

It was a beautiful sun-splashed and warm day, Friday, July 3. It was a day off for me. As I awoke I announced to Jill that today, instead of my usual 1.6 mile run I would perhaps (and that is a key word here) try my first 5k (3.1 mile) run of the summer. Now, you need to know that I have run in but one race...a 2 mile run in New Holstein's Cow Town celebration in 1982. I was somewhat younger and in better shape then...I won't tell you by how many pounds, but you can guess if you add up the intervening years. And still, at the end of that event my campaign worker who was with me told me that I looked pretty pale, I had better sit down and rest. I just am not built to be a runner. So, that ended my competitive racing career. But, off and on (more off than on) I have continued to jog/run/walk in the never ending battle to increase my metabolism rate. But, going 3.1 miles, that is a challenge I give myself only a couple of times a year, at most. So, what was I thinking this holiday Friday?!

There is a decision point in my running route...about a half-mile into the run I can turn right and take my usual route or I can go straight ahead for the 5k route. It is a moment of great decision for me. How do my legs feel? Can I wait an extra 20 minutes for that first cup of coffee? Do I want to spend most of the morning in a recovery mode? So, I stretched and set out up and down the first hills and approached the critical juncture. Shall I turn right and do my usual route, or should I head straight up the hill toward the lake? I was coming pretty smoothly down the hill toward the intersection, and the decision seemed obvious....

Getting ready to run is a lot like life, isn't it? I mean, we can make these great pronouncements...today I am starting my new diet! Today I will call the friend I have been avoiding; today I will ask forgiveness, or extend forgiveness, to my family; today I will let my life show my co-workers that I am a child of God. It is easy to make the initial pronouncement, but that doesn't mean it is not important. Telling yourself that today is the day is an essential first step in change. Is there some decision you have been putting off because you just can't face what carrying out that decision will actually involve? Yes, you need to consider the cost of your decision. You need to consider if the benefit of moving ahead with your decision is worth the risk of what it will cost you. But, the first step of your journey can be as simple as telling yourself, "TODAY IS THE DAY."

The path to spiritual freedom...freedom received by grace; freedom in which we experience love and forgiveness; freedom to conquer our demons; begins with a simple declaration: today is the day. I invite you to join me as we continue to explore this Freedom Run (?), and as you consider what my crossroads decision will be, I encourage you to make a decision to start the journey to freedom...as the old sayings go, "the first step is the hardest" and "a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step" But, this journey is for a Prize that will make it all worth it.

"You've all been to the stadium and seen the athletes race. Everyone runs; one wins. Run to win. All good athletes train hard. They do it for a gold medal that tarnishes and fades. You're after one that's gold eternally." I Corinthians 9:24 (The Message)

Sabbath blessings upon you,

Shalom,

Bill

P.S. I have attached the invitation to my ordination and installation service set for August 30 at 3:00 p.m. You, my pilgrim friends, are all welcome!

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