

PUBLISHED BY: WALKING WITH JESUS MINISTRIES  
P O BOX 9143  
TAURANGA  
NEW ZEALAND

Email: dtait@wave.co.nz  
Phone: 0064 7 552 6455  
Fax: 0064 7 552 6456

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## BACKGROUND

In 1992, when I was but a 3 year old Christian, the Lord stopped me as I was nearing the end of reading the Bible right through – at Revelation 12: 11 to be precise.

"They overcame him (meaning satan) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death."

As clear as you are reading this, He explained basically what the verse meant, and told me to base my life's work for Him upon it.

Now, for a relatively new Christian, this came as a bit of a surprise! However, I was prepared to give it a go. So the next day, I can still clearly remember sitting on the couch in our lounge, wondering what to do and where to start.

While sitting there, the Lord gave me this allegory of 'The Two Marathoners.' I hurriedly wrote it down, not wanting to forget, fully understanding my notoriously poor memory. The following day He gave me the interpretation. Of course, it took a couple of weeks to flesh out the outline and make the grammar acceptable to you, the reader.

The allegory was given in three parts, relating both to the three parts of the key verse and of our walk with Jesus. Over the next 18 months the three-part 'Walking With Jesus' course evolved. One part of the allegory was included with each part of the course. However, it wasn't until I had just about completed writing the course, or more correctly, holding the pen while the Holy Spirit wrote it, that I realised that the allegory lined up with the course perfectly. It had to be God, for I had no idea of what was to come when I was first given it.

The 30-hour 'Walking With Jesus' course, consisting of 3 booklets and 18 hours of tapes, has been used by over 10,000 people over the past 8 years or so. Many people have found it helpful to a better understanding their walk with Jesus while others have found the Lord for the first time through it.

I trust this story will inspire you too, to find or deepen your walk with Jesus.

## THE TWO MARATHONERS

Note: The gaps between the brackets ( ) are there for you to write in the underlying 'spiritual' meanings of the CAPITALISED words that proceed them. The letters and numbers in Italics refer you to the answers that are found, along with the interpretation, at the end of each of the 3 parts. The first two are given for free, so you can get the idea. Have fun – and get the Lord's message too!

Part 1: The Decision ( ) a)

Two friends, Jeremy Jogger and Roger Runner were watching the Olympic Marathon on TV. As they relaxed on the couch with an ALE (worldly pleasure 1) in their hands, they chatted to each other about life as good friends do. Roger remarked to Jeremy how the RUNNERS ( Christians 2) in the RACE ( ) 3) appeared to be focused, to have a purpose in life. Jeremy agreed and upon reflection, both conceded that the MARATHONERS ( ) 2) had a source of inspiration and motivation their own lives lacked, a worthwhile GOAL ( ) 4) to strive for.

The race leader and eventual WINNER ( ) 5) impressed them most of all, inspired them even, for the way in which he led, and the manner in which he won the RACE. ( ) 3) The obvious sacrifice and pain he suffered, particularly over the LAST KILOMETRE, ( ) 6) was far in excess of the other competitors, but the joy of victory, coupled with his obvious humility, seemed to make all the pain and suffering worthwhile.

At the end of the RACE ( ) 3) a FRIEND OF THE OLYMPIC CHAMPION ( ) 7) was interviewed. He talked about the amazing of the WINNER, ( ) 5) how he was a great guy, of the places he had been too, his good health, the money he had earned, and how good marathon running was for his whole life! Both Jeremy and Roger were enthralled and inspired. Jeremy was so excited with the emotion of the moment that he could already see himself on the podium, being presented with the GOLD MEDAL. ( ) 8) In his excitement he missed hearing the WINNERS FRIEND ( ) 7) mention, almost in passing, that the CHAMPION( ) 5) had had to spend many hours training before he had reached the STANDARD OF FITNESS ( ) 9) required to win the race. Roger was also very enthusiastic, but he listened intently, in order to hear everything the OLYMPIC CHAMPIONS FRIEND ( ) 7) said, not wanting to miss a word that might help him to emulate the VICTOR'S ( ) 5) feats.

Our two intrepid TV sportsmen, COUCH POTATOES, ( ) 10) were finally convinced when the CHAMPION'S FRIEND ( ) 7) told them that all they had to do to become successful marathoners, to become like the OLYMPIC CHAMPION, ( ) 5) was to believe in their hearts that they could do it. While perhaps they might not be able to run the race as fast as him, but BELIEF ( ) 11) in their ability to complete the COURSE ( ) 3) would enable them to do it. As the interview with the CHAMPION'S FRIEND ( ) 7) concluded, Jeremy and Roger looked at each other, amazed by the enthusiasm the INTERVIEW ( ) 12) had generated in them.

Our two COUCH POTATO ( ) 10) mates realised that they didn't look at all like the MARATHONERS ( ) 2) they had seen on the television. In fact both were amply endowed with ROLLS OF FAT ( ) 13) around that mythical, middle area. In spite of this, they turned to each other and made THE DECISION ( ) 14) that they were going to become MARATHONERS. ( ) 2) In line with the CHAMPIONS FRIEND'S ( ) 7) positive self motivation suggestion, they declared to each other, "We are now MARATHONERS." ( ) 2) Both felt on top of the world!

The enthusiasm of the moment was dampened a little however, when Roger thoughtfully asked, "Jeremy, when are we actually going to run this RACE

( 3) to prove that we really are MARATHONERS?" ( 2) Jeremy was stopped in his tracks! "Well Roger, I guess you are right. I was having so much fun imagining myself on the podium receiving the GOLD MEDAL ( 8) that I hadn't given the race itself a thought!"

"I know," said Roger, "the other day a MARATHONER ( 2) friend of mine was telling me that the next ROTORUA MARATHON ( 15) is on the 2nd of May next year. I guess you know that it is New Zealand's biggest marathon and there will be plenty of OTHERS ( 2) to run with, which should make it easier for us. What do you say?"

"I guess you're right Roger," said Jeremy, we will have to run THE MARATHON ( 16) some day." (To himself he quietly thought, "that doesn't sound too bad – it's still 9 months away!") "O K Roger," Jeremy spoke aloud again, "we'll meet in Rotorua on RM DAY." ( 15)

So both of them went their separate ways, amazed at the events of the day, while wondering what they had let themselves in for.

### UNDERLYING SPIRITUAL MEANINGS FOR WORDS IN 'THE DECISION'

#### ALLEGORY WORDS      SPIRITUAL MEANINGS

- a. The decision    Of life's direction
1. Ale, Christmas spirit      Worldly pleasure, Satan's deceit
2. Runners, Marathoners, Friends    Christians
3. Race, Course    Race of life
4. Goal      Eternal life
5. Winner, Olympic champion, Him, Jesus  
Champion, President, Victor    Jesus
6. Last kilometre      The Cross
7. Champions friend, His friend, He      The evangelist (pastor or teacher)
8. Gold Medal    Eternal life
9. Standard of fitness    Death on the Cross
10. Couch potato      Worldly
11. Belief (& derivatives), Knew      Faith (& derivatives)
12. Interview      Crusade, Meeting
13. Rolls of fat, Flab, Kilos      Worldly pleasures
14. The Decision, Will do it      Decision for Christ
15. Rotorua Marathon, Marathon,      Judgement Day  
RM day, The day    Judgement Day
16. Run the marathon    Face Judgement

### INTERPRETATION OF 'The Decision' (of Life's Direction)

The allegory compares two men, both of whom realise they need a new direction in life, 'coming to Christ'.

The first, Jeremy Jogger, sees Christianity as a religion. He believes in the theory of Jesus as shared by the evangelist. He is sold on the benefits he expects to receive. He believes in the evangelist. He realises that he will have to face God's judgement one day, but it still seems a long way off. He is prepared to fit religion into his lifestyle.

The second, Roger Runner, however, accepts Christianity as his new life. His conversion is focused on Jesus and the cross, not on the evangelist. (pastor or teacher) He realises that there will be costs as well as benefits in attaining his goal of eternal life with Christ. He believes in Jesus.

Let's carry on with parts two and three to find out how our two friends made out!

## THE TWO MARATHONERS

Part 2: The Training ( b)

JEREMY JOGGER: ( 17) Jeremy went home that night feeling just great. The next morning, as he was reading the newspaper in bed, he saw an advertisement for a SELF MOTIVATION ( 18) seminar. "What a good idea," he thought. "This will help me become a really good MARATHONER." ( 2) Jeremy went along to the course and was full of enthusiasm for the SPEAKER ( 19) and for the marathon he was going to run.

In his enthusiasm, the day after the course concluded he went along to the MARATHON CLINIC, ( 20) a group of SERIOUS MARATHONERS. ( 21) He came home deflated. "These girls and guys were so serious! All they talked about was running their marathon. They really seemed to enjoy it but I didn't find it any fun at all. I won't go back there again!"

One evening a few days later, over an ALE ( 1) at his local pub – and a very convivial atmosphere it had too – one of the other PATRONS ( 22) suggested, "Why don't you go and join the HASHHOUSE HARRIERS. ( 23) They don't take their RUNNING ( 24) too seriously. They really enjoy a few beers and I am sure they will make you really welcome. I have heard that they can do with new members."

Jeremy went along and found it was just what he wanted. After a GENTLE RUN ( 25) the members came back, had an ALE ( 1) or 2 and reminisced about past days of glory. They also spent time ruminating over what they had DONE WITH THEIR DAY ( 26) and debating heatedly amongst themselves which were the most successful TRAINING METHODS. ( 27) There was a small group of SERIOUS RUNNERS, ( 21) but they tended to keep to themselves and were basically ignored by the majority. The TRAINING ( 27) wasn't too hard and the social side was great. It really suited Jeremy and he was very happy there.

Waking up the morning after clubnights with a little bit of a HANGOVER, ( 28) "Nothing to worry about you know, nothing a COUPLE OF ASPRINS ( 29) can't fix," Jeremy occasionally did have his doubts. However he always remembered back to what the CHAMPIONS FRIEND ( 7) had said. "Just BELIEVE ( 11) that you can do it and you will!" "Yes, that's right," Jeremy thought, "HE ( 7) told me so." Sometimes, in the minutes of throbbing before the ASPRINS ( 29) started working, his BELIEF IN HIMSELF ( 30) did waver a little, but as the Asprins took affect, his self confidence returned and he knew – well he almost knew – that because he BELIEVED ( 11) he was a MARATHONER, ( 2) he was one. That was what the CHAMPIONS FRIEND ( 7) had said, wasn't it – wasn't it?

As RM DAY ( 15) approached he tried a few LONGER RUNS. ( 31) They didn't go too well, but he thought to himself, "I know I'm in REASONABLE SHAPE. ( 32) It will be okay on THE DAY, ( 15) won't it? The CHAMPIONS FRIEND ( 7) told me so didn't he? While I may still have some excess FLAB ( 13) round that mystical middle area and I might be a LITTLE SLOWER ( 33) than I could have been had I done more TRAINING, ( 24) I am sure I will make the FINISH, ( 34) won't I? Won't I! The champions friend did tell me so! I heard him!

ROGER RUNNER: ( 35) Roger, on the other hand, got home that night from being with his friend Jeremy Jogger and thought to himself, "Hey, what is this I have committed myself to? I don't look like a MARATHONER," ( 2) as he felt those surplus ROLLS OF FAT ( 13) round that mystical middle area! "While I know it is important that I believe I am becoming a MARATHONER, ( 2) I guess as a first step, I had better go on a DIET ( 36) so that others will also be able to see that I am

one. I've known for a while that I've been unhappy being a COUCH POTATO (10) but until hearing the CHAMPIONS FRIEND (7) I just didn't know what to do about it. I don't want to LIVE THAT LIFESTYLE (37) any more. I now know I don't have to. The OLYMPIC CHAMPION (5) SHOWED ME THAT (38) by the way in which HE WON THE RACE. (39) HIS FRIEND, (7) I remember, did say that as well as BELIEVING, (11) you still have to do the TRAINING, (24) to succeed. I have to admit that I don't know too much at all about it really, but I have said I WILL DO IT, (14) so I had better get some help. But how? The champions friend didn't tell me that.

The picture of the CHAMPION (5) WINNING THE RACE (39) inspired him though. Roger really wanted to be like him. With his dedication and determination, the answers to his problems soon sorted themselves out. Roger wrote them down so that they would be there for future reference.

1. I will buy the BEST BOOK ON RUNNING. (40) It will show me WHAT MAKES ME TICK, (41) how to prepare myself so I can FINISH (34) the race safely, and show me the right TRAINING PROGRAMME (24) to ensure I run the BEST TIME (46) possible for me.
2. I will ask my friend MONTY MARATHONER (43) who has completed TWELVE (44) marathons, if he would mind guiding me, advising me on a one to one basis, about applying the TRAINING PROGRAMME (24) to my special needs, and to give me encouragement and support when I need it.
3. I will go out and join the local MARATHON CLINIC (20) to enable me to train with other MARATHONERS (2) so that we can MOTIVATE (45) each other.
4. I will take notice of what I read and am told and I WILL DO IT. (46)

Roger was true to his word. He ate BETTER (47) food, he studied his RUNNING BOOK (40) regularly, and kept in touch with his friend MONTY MARATHONER. (43) Under their GUIDANCE (46) he steadily built up his TRAINING (24) until he was running 100 kilometres a week. He felt just great!

One day however, he PULLED A HAMSTRING. (48) His world came to an end. He couldn't train – what could he do! He looked up his running book and sure enough, it told him WHAT TO DO

(49) about the INJURY. (48) He spoke to his friend MONTY MARATHONER (43) who put him in touch with the best physiotherapist in town. He also shared his woes with his friends at the MARATHON CLINIC. (20) They quickly reassured him that they too had had similar injuries, but had come through them with no ill affect. In fact, they would feel refreshed, and keener than before, once the INJURY (41) had healed. It would just take time and patience. And so it was. After 10 days Roger was back training with more enthusiasm than ever, but also a little wiser. He now made sure he did his HAMSTRING STRETCHING EXERCISES (50) thoroughly before each workout.

Then came the CHRISTMAS SEASON. (51) Roger was just so busy at work. Everyone wanted everything yesterday. He also had go to his wife's work Christmas party, to the children's school breakups, to buy presents and do the 1002 other things we all inevitably get involved with at Christmas. There just weren't enough hours in the day. Something had to give. Yes, you've guessed it. It was Roger's training. It soon showed. The KILOS (13) started going back on again as the DIET (36) was put to one side – just for a while! "We all have to share in Christmas cheer don't we – just to make others happy," Roger thought to himself. "The CHRISTMAS SPIRIT, (1) you know!" Roger got so

involved with the spirit of Christmas that he remembered his TRAINING ( 24) less and less, until, when Christmas Day came, he had just about forgotten it altogether. After Christmas, he took the family for a holiday and they enjoyed themselves so much that he never gave his training a second thought.

Roger had been back home for a couple of days and things were beginning to settle back to normal again. He went to the fridge, grabbed himself an ALE, (

1) then went to sit down in his FAVOURITE ARMCHAIR. ( 52) Just as he sat down however, the phone rang. It was his friend and guide, MONTY MARATHONER. ( 43)

"Haven't heard from you for a while, Roger. How is the TRAINING ( 24) going?" "Training? What training? Oh, I remember now, my marathon training. Look Monty, I have just been so busy with Christmas and doing things with my family, I haven't had any time to train," Roger said in a terse voice. "That's okay Roger, it's your MARATHON. ( 15) Just thought I would give you A CALL.

( 55) If I can be of any help you know how to get hold of me." Monty hung up.

Roger glared down the ear piece of the phone as if expecting his 'ex-friend' Monty to jump out, grab him, and force him back into TRAINING ( 24) again, all against his will. "How dare he!" Roger muttered to himself.

But nothing happened. After what seemed an eternity of silence, a now more pensive Roger thought to himself, "Can't really blame Monty for how you are feeling, Roger. He did say the CHOICE WAS MINE." ( 54)

Roger hung up the phone in quiet despair. "What am I doing?" he thought to himself as he picked up his ALE ( 1) and sat back down in his ARMCHAIR. ( 52) He just couldn't relax. He looked down at that unmentionable middle area and saw how the ROLLS OF FLAB ( 13) had reappeared over recent weeks. "I will never be able to run the ROTORUA MARATHON ( 15) now," he thought sadly. But I HAVE TO, ( 55) I'm committed! What have I done? What can I do?" He sat silently and pondered. Gradually, he came to accept the inevitable. He thought aloud. "I've no alternative but to ring Monty back, apologise for my behaviour and ask him to help me get back into training. Otherwise I will never be able to COMPLETE THE COURSE." ( 34)

Slowly he pushed himself up, out of his armchair, dragged himself over to the phone and rang his friend, MONTY. ( 43) "I am sorry," he said when Monty picked up the phone on the first ring, "I was COMPLETELY WRONG

( 56) to give up my TRAINING. ( 24) I am so sorry for being rude to you. What can I do now? I really NEED YOUR HELP." ( 57)

Monty accepted his apology gracefully, told him ALL WAS FORGOTTEN, ( 58) but suggested he would be wise to learn from his experience, because if it happened again he might not have time to PUT THINGS RIGHT ( 56) before RM DAY. ( 15)

Monty then suggested he go back and re-read his RUNNING BOOK. ( 40) Then he, Monty, would help him devise a new training programme to get him back into shape for the big day. He also suggested that Roger go back to the MARATHON CLINIC, ( 20) in spite of Roger's obvious reluctance to do so. Roger thanked Monty and agreed to DO ( 46) as he had suggested.

He was surprised, when he returned to the Marathon Clinic, to find that his FRIENDS ( 47) welcomed him back with open arms. A good number of them had also been through the same experience.

Roger settled back into his training, his MILEAGE ( 31) quickly returned to normal, the FLAB ( 13) disappeared even more quickly than it had come, and he got fitter and fitter.

Several times over the next few months he let himself down by MISSING A DAY'S TRAINING, ( 59) but he now knew that he could confide in his friend and guide, MONTY MARATHONER, ( 43) who would gently counsel and encourage him back into his training programme.

