



SHARING SCRIPTURE

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Spirit-Empowered Witnessing

For use: July 26 - August 1

Texts: John 15:26, 27; Acts 2:41, 42; Acts 8:4; Hebrews 4:12; Acts 17:33, 34; Acts 18:8

She did the impossible. Though the 27th Kona Marathon was cancelled this last week, like many other sports events due to the pandemic, this was a good time to remember the amazing accomplishments of Jeannie Wokasch. This incredible runner captured first place in her category a record eight times. People said that it couldn't be done, but she did it.

"The marathon was still new in 1996, with only two years under its belt. Wokasch, now known for crossing the Kona Marathon finish line with a signature cartwheel, won her first Kona Marathon in August of that year, finishing in three hours, four minutes, and 55 seconds. The time would be her personal best at the marathon, but Wokasch wasn't done being first." [1]

Over the next ten years, Wokasch won seven more times, setting a record that has never been beaten. During her two final races, in 2005 and 2006, she was in second place at about the halfway point, when she pressed hard to move into first place, exhibiting incredible energy and endurance. "I never look back — I just race against my feet," Wokasch said.

What perfect advice for we who run the race of life, followers of Christ in pressing toward the kingdom of heaven. But our journey is not for ourselves alone. We live to serve others and encourage them on their way toward heaven. In fact, God has given the church the task of spreading the good news to the entire world, something that seems unimaginable ... like trying to win eight marathons.

This week's Sabbath school lesson, "Spirit-Empowered Witnessing," reminds us that in our own strength, it *is* an absurd task. Yet, when we are filled with the greatest power in the universe, the strength of the Holy Spirit, all things are

possible.

Christ promised the power of the Spirit to the disciples before returning to heaven. "It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7, NKJV). Such help is like having a partner running beside you to encourage you along the way. The Spirit not only gives us strength, but courage and wisdom to know what to say to reach hearts.

Like winning a marathon eight times, the reward of the righteous is not simply a crown of gold placed on our bowed heads, but the friends with whom we run across the finish line to enter Paradise.

~Curtis Rittenour

[1] <https://www.hawaiitribune-herald.com/2020/06/30/sports/impossible-task-jeannie-wokasch-wins-eight-kona-marathons-from-1996-2006/>

For Reflection

Connecting: Have you ever won a sports event? Do you recall the moment you had to push yourself beyond what you thought possible?

Sharing: When you struggle to be a witness for Christ, feeling at times that it is an impossible endeavor, what can spur you forward?

1. Never forget that prayer precedes bold witnessing (Acts 4:31).
2. Only through the power of the Holy Spirit can you truly share Christ with others (Acts 1:8).
3. Recall that Christ promised help to you if you are open and willing (John 16:7).
4. Don't feel like you must convict others. That is the job of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8).
5. Review the great work of the early church, led by God's Spirit (Acts 2:41).
6. Other...

Applying: What is your biggest hesitation about witnessing? Come up with a short list of fears or worries. Then open your Bible and look for God's solution to these qualms. Share what you find with the rest of your group, whether by text or phone or email.

Valuing: The Holy Spirit will give you power to be a witness for Christ. Pray with another person in your group, perhaps over the phone if you cannot be together, and ask God for faith and the power of the Spirit to help you move forward when it feels impossible.

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