



## THE BATTLE IN YOUR MIND

If you are an “average” runner, a marathon (26.2 miles!) would probably take you around 4 hours. **Running without stopping for 4 hours is, well, A LONG TIME!**

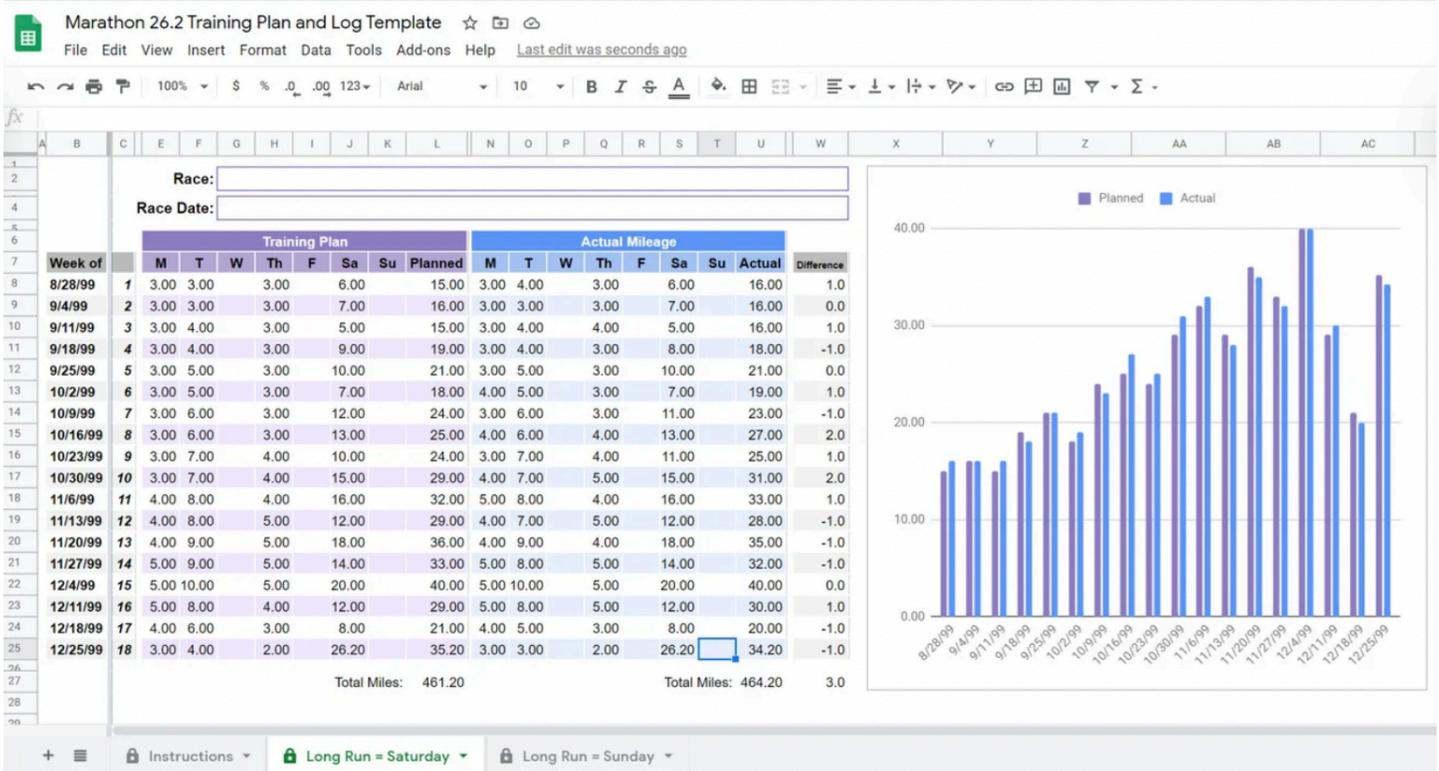
If you go for a run around Lake Sacajawea (4.2 miles) at that same pace, it would take about 35 minutes. As you’re moving around each section, enjoying the trees, fountains and people, time passes pretty quickly and the next thing you know, you’re finished. A marathon is much different. During that 4 hours on the road, **you have a lot of time to think.** A lot of time to enjoy the scenery, analyze your physical condition, regret your lack of preparation and maybe even considering whether or not you will be able to finish this race!

**The Race:** This “race” reference the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth is our jumping off point today. What do you think might have been on Paul’s mind here?

- <sup>25</sup> **All athletes are disciplined in their training.** They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. <sup>26</sup> **So I run with purpose in every step.** I am not just **shadowboxing.** <sup>27</sup> **I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.** (1 Cor. 9:25–27 NLT-SE)
  - **All athletes are disciplined...** How do we go about disciplining our body? Have you ever had to “tell your body to do something?” When you are “pushing your body,” what exactly are you doing? Your mind is informing your body to do something. Not just informing, but persuading, sometimes forcefully, to go a certain direction or do a certain thing.
  - **Working your body...** Let’s say you are conditioning your body to become stronger. You would start by introducing your body to something called “work.” Work is defined as, “activity involving mental or physical effort done in order to achieve a purpose or result.” So, you work your body with the hope that it will get stronger.
  - **Work resistance...** If your increase the workload, it won’t be long until your body pushes back. “I’m tired. I don’t like the feeling of being tired, so I’m going to slow down a bit until I get comfortable again. Unfortunately, your body won’t get stronger if, every time you work hard enough to get uncomfortable, you slow down or stop. So, your mind begins to talk your body into doing something uncomfortable in order to achieve your goal...to get stronger. If you quit, you loose. If you continue, you win!
  - **Wisdom at work...** If your mind can consistently convince your body to increase the workload when you start getting tired, you will get stronger. Of course, your mind will also tell your body that you need to have periods of rest and recovery as well, or you will injure yourself. Everyone has limits and wisdom keeps your mind from

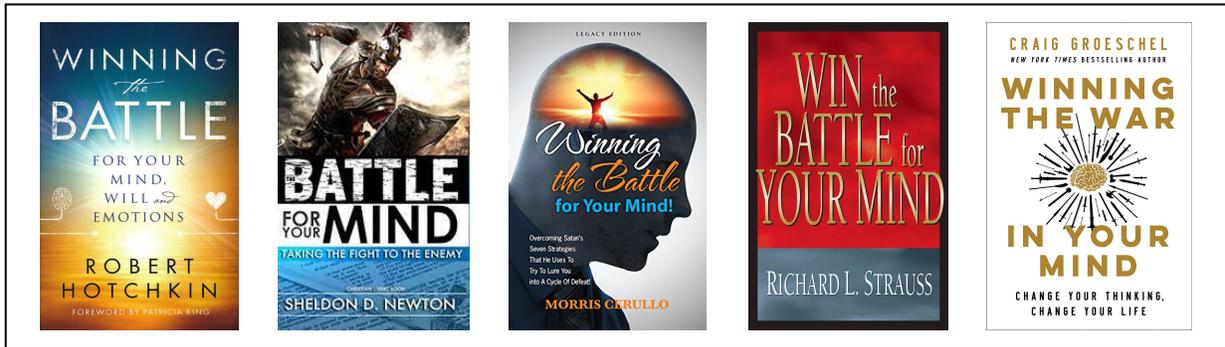
pushing your body too hard, too fast, causing injury. In the verse above, running “with purpose in every step,” is running with wisdom. It is “**working smarter, not harder**” (coined by Industrial engineer, Allen F. Morgenstern).

