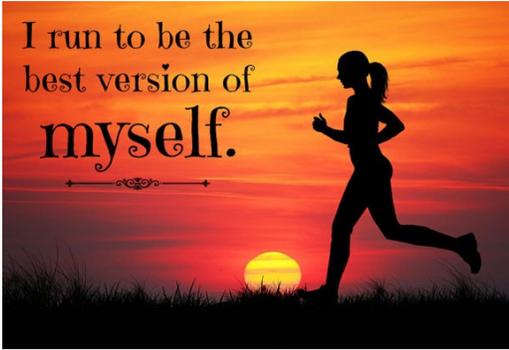


I run to be the
best version of
myself.



Forced To Quit The Race

Written By: Brett Petrillo

Joe Rosa had already run 7 laps. He was on his way to breaking the New Jersey state record for the 3,200-meter run. Then, with one lap left to go, track meet officials came out and forced Joe off the track and out of the race. With storm clouds looming overhead and lightning striking around, the officials decided to make the safe, and ultimately right, decision to end the race. They brought the runners off the track and told the crowd to vacate the metal bleachers. Not only was Joe on his way to breaking the record but his twin brother was in second place as well. As you might imagine, many were quite upset with the officials' decision. They didn't understand why the officials didn't just let one more lap go by.

Surely Joe wanted to finish this race quite badly. After all of the practice, all the training, and all of the conditioning, this was the moment he had been striving for. He was probably going to make state history. But in the end, the weather and the officials got in the way of Joe finishing the race.

Whether we realize it or not, we are all in the race to get to heaven. However, this is not a race where the first person who crosses the finish line wins. It is a race

where anyone who crosses that line wins. But unlike Joe Rosa's race, this is a race that cannot be stopped by threatening weather. This isn't even a race that can be halted by officials. This race is one that continues until death. The problem is, even though the race goes on, many Christians have already stopped running. Some are even going the wrong direction.

There are many aspects of this life that try to “force us off the track” and make us quit. Riches, immorality, lies, blaming God, and the list goes on and on (Galatians 5:7). As we are running on the path to heaven, we will come across temptations. If we give in to these temptations we get off track.

Sometimes these temptations even lead people to quit. Despite all of these temptations, there is not a single aspect on this earth that can “force” you to quit the race to heaven. Quitting the race to heaven is always a choice. Joe probably would have done anything to cross that finish line. Surely he would have braved the weather and the surrounding danger. He wanted the prize.

What are we willing to do to achieve that prize in heaven? When it comes to finishing the race or quitting, selfishness is our biggest obstacle. We have to get out of our own way. Are we willing to put ourselves aside and obey God (Luke 9:23)? As Paul said so

powerfully, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:7-8). No matter what we deal with, let's make sure we finish the race!