

Sprint vs. Marathon

By Kate Ward

A dear friend once said to me, "Kate, you are a sprinter, and your husband is a marathoner." Now of course she didn't mean it literally, although my husband does enjoy his fair share of running marathons. She meant it as a representation of my personality. I don't have a cruise control; it is either fast or stop.



Thankfully, God gave me a steady constant in my life with John, my husband.

Being a mom is the best thing I have ever done, but as a "sprinter" my mothering career has had its ups and downs. My personality tendencies help me to have high energy and a love to start new things. But on the other side, I tend to overreact, lose focus, and spiral downward quickly when life gets overwhelming.

In the beginning of January, God allowed John and me to go out of the country for a training time with John's work. My wonderful parents offered to watch our three boys (what a blessing) and we were off for over a week. It was the first time in eleven years that I had been away for that long.

The time away was refreshing to my soul. It allowed me to reflect on my life and see how God is working and refining me to be more like Him. My extreme tendencies and crazy pace do not lend themselves to reflection and times of silence. But that is what you need to truly hear from God and know what He is calling you to do.

I love this verse in Ephesians 2:8-10, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." It is a reminder to me that all we have is from God, but He allows us to be a part of his bigger, ultimate fulfilling plan.

In my time of reflection, I prayed that my eyes would be open to see what God has in store for me. He made me, with His help, to be a great mom, but as His child, He has gifted me to do significant things to make His name known. Sometimes in the day-to-day, I forget about anything that doesn't involve my kids. But when my kids see me being obedient to God's call on my life, they see an example of what it looks like to follow God. And that is God's desire, for them to follow and obey Him with all of their lives.

After a wonderful trip, my husband and I headed home. I had all these hopes and goals written down and I was ready to make a difference. Fast forward three days back in the

mayhem, and I had lost everything I had vowed to do. My prayer journaling had stalled, my positive outlook had soured, and I felt like I was right back to the chaos I had left.

Why had God allowed me to have that time away, if nothing that I had learned would stick? That is when it hit me. Life isn't a sprint or a marathon; it is a mix of both. Sometimes life is crazy and we are just running to keep our heads above water, and sometimes God calls us to be faithful and just keep going when we don't see results. It isn't my ability or energy; it has to come from God. So the only thing I need to be doing is praying for God to give me the strength, ability, and wisdom to know when to run fast and when to press on.

I am back to my prayer journaling, most days. Sometimes it is short and sweet, and sometimes it is more detailed. I write a request or praise for each member of my family and I ask God for wisdom or something specific with the interactions I will have with others during the week.

I think at the core of it all, we should hunger to make a difference for God, to be used by Him to point people to the gospel and encourage them in their daily walk with Him. God has made us each uniquely and can use our gifts and personalities for his glory. However, he also wants to make us a "new creation" and "because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions" (Ephesians 2:4-5). It is all about balance, knowing how God made us and knowing who we are in Christ. So today I wrote in my prayer journal, "God, please give me balance!" And I'm trusting He will!