- **What type of mental battle do you fight when you run?** Some of the thoughts you might experience: (From *Solutions For the Mental Battle of Running* in *Healthy Balance Fitness*.)
  - **The Complainer:** In your own head, or out loud to anyone who will listen, you repeat a constant stream of “This feels awful, I’m not enjoying this, My legs are tired, I’m out of breath, I hate hills...”
  - **The Doubter:** You find yourself questioning your ability, despite the fact that you’re following a program or doing a run that is well within your capabilities. “I won’t make another 2km, I’m no good at this, I’ll never get any better, I’ll never be ready for my fun run, I’m just not a runner...”
  - **The Comparer:** You diminish your achievements and abilities by constantly comparing yourself to others running around you, or people you know. “She’s running so much faster than me, I’m the slowest person here, Sarah can do 5 minute kilometres, Emma can run 10km easily, I’ll always be the slowest in class/amongst my friends...”
  - **The Quitter:** You sneakily try to convince yourself to stop before you’re anywhere near finished. You spend most of the run wishing you could stop, bargaining with yourself and dreaming of the end. “You’ve done enough for today, Just stop here and turn back, Take the short cut home, Quit now and do more next time...” Keep in mind it’s perfectly sensible to stop if you’re in pain, feeling like you’re working too hard or struggling too much! However the Quitter looks to stop as the default mode – even if you’re not even working that hard you’re looking for a way out every time.
  - **So...** “Your mind can affect your performance much more than even your fitness, your experience and your talent. If left unchecked it can be your own worst enemy and can make running unenjoyable, uncomfortable and hold you back from your goals.”



## - The Battle In Your Mind

- **Whatever is greatly valued by God is going to be greatly contested by Satan.** We can go so far as to say that the human mind is the ultimate battlefield for spiritual warfare. Satan is more concerned about what we think and believe than about anything else. Christian leader and pastor **Craig Groeschel** says, “The mind is a battlefield. Most battles are won or lost in your mind.”
  - <sup>3</sup> *For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.* <sup>4</sup> *The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to **demolish** strongholds.* (2 Cor. 10:3–4 NIV)



- **The Devil tries to shape your thinking**, one lie at a time, until you are a **prisoner of deception**. So, how do we do battle in our mind?
  - We **demolish** arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we **take captive** every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Cor. 10:5 NIV)
- Again, **Craig Groeschel**, in his new book, **Winning the War In Your Mind: Change Your Thinking, Change Your Life** says, “Our lives are always moving in the direction of our strongest thoughts. The life we have is often a reflection of the thoughts we think.”
- **Jesus** said we must love God with all our **heart, soul, and MIND** (Matthew 22:37). How do we love him with all our mind?
  - <sup>21</sup> *Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him,* <sup>22</sup> *throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception.* <sup>23</sup> *Instead, let the Spirit **renew your thoughts and attitudes.*** <sup>24</sup> *Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.* (Eph. 4:21–24 NLT-SE)
  - *In the same way that gold and silver are refined by fire, **The Lord purifies your heart By the tests and trials of life.*** (Pr 17:3 TPT)



Craig Groeschel

## - Let LOVE rule and reign in your mind

- This quote came from **Debbie Millman** in a commencement speech on “courage vs. confidence” delivered to the graduating class at San Jose State University...
  - “Do what you love, and don’t stop until you get what you love. Work as hard as you can, imagine immensities, don’t compromise, and don’t waste time. Start now. Not 20 years from now, not two weeks from now. Now.”
- The great teacher and theologian **Oswald Chambers** wrote...
  - “Your mind is the greatest gift God has given you and it ought to be devoted entirely to Him. You should seek to be ‘bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ’ (2 Corinthians 10:5). This will be one of the

greatest assets of your faith when a time of trial comes, because then your faith and the Spirit of God will work together.”

- God loves you. He is for you and He is committed to **transform** and renew **you!**
  - *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person **by changing the way you think**. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (Rom. 12:2 NLT-SE)*
  - *Those who wait for the LORD Will **gain new strength**; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary. (Is. 40:31 NAS95)*
  - *<sup>16</sup> That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, **our spirits are being renewed every day**. <sup>17</sup> For our present troubles are small and **won't last very long**. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! <sup>18</sup> So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we **fix our gaze** on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever. (2 Cor. 4:16–18 NLT-SE)*