

# RUNNING in FAITH

Devotions  
for Runners



RUN  
FOR  
GOD

**FREE  
PREVIEW**

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# *foreword: a call to action*

**STORIES. SINCE THE DAWN OF AGE, PEOPLE** have told their stories to compel others to action. Some have told their story of a radical life change and illustrated it with the truth that they surrendered to our Savior and He changed their life. Others tell stories of taking steps outside their comfort zone that opened the doors to doing things they never thought possible. These stories inspire us—they give us hope that if one person can make change, endure a hardship, or live their life in a new way, then we can too.

Since 2010 I have made it my goal to take people who have looked at the sport of running and said, “I can’t do that,” and get them to a place where they say, “I did it!” The first time you walk into one of the thousands of Run for God—5K Challenge classes, you will NOT see a room full of runners. Instead, you’ll see the husband and wife who are overweight and looking for hope; you’ll see the diabetic looking for a chance to keep up with his grandkids; and you’ll see the young woman who just showed up for the running class not really understanding who Jesus is. What I’ve seen through the years is that everyone in that room is about to be changed, including the person teaching the class.

Many years ago, Run for God began archiving the stories of people who conquered the seemingly monumental task of becoming spiritually and physically fit. The Run for God Challenges have shown hundreds of thousands of graduates that real change is simply a choice. Want a deeper relationship with God? Dive into His word. Want to lose some weight and get off the “hamster wheel” of life? Start moving, then walking, then running. We all know these are simple choices, yet many times we’re more motivated to change when we hear how others have done it.

Guideposts and Run for God have teamed up to bring you stories of hope, faith, drive, and yes, endurance. In the pages to come you'll find a weekly dose of inspiring content that will not only have you getting off the couch and heading out the door, but also learning the basics of a sport that millions of people enjoy each day. The task of running in and of itself is not that complicated. Doing it in a way that keeps you injury free, enjoying the journey, and deepening your relationship with Christ at the same time can be a bit challenging without the right guidance. But you've come to the right place with *Running in Faith*.

My hope is that you will not only find inspiration in the stories you read but that you also will become more physically and spiritually active. I pray you will come to the life-changing realization of what God can do in your life when you live out 1 Corinthians 10:31: "...whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

What God has done through this ministry has changed my life, and He can do the same for you. If you would like to learn more about Run for God or any of our other products, visit [www.RunforGod.com](http://www.RunforGod.com).

Now, let's get moving!

Mitchell Hollis

Founder, Run for God



## *run uphill!*

**THE FIRST 30 MINUTES OF JANUARY** 1, 2013, I ran my first 5K with my husband. We started at midnight and ran through the Christmas lights at a beautiful local park's "Festival of Lights." With my adrenaline high, I was thrilled to be starting a new year with a new and healthy lifestyle.

I remember running up two tough hills near the end of the race. Most of the people around me either slowed their run or started walking. I was tired, almost out of breath, but determined. I passed several people on those hills, just because I kept running. I felt incredible. After the race, I decided to make that my motto: "Run Uphill!" I had it engraved on my wristband, along with my personal emergency information. Sometimes I remember it or look down at it while I'm running. It encourages me to keep running no matter how hard the hill is. Those words motivate me to face my challenges, because "Run Uphill!" is more than a running motto. It has also become my life motto.

One reason I was able to pass other runners on the hills was 90 percent of my training had been uphill. I trained primarily on a treadmill. I had set it at an incline when I first started to run. Though small and slow, every step I took was uphill. My husband hadn't trained this way; much of his training was outdoors on flat roads. Even though he had already participated in a few 5Ks and usually had better endurance than me, the hills in this race set us apart. He had to stop and walk, while I kept going.

I realize that I am in training for my Christian life every day. I train by studying

the Bible, spending time with God in prayer, and learning from other believers. I train in a controlled environment, but I don't know what hills (difficulties) will come my way next. I should make sure I am training at a high intensity, always driving upward and forward. The more I learn about God and the more in tune I am to His voice, the easier it will be to rely on His strength and conquer the trials of life. I should train diligently and then run with confidence, both physically and spiritually. While we shouldn't be in spiritual competition with other believers, it's easy to tell that there are Christians who live more victoriously than others. Often the hills of life are the events that distinguish victorious Christians from defeated ones.

Thankfully, we don't have to rely on our own power to conquer those hills. God supplies us with the power we need, but we still have to fight the good fight of faith and run our own race. I had to put forth some extra effort to get up the hills in that 5K. I later made a list of some ways I can put forth the effort to run uphill in other real-life situations. Running uphill means:

**To try harder than normal**

**To do right, when wrong is easier**

**To get out of my comfort zone and get the job done**

**To accept the challenge, take responsibility, and be a leader**

**To avoid passivity**

**To not let others drag me down**

**To have a confident, optimistic attitude**

**To look to Jesus, who endured the cross and the shame that He despised, because He knew the joy that would come at its completion.**

**Hannah Jones – East Bend, NC**





# *get in the word*

**Hebrews 12:1–2**

*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

**2 Timothy 2:15**

*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

**1 Corinthians 15:57**

*But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*





## *something to ponder*

**IS YOUR** spiritual training intense enough to prepare you for life's battles? How could you kick it up a notch?

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**WHAT SPIRITUAL** hills have you faced lately? How could you have been better prepared?

