

Thanksgiving 2: (Inter)Personal Best

For the last 30 years, I've pounded the pavement as a long-distance runner. I ran the LA Marathon in 1989, beat my training partner, and never looked back.

Since then I ran alone. Hard. Desert Stream began to flow to nations; I ran through Perth and Paris, Johannesburg and Jakarta, Auckland and Amsterdam, Medellin and Milan, Hong Kong and Helsinki, Caracas and Copenhagen, Bangkok and Bahrain, Davao City and Dublin. Though I served with teammates, I ran alone, typically in the wee hours. I've breathtaking encounters with cathedrals and shrines lit by the sun's first rays. And more than a few bouts with losing my way in a maze of ancient paths (pre-GPS). Sprinting wildly from one blind alley to another, I've come close to missing conferences. Jesus, lead on...

He helped me in the race. My impetus was worship—I ran to the songs that brought Jesus' presence near. But I ran alone. Charged with Spirit, but alone. I ran through eviscerating conflicts. During one tough bout with international leaders my legs nearly gave way. Emotional wounds physicalized. I asked Him to help me to endure. He did; I was and am thankful for this refuge of the roads.

Back home, I trained and ran about 4-5 races a year. Alone. Post the weather-monotone of So. Cal., Midwest training invited me to enjoy the change of seasons—racing through 15-105 degrees. My mantra was personal best. I surprised myself. Just when I thought my legs had run their last, I beat my time. When I didn't beat it, I pledged to train harder. I never suffered injury. Thankful.

Early this last year, I prayed for partnership. Our new intern Marco liked to run, had a base of 5 miles 2-3X a week. I asked if he'd train with me for a half-marathon. He committed and didn't look back. We ran through hurting legs and humidity: in darkness and withering sun. We prayed before and did not talk much during. We needed all the breath we could get.

I loved partnership. I needed it. I faced two big challenges at the onset of our training. A dog roared out of the dark one early morn and took a chunk out of my arm. I nearly snapped my hamstrings (don't laugh) sprinting for home in a goofy kickball game. My first injury. I couldn't run anymore.

I wanted Marco to race and I wanted to keep my end of the training bargain. I knew it was unwise to push my recovery but I asked God for it anyway. He heard me. I restarted slowly and trained a little longer, painfully. Marco and I ran the race side-by-side in pouring rain—eyes fixed on Jesus and the best parts of Kansas City. Marco excelled—personal best. I scored too, interpersonal best. Thankful.

Please take time to watch our new video and become '[Chaste Together](#).'