

Before and After 1

February 17, 2013 | mediaatvictory.com

Love is blind, but marriage is an eye opener.

For the single people:

- Relationships can be difficult.
- Most single people have either:
 - Been married
 - Lived with someone
 - Will get married
 - Sworn off marriage – FEAR IS A LOUSY LEADER!

Many marriages would be better if they understood they are on the same side, running the same race.

In marriage everyone is running the race, but few rarely win.

Marriage is a race you run together that requires that you carry your partner.

I Corinthians 9:24-27 – ²⁴ In a race everyone runs, but only one person gets first prize. So **run your race to win.** ²⁵ To **win the contest you must deny yourselves** many things that would keep you from **doing your best.** An athlete goes to all **this trouble in training** just to **win** a blue ribbon or a silver cup that will **not last**, but we do it for a heavenly reward that never disappears and **last forever.** ²⁶ So I run **straight to the goal** with **purpose** in every step. **I fight to win.** I'm not just shadow-boxing or playing around. ²⁷ Like an athlete I **punish my body**, treating it roughly, training it to do what it should, not what it wants to. **I bring it into subjection.** Otherwise I fear that after enlisting others for the race, I myself might be declared unfit and ordered to stand aside.

To Win the Marriage Race, You Must:

1. Understand you are in a marathon, not a sprint.
 - Most people enter marriage as a sprint and when they weary they **give up** or **look for another race.**

2. Punish, treat roughly, and train your body to do what it should, not what it wants.
 - It is human nature to be selfish and insensitive.
 - Your body will take the line of least resistance.
 - Selfishness and insensitivity will rot a marriage.
 - “I,” the inward man, bring “it,” my body, into subjection.

3. Fight to win – no shadow boxing
 - “I fight to win” must be the mantra of every married couple. Often we stop at, “I Fight.”

4. Run with purpose toward the finish line.
 - Stay on course or be consistent and you will position yourself to win.

5. Don’t be declared unfit or be disqualified and ordered to stand aside.
 - Don’t cut corners—you’ll be ordered to stand aside.
 - Divorce occurs when we are “ordered to stand aside.”
 - Don’t get driven off course by problems.

6. Deny yourself many things.

Luke 9:23-24 – ²³ He said to all of them, “Those who want to come with me must say no to the things they want and lose sight of themselves, pick up their crosses every day, and follow me. ²⁴ Those who want to save their lives will lose them. But those who lose their lives for me will save them.”

Whoever loses their lives for their spouse will save and preserve their marriage, and whoever saves their own lives will destroy and lose their marriage.

7. Do your best to give your spouse what they have denied for themselves.
 - When our partner **chooses** to meet our needs and we aren’t demanding from them or trying to meet them ourselves, an endurance or strength is developed.
 - Until you experience the feeling that comes from having your needs met by trusting your spouse, you haven’t yet experienced the greatest joy of marriage.

Homework – What is the one thing I can do this week for my spouse, that will be meaningful? DO IT EVERY DAY UNTIL NEXT WEEK.