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**WHAT DOES** running uphill mean to you?

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# *running observations*

## *by dean*

### **The View Is Always Worth the Climb**

**ANYTIME MY WIFE, DEBBIE, AND I** are traveling, I love to wake up early and go for a run in a new city. I can remember times when I would notice a hill that, once climbed, would afford a great view of the city. I like to climb that hill, even though I know it will be difficult to get all the way up, because the view is always worth it. It's one of the few times I will stop in the middle of the run to look around me.

On the days you don't feel motivated to workout, remember that the view is worth the climb. You will reap tremendous benefits from getting out there and completing your workout. Sometimes running the workout I don't want to run yields the best results. I've often thought the reason for this is my low expectations. I am more relaxed than normal, letting it all hang out, and so I find myself gliding along more easily than I thought I would.

Whether metaphorical or real, I never pass on the opportunity to climb to the top of the hill because I know what the result will be. After all, I may never be back to that city again, or I may never be in the same place in my training again. I have to take the opportunity while I can. On the few occasions I have not made the climb, I usually regretted it. The only caveat is reserved for those times when your body is truly not ready for the workout or the climb because of injury, fatigue, or illness.

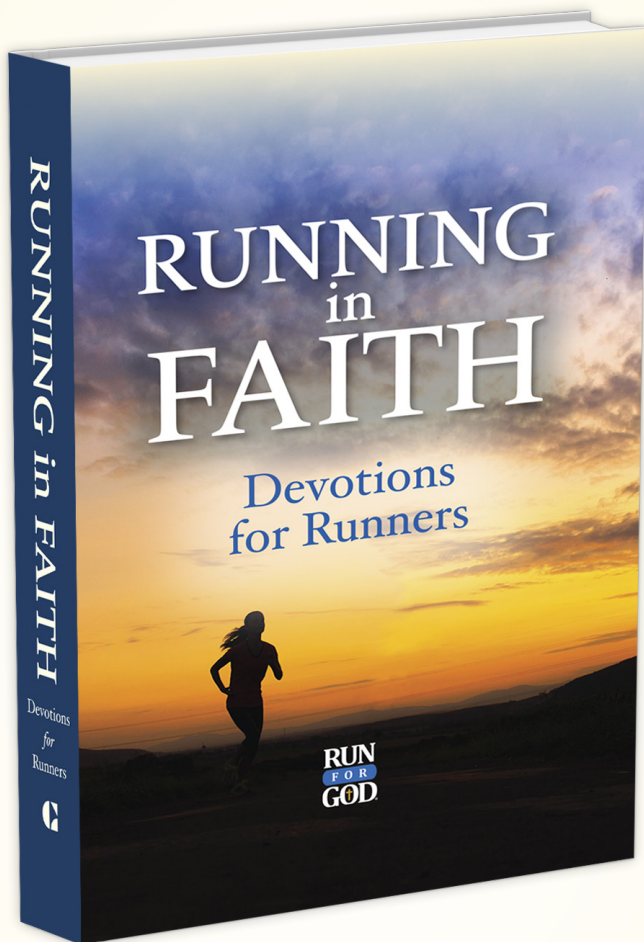
You can't be the best you can be without working hard, but how do you stay motivated? Imagine the results. When you find your motivation waning and you're talking yourself out of a tough run, envision the view you will see at the top of the hill. The hard work is always worth it.

In the same way, speaking the truth in love and telling unbelievers about Jesus are important habits to build. Sometimes I want to speak up but have trouble finding the words, and other times I reflect on how I spoke up with a less than lovely tone. Just as working through tough workouts yields a more efficient runner, spending time with our Lord yields a more effective witness.

- *Remember that focusing on your goal helps to keep you motivated on those days when it is tough to get out the door.*
- *Anything worthwhile in life requires climbing a hill, whether physical or metaphorical.*
- *Being the most effective witness you can be requires effort, but the view is worth the climb.*



# Run Stronger, Go Farther, **WALK MORE DEEPLY WITH GOD**



There's never been a devotional like ***Running in Faith*** to help you run injury-free, enjoy the journey, and deepen your relationship with Jesus all at the same time.

***Running in Faith*** is so much more than a book of devotions. *It's a day-by-day, 52-week study to help you grow spiritually strong and physically fit as you happily encounter your fellow runners and God Himself.*

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