## UNDERLYING SPIRITUAL MEANINGS FOR WORDS IN 'THE TRAINING'

### ALLEGORY WORDS      SPIRITUAL MEANINGS

- b. The Training    The Christian walk
1. Ale, Christmas spirit      Worldly pleasure, Satan's deceit
  2. Runners, Marathoners      Christians
  - Friends, Others    Christians
  5. Winner, Olympic Champion,      Jesus  
Champion, Victor, President, Him    Jesus
  7. Champions friend, His friend, he      The evangelist, pastor or teacher
  10. Couch Potato      Worldly
  11. Belief & derivatives, Knew      Faith and derivatives
  13. Rolls of fat, Flab, Kilos      Worldly pleasures
  14. The Decision, Will do it      Decision for Christ
  15. Rotorua Marathon, RM Day      Judgement Day
  17. Jeremy Jogger      Worldly minded, Uncommitted  
Christian
  18. Self-motivation      Worldly success, New Age thought
  19. Speaker      New Age philosopher
  20. Marathon Clinic      Spiritual church
  21. Serious marathoners (runners)      Spiritual Christians
  22. Patrons      Demons
  23. Hashhouse Harriers      Spiritually dead church
  24. Running, Training (programme)      Christian walk of obedience
  25. Gentle run      Self generated good works
  26. Done with their day      Worldly pursuits
  27. Training (methods)      Theologies
  28. Hangover      Sin's reward
  29. Asprins      Worldly justification
  30. Belief in himself      Mans striving
  31. Runs, Longer runs, Striving      Good works
  32. Reasonable shape      Living a good life
  33. Little slower      'skin of teeth' salvation
  34. Finish & derivatives, victory, goal      Eternal Life
  35. Roger Runner      Spiritual (obedient) Christian
  36. Diet      Leading a new life
  37. Live that lifestyle      Worldly life
  38. Showed me that      Way of Salvation
  39. Won (Winning) the raceBy/on the Cross
  40. (Best) Running Book, Book      The Bible
  41. What makes me tick      Fallen man
  42. Best time      Best salvation
  43. Monty Marathoner, Me      The Holy Spirit
  44. Twelve      Hebrew number means 'Divine'
  45. Motivate      Support of Christians
  46. Will do it, guidance, do      Obedience
  47. Better      Spiritual
  48. Pulled hamstring, injury, mountain      Trial and testing
  49. What to do      Perseverance
  50. Hamstring stretching routine      Spiritual warfare
  51. Christmas season      Backsliding experience
  52. Favourite armchair, Armchair      Self satisfaction
  53. Give you a call      Pricking of conscience
  54. Choice was mine      Man's freewill
  55. I have to      Everyone faces judgement
  56. Completely wrong, Put things right      Repentance
  57. Need your help      Submission
  58. All was forgotten      Forgiveness of sin
  59. Missing a day's training      Sinned

There are others too, not listed here. Can you find them?

## INTERPRETATION OF 'The Training' (of the Christian Walk)

### THE CHRISTIAN WALK FROM MAN'S VIEWPOINT:

The story compares the walk of 2 types of 'Christians' and/or 2 types of churches.

The first, Jeremy Jogger, views the walk from a human religious perspective, motivated essentially by self. It is an easy walk, as it requires little commitment. Satan basically leaves it alone as it is serving his purpose just fine the way it is.

The second, Roger Runner, lives the walk. Christ becomes the centre of life, the reason for living. This walk requires commitment and obedience to bring about the promised rewards. God tests this commitment and Satan attacks it with vigour. Overcoming through submission to God's purpose for our lives leads to spiritual growth.

### THE TWO MARATHONERS

Part 3: The Race ( c)

Finally, the big RM DAY ( 15) arrived. Roger Runner turned up in good time for the race, went through his well practised, precautionary STRETCHING ROUTINE ( 50) and had a gentle warm up. He felt just great - rearing to go! He looked round for his old COUCH POTATO ( 10) mate, Jeremy Jogger, but he was nowhere to be seen. Ten minutes to go to the start. Still no sign of Jeremy. Five minutes. Then two minutes. Suddenly, out of the corner of his eye he saw his old friend Jeremy, pushing his way towards him, through the throng. Jeremy looked terrible, he looked really terrible! He had arrived late, and had to run the 2 KILOMETRES ( 6) from where he was able to find a park for his car to get to the starting line. He was flushed and already puffing heavily. His couch potato mystical middle area FLAB ( 13) was bursting out over the top of his shorts. He just looked so out of place amongst the mass of well prepared, eager RUNNERS. ( 2) While he was still trying to force his way through the crowd towards Roger, the starters pistol fired. With a loud shout the mass surged forward, knocking Jeremy off his feet as he struggled against the flow, all as one in their single minded determination to achieve the GOAL ( 34) that they had worked towards for so long. As Roger surged forward with the others, he could hear Jeremy's rapidly fading, plaintive cry, "Roger, wait for me, wait for me!"

Rogers mentor, MONTY MARATHONER ( 43) looked on sadly but silently. It was too late to do anything for Jeremy now. Without doing the TRAINING ( 24) it was impossible to complete the course. There was nothing that anyone could do for JEREMY JOGGER. ( 17) Jeremy cried like a baby as he was pushed and shoved to one side by the thousands of runners who passed him by. He was led away, a BROKEN ( 60) man, by the race officials. His race was over before it had even begun.

