



Furthermore, since God is the One who designs the race, we would be wise to seek His counsel throughout the process—getting our plans in harmony with His plans and purposes.

## COACH'S COUNSEL

Don't plan without God. God seems to have a delightful way of upsetting the plans we have made, when we have not taken Him into account. We get ourselves into circumstances that were not chosen by God, and suddenly we realize that we have been making our plans without Him—that we have not even considered Him to be a vital, living factor in the planning of our lives. And yet the only thing that will keep us from even the possibility of worrying is to bring God in as the greatest factor in all of our planning<sup>o</sup>

*Oswald Chambers*



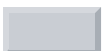
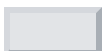
Up to this point, how big a factor has the Lord been in your planning?

Minor    1    2    3    4    5    Major

To what extent do you desire your career plans to fit into God's larger purposes?

Small    1    2    3    4    5    Great

Look again at the verse from Isaiah 42 (previous page). Explain in your own words how intimately God wants to be involved with you (including in your workplace).





## 2. Races require preparation

In addition to planning, races require preparation. For the athlete, strict training is a prerequisite to competing (1 Corinthians 9:25). Training also guards against injury. A pulled muscle or torn ligament can cause a runner to be out of action for weeks. Consequently, athletes strive to be in tip-top shape before entering any serious race.

The workplace requires preparation and training too. If you plan to have the kind of successful experience you would like to have, it will require education, on-the-job experience, and probably some degree of specialized training. Like training for a race, running well in the workplace takes a great deal of effort over an extended period of time. Those who put forth the effort reap the rewards. Are you making plans to be in tip-top shape for the race set before you?

### TIME OUT



In many ways running is like any job—a long succession of repeated tasks and hard work<sup>11</sup>

*Michael Johnson  
200 and 400 Meters—  
Five Olympic Gold Medals*

List three ways you may need to prepare or train for the race set before you.

1.	
2.	
3.	

## 3. Races present challenging opportunities

There's something about a race that brings out the best in us. Maybe it arouses our sense of competition. Maybe it's an opportunity to test our abilities. Maybe it stretches us to a higher level of performance. Or maybe it's simply the thrill of exploding energy. Whatever the reason, a race motivates us to rise to the challenge. Our work presents challenging opportunities too.





What challenging opportunity is the Lord currently setting before you?

A large rectangular area with horizontal lines, resembling a piece of lined paper with a torn bottom edge, intended for writing an answer to the question above.

#### 4. Races have a clear purpose

Runners run toward a goal. Whether it's a 100-meter sprint or a cross-country run, runners are motivated by a strong sense of purpose. Remember what Paul said? "I run straight to the goal with purpose in every step" (1 Corinthians 9:26, NLT).

**PEP TALK!**

OK, runners, listen up. If you want your work to be an adventure with God, plan to approach it with a sense of purpose. Catch a vision of what the Lord and you want it to look like, then make plans on how to get there. (We'll get into purpose and vision in the next guidebook). A strong sense of purpose will help you clear hurdles in the workplace while keeping your eye on the goal. Try not to waste valuable time stumbling or floundering. Know what you're about.

Keep in mind that God wants to give you a sense of purpose. But He doesn't force it on you. You have to want Him badly enough to seek it in Him.

Have you been seeking the Lord's purposes for the race He sets before you? To what degree?

Casually    1    2    3    4    5    Seriously





If you have identified a purpose or two, make a note of them.


## 5. Races require endurance

The longer the race, the more endurance it takes.

Sometimes a race in the workplace can feel like an all-out sprint and at other times like a punishing cross-country race or an endless marathon. If there had been a steeplechase (a 3000-meter race which includes a combination of hurdles and 12-foot water jumps) in New Testament days, it may have been used as an example. Terms like *demanding* and *grueling* would certainly apply to the steeplechase as they do to some jobs. At the end of a steeplechase, runners often feel like collapsing into a buddy's arms. Guess whose arms are waiting for you at the end of your race?

Thanks to Hebrews 12:1 ("run with endurance"), we need not idealize the workplace. By taking its truth to heart, we can form realistic expectations of what will be required for life and the workplace—namely, *endurance!*

### TIME OUT



My job is to run fast and I love it. Before every race I pray to the Lord and ask him to strengthen me and allow me to do the best I possibly can. Even after every race, I thank the Lord, whatever the outcome. If it wasn't for Jesus, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing. All that matters is that God gets all the glory.<sup>12</sup>

Maurice Greene  
100 Meters—Sydney  
Olympic Gold Medalist

