

## Sheer Determination

By: Amanda Winder

Have you ever watched a race before and wondered what goes through the mind of a runner before he takes off down the track? Is he focused on the finish line, or is he simply taking one step at a time? What happens when he gets tired and feels like giving up? How does he push on to the end? These questions and many more, have been on my mind lately because I am trying to learn how to progress past things that have become *horrible habits* in my life.

I have a friend who runs long distance marathons, and I decided to ask her what she does to keep herself in a positive mindset so she can press on and reach the finish line. She explained to me that it all comes down to “believing in yourself,” and “When the crowds and other runners fade away during a race, it is *sheer determination* that gets you through and across the line.” After hearing her explanation of a runner’s mindset, I began to understand how I would go about progressing past my *horrible habits*.

One of my *horrible habits* is eating too many sweets. I have an addiction to sugar. The sweeter the better is the way I see it. Eating sugar helps me cope with the rest of my problems when I get worried, stressed, or anxious. I basically medicate myself because, in that moment, sweets help me “feel better.” Yes, sugar is a real addiction, and after reading about it, I learned that sugar is as addictive as heroine. When I’m eating sweets, it relieves my mind like pain pills relieve a drug addict. The horrible part is eating sweets doesn’t do me any good because I feel terrible the next day. I have a headache and I beat myself up over what I’ve done.

Now, I didn’t get this way over night. I didn’t start eating a lot of sweets at once. It took time. I slowly progressed towards it. I told myself, “Amanda, you like sweets way too much to find the balance in the way you eat them now. You can practice progression in this area when you *choose* to. When you want to stop, you can stop.” I basically compromised with myself time and time again, and now I have an addiction.

At first, I was scared to death. I began to fear my addiction to sugar because I didn’t know how I was going to stop it. I feared I would gain all my weight, which I worked so hard to lose, back. I became a slave to my own thought process and began to obsess over it. I made a calendar and told myself for 30 days I won’t eat any sweets. I talked to my sister and hoped she would help hold me accountable. I even tried to fast for three days in hopes that I could get the sugar out of my body and start fresh. Unfortunately, none of these things worked, but then I remembered what my friend told me about running a race. I must have *sheer determination* to finish the race, even when I feel as though I can’t; I must keep running because I can.

To me, *sheer determination* means I must decide in my mind that I am going to accomplish what I've started and overcome my *horrible habits*, and then I must remain focused on maintaining my pace. I believe *sheer determination* is a choice because no one can stop my sugar addiction. I am in control of what I put in my mouth. Sometimes this can be difficult because my body is craving sugar, but I believe *sheer determination* is what will push me to race past my addiction and help me find a healthy balance. I also know I can *listen* to the Spirit. He is willing to instruct me on how to race past my addiction, just like He is willing to help you.

I believe many Christians I know are struggling with *horrible habits* too. Little parts of their life they would like to omit. I believe too many Christians have trouble admitting these *horrible habits* because then someone will *know* they have a weakness. Who cares? We all have weaknesses. Thank God we have strengths to overcome our weaknesses. We have the Spirit, our greatest strength, pushing us to finish if we will simply *listen* to Him.

As Christians, we must be transparent and real with one another. We must realize we all have *horrible habits* in our life that need to be broken, and until we can *be real* and admit we have a problem, chances are, we will not progress past our *horrible habits*. We will simply stay in the same cycle we are in because we love what medicates us too much. It's sad we, as Christians, have trouble relying on the Spirit. Someone we should communicate with on a moment-by-moment basis gets ignored because we would rather cope than have the *sheer determination* to progress towards the finish line.

Today, I hope you can target the *horrible habits* you might have in your life. You could be irresponsible, have trouble managing your time, or have a sugar addiction like me. Whatever your *horrible habit* is decