

# Pace the Race

Posted by admin

I run — not real fast — not as fast as I used to, but at least I'm consistent, however slow I may be. Every once in a while, I enter a 10K race (I'm not into marathons). In one of my first races, I was given some good advice by a friend to run my race at my pace. "Don't try to keep up with the pack," he cautioned me. "Run at a reasonable pace." I never forgot that advice. There's a life principle here that pertains to more than foot racing. Too many leaders are running out of gas before the finish line — working too long, too hard, too frantically. Scripture has something to say about being in a race — 1 Corinthians 9, 2 Timothy 4 and Hebrews 12. My understanding is that the Christian race is a marathon (as much as I'm not "into" marathons, I'm "into" this one) not a 100 meter dash. We're in it for the long haul, and careful pacing is crucial.

Bill Hybels has quite an interesting teaching about what he learned, the hard way, from not pacing his race. Within the last couple of years, both John Maxwell and James Dobson had heart attacks. There are at least 22 organizations that exist for the sole purpose of pre- or post-burnout counseling for pastors. The more I read the more I'm seeing that the landscape is littered with the bodies of leaders who are "killing" themselves emotionally and physically in the ministry due to lack of personal pacing.

I came perilously close myself a number of years ago. I was becoming addicted to Tums because of constant stomach problems. I discovered after a very unpleasant trip to the doctor and to the hospital, that my problem was due to going too fast for too long on the highway of life as I sailed past the rest stops. I've made some good progress, but I'm not out of the woods yet. We Type A people struggle with slowing down. "faster" and "more" always seems superior.

Dr. Richard Swenson hit the nail on the head when he said in his book, *Overload Syndrome*, "We live in a nanosecond culture wheezing and worn-out. Is there a speed limit to life? When we exceed it, does God give us a ticket? I have come to believe that speed is as much responsible for the problem of personal and societal dysfunction as any other single factor. Our sense of the presence of God is in inverse proportion to the pace of our lives." It's getting so bad that someone noted we're now paying others to stop and smell the roses for us!

So, are you **pacing your race**? Ask those whom you love and who love you. Are your kids asking their mother, "When is daddy going to visit us again?" Or vice versa for working moms. I like the encouragement of Psalm 139:3 in the New Living Translation. "You chart the path ahead of me and tell me where to stop and rest. Every moment you know where I am." God will tell me when and how often to stop and rest; but am I parking my body long enough to listen and hear what He has to say to me?

How about taking a "pacing audit" to see how you are **really** doing. Make sure you ask those close to you what they think about your pace.