ROGER RUNNER ( 35) meanwhile, was out on the course. The race seemed easy after the TRAINING. ( 24) Now

nearly to halfway - no problems. Then loomed up, as expected, the MOUNTAIN. ( 48) Roger was prepared for this challenge. The going started to get a bit tougher as he climbed higher and higher but, just when he needed some encouragement, he saw the stone marking the halfway point of the race. He looked ahead and could see the road disappearing over the top of the mountain. This spurred him on, up, over the top and down the other side. What a tremendous feeling! The mountain conquered. "It will be easier now," Roger thought, with the hint of a smile. A drink station - a welcome replacement of FLUIDS ( 61) lost on the tough mountain climb.

Suddenly, unexpectedly, a small INCLINE ( 62) makes its presence felt under Roger's pounding feet. It doesn't feel that steep but it seems to go on forever. The muscles in each leg begin to hurt and hurt badly. How could such a LITTLE HILL ( 62) hurt so much. Roger looked up in despair. It was then that he saw MONTY MARATHONER ( 43) standing on the side of the

road, encouraging him onwards. Over the HILL. ( appears – only 12 to go. Then 32km – only 10 left now!

62) The 30km sign

At that moment Roger's body really starts screaming! "I can't go on," he thought in despair. "I can't take any more!" But through t

road, encouraging him onwards. Over the HILL. ( 62) The 30km sign appears – only 12 to go. Then 32km – only 10 left now!

At that moment Roger's body really starts screaming! "I can't go on," he thought in despair. "I can't take any more!" But through the pain he heard his friend Monty shouting out to him, "Remember what the book says.

Remember what I have taught you." Roger remembered. He had hit 'THE WALL'. ( 63) The time in every marathon when the body's metabolism changes from burning BLOOD SUGARS ( 64) to burning BODY FAT. ( 65) It was painful, unbelievably painful. It was so hard, so very hard to keep on going, but Roger KNEW ( 11) that if he did carry on, did run through it, everything would come right. Besides, he still had Monty's words of encouragement ringing in his ears. "Have faith in the BOOK, ( 40) have faith in ME, ( 43) Roger." He repeated these over and over to himself as he ran through the searing pain.

Then he looked up again – the 35km marker. Only 7 to go! He was starting to feel a bit better too. "Look ahead to the end of the race Roger," he told himself. "All that the book and Monty have said is proving to be right." Thirty-six kilometres, 37, 38 – 90% done – 9 steps taken out of every 10. He glanced to the side of the road and there again was MONTY ( 43)

smiling and encouraging him on to even more effort. "Not far to go now," Roger said to himself, knowing that the strain was showing on his face and in his slightly stooped body. Thirty-nine kilometres, forty. "I'm going to make it! I'm going to make it!" A new release of energy, his stride lengthens, his body straightens. He glances sideways and sees Monty there, running with him. Forty-one kilometres. Into Rotorua's central shopping area. The crowds are cheering him on. His pace quickens some more. Monty is still running at his side, smiling and encouraging him on. Roger turns into Government Gardens and now can see the FINISHING LINE ( 34) a couple of hundred metres ahead. Adrenalin takes over and he breaks into a sprint. The crowds cheer some more. Roger is smiling amidst the effort of sprinting those final few metres. The FINISHING LINE ( 34) arrives at last, 42km, 196 metres after the start of the race.

And who was the first to congratulate him? MONTY ( 43) of course. The exhilaration, the tiredness, the joy, the pain, the TRAINING, ( 24) the VICTORY! ( 34) It was all worthwhile. His GOAL ( 34) had been achieved. The reward was in Monty's smile. Welcome to the MARATHONERS CLUB, ( 66) Roger.

Roger was surrounded by fellow SUCCESSFUL FINISHERS, ( 67) some from his own MARATHON CLINIC, ( 20) whom he greeted by name, together with many others he didn't know, but was now able to greet as sisters and brothers. They had all run THE RACE, ( 3) had all passed the test together.

