

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 66

Dearest Grandchild,

Today's letter will involve the fact that the Christian life is like a race. You immediately know the difference between a casual walk and a race. The Christian life is not a stroll in the park, it is a race! Please consider these Scriptures:

- **“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly. . . “ (1 Cor 9:24-26)**
- **“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.” (Heb 12:1).**
- **“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.” (2 Tim 4:7-8)**

These, and other Scriptures, point out the importance of training and discipline to be a Christian. The Christian life is not a leisurely stroll, it is a race!

I'm sure you have seen the cartoon of a donkey being encouraged to move by dangling a carrot in front of it and by beating it with a stick from behind. Here are a couple of true stories from history that illustrate the motivation of both the stick and the carrot.

STORY # 1 - THE STICK

John Colter was a trapper who crossed the continent in the Lewis and Clark expedition. On their way back in 1806 he received permission from Captain Lewis to stay behind and trap near the headwaters of the Missouri River. Unfortunately, this was territory claimed by the Blackfoot Indians who hated white men.

Early one morning Colter, and his trapping partner Jack Potts, found themselves surrounded by Indians. Potts was killed outright, but they decided to kill Colter in a more sporting way. He was stripped of his clothing and shoes and given a head start. It was a deadly game. It was a race that would mean life or death for Colter. Soon hundreds of Indians gave a war whoop and started after him.

Colter headed for the Jefferson River which was six miles away. The plain was covered with

cactus and soon Colter's feet were filled with cactus thorns, but Colter had a strong motivation to keep running. About half way to the river there was only one Indian close enough to be a threat. Colter suddenly stopped, faced the surprised Indian and shouted. In the struggle that ensued Colter was able to kill the Indian with his own spear. The exhausted trapper did not dare stop to rest. With blood gushing from his nose and covering his body he raced on to the river. He immediately plunged into the icy waters and hid beneath some logs. The enraged Indians, hunted him for hours in the icy waters of the river.

At dark the Indians temporarily gave up the hunt. This allowed Coulter to swim a long way downstream and then head for the mountains. Since he expected the Indians to be watching the pass, he crossed over a rugged area where they were not looking. Fort Manuel was 300 miles away but somehow the naked and barefoot man made it to safety. As starved and sick as he was, completing the race was much better than the alternative.

STORY # 2 - THE CARROT

The second story involves a "carrot". Andy Payne was a Cherokee farm boy who grew up in Foyil, Oklahoma. This is a very small town between Claremore and Chelsea on Route # 66. Times were tough and Andy feared they would lose the family farm if they didn't get some money. In 1928 a Transcontinental footrace was planned from Los Angeles to New York. The first prize was \$25,000. This money would not only pay off the mortgage on the farm, but also give Andy enough money to get married. The race was planned by Charles C. Pyle, who was known as the P. T. Barnum of professional sports. A traveling side-show preceded the runners featuring the embalmed remains of a dead outlaw, a 5 legged pig, and a dog that talked with his ears.. Much of the race followed the new highway known as Route 66 which went right by Andy's home.

The race began in Los Angeles, California on March 4, 1928 with 275 runners contending for the prize. 84 days later Andy won the race having averaged over 60 miles per day. He traveled 3,423.5 miles in 573 hours, 4 minutes, and 34 seconds.

As you can imagine, the race was not easy, but Andy had a strong motivation to win. He crossed freezing mountain passes and blistering desert heat, but never gave up. He not only battled the elements, but also a fever and tonsilitis Here is a brief video about his amazing achievement.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoxFuW5xkBY>

I didn't intentionally plan it this way, but letter # 66 does involve Route 66. The point of this letter, however, is still critically important. The Christian life is not a leisure stroll, it is a race. The victor's crow is not given to those who start, but to those who finish. There will be times when you will get discouraged and be tempted to quit. **DON'T QUIT!**

Remember the "stick" as well as the "carrot". God is our Judge as well as our Father. He wants you to be saved and has done everything to make it possible you to be saved, but you must be

faithful until death in order to receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

Paul finished the race and won the victor's crown. He wrote to Timothy: **“For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”** (2 Tim 4:6-8)

With the help of Christ you too can win the race as long as you do not quit!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce