

## Interval Training and Witnessing

by Coty Pinckney 08/08/08

In Sunday's sermon, I discussed my love-hate relationship over the years with interval training – running a set distance fast, repeatedly, with a short, timed rest between runs. In my high school and college days, I hated these workouts; I worked hard at them only because I knew they were necessary if I were to improve as a runner. Yet by the time I was 35, I had grown to love interval training. It was still painful – perhaps more so at age 35 than at 20. But I came to love the mental discipline of pushing myself through the pain, of maintaining good form despite tiring legs, of completing a hard workout well.

In our sermon discussion Tuesday morning, Albert brought up a particularly helpful application of this idea in our Christian lives: Many of us know that we should share our faith. We want to be people who witness. And yet we also don't want to do so. We fear rejection; we think we won't know what to say, or how to answer questions. So we too end up with a love-hate relationship with witnessing.

My attitude towards interval training changed when I began to see those workouts as a fulfillment of my identity as a runner. A runner *is* mentally tough. A runner *does have control* over his weakening legs. A runner *will experience pain*, but will nevertheless continue and overcome the temptation to quit.

We, too, need to see the sharing of our faith as the fulfillment of who we are as Christians, as those who delight in Jesus above all things. Consider:

A Christian *does have control* over his fears through dependence on God:

Psalm 56:3-4: When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?

A Christian *does have the words to say*, for we can prepare ourselves, and, even in the most frightening circumstances, when our lives are on the line, God will give us those words:

1 Peter 3:15: Always [be] prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

Mark 13:11: And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.

A Christian *does fulfill his identity* through speaking to others about who Jesus is – regardless of their response.

2 Corinthians 5:17-20: If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

A Christian *can continue to toil and endure through difficult circumstances*, since God's energy works in him.

Colossians 1:28-29: [Christ] we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

So know who you are. Fulfill who you are. May we all come to love the discipline of witnessing, and so find our true selves.