Roger wasn't the first to finish, nor was he the last, but he had run the race to the BEST OF HIS ABILITY. ( 68) At the prizegiving, after the last FINISHER ( 67) had completed the course, the PRESIDENT ( 5) of the MARATHON CLUB ( 66) welcomed all the FINISHERS, ( 67) individually, to the club. JEREMY JOGGER ( 17) was nowhere to be seen. When it came to Roger's turn, he looked up and his happiness was complete. Roger had recognised the CLUB PRESIDENT. ( 5) He looked a little different out of his running gear but he clearly recognised his friend and mentor, MONTY MARATHONER. ( 43) "Can I ask you just one question, Mr President," he asked. "When I was out there running my race and needed support, I looked up and every time saw my friend Monty there to encourage me. How did he manage to do that?" The PRESIDENT ( 5) answered in a gentle voice, "Roger, we ran beside you all of the way. You ran the race to the best of your ability. WE ( 69) are proud of you."

In the traditional end of marathon, emotional experience, Roger burst into tears, tears of joy that is, and could only just manage to reply, "Without YOUR ( 69) guiding, prompting, example, encouragement and friendship I would never

have made it. Really, the PRIZE BELONGS TO YOU." ( 70) The race was run, the race was won. Roger would savour this moment FOREVER. ( 71)

## UNDERLYING SPIRITUAL MEANINGS FOR WORDS IN 'THE RACE'

### ALLEGORY WORDS SPIRITUAL MEANINGS

- C. The Race Judgement Day
2. Runners, Marathoners, Christians  
Friends, Others Christians
3. Race, Course Race of life
5. Winner, (Olympic) Champion, Jesus  
Victor, President, Him Jesus
6. (Last) Kilometre The Cross
10. Couch Potato Worldly
11. Belief (& derivatives), Knew Faith (& derivatives)
13. Rolls of Fat, Flab, Kilos Worldly Pleasures
15. Rotorua Marathon, Marathon Judgement Day  
RM Day, The Day Judgement Day
17. Jeremy Jogger Worldly Minded, (Uncommitted)  
Christian
20. Marathon Clinic Spiritual Church
24. Running, Training (Programme) Christian walk of obedience
34. Finish (derivatives), Victory, Goal Eternal Life
35. Roger Runner Spiritual (obedient) Christian
40. Best book on running The Bible  
Running Book, Book The Bible
43. Monty Marathoner, Me The Holy Spirit
48. Pulled hamstring, Injury, Mountain Testing
50. Hamstring stretching exercises. Spiritual Warfare  
Stretching routine Spiritual Warfare
60. Broken Condemned
61. Fluids Spiritual Strength
62. Incline, Little hill, Hill Unexpected Testing
63. The wall Point of total reliance on Holy Spirit
64. Blood sugar Self reliance
65. Body fat Spiritual reliance
66. Marathoners Club Heaven
67. Successful finishers, Finisher Overcoming Christians
68. Best of his ability Used his talents wisely
69. We, Your Jesus and the Holy Spirit
70. Prize belongs to you Saved by grace
71. Forever For eternity

### INTERPRETATION OF

'The Race' (Judgement Day)

### THE CHRISTIAN WALK FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE:

This story illustrates the different perspective to God of our walk with Him. We see our walk as one of training to enter God's kingdom, to put in as much or as little effort as we desire. God however, views our walk (or race) as commencing with salvation, developing through testing, perseverance and obedience. As we become more dependent upon Him, so the support of His Holy Spirit increases, until we reach the goal we seek and He desires for us – eternal life with Him.

Repented sins are forgiven and forgotten, therefore do not feature in God's judgement of us.

Salvation qualifies us to start the race, while the rewards are at the end. Ultimate victory is achieved through full submission to Him. Only on the path of obedience can the race be run and won.

While we may be plucked out of the race (by death) at any stage, as we live we are required to keep on training and running, to attain to God's rewards for us. To give up the training is to sacrifice the rewards. The Choice is ours.

They overcame him (that is satan) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. (Revelation 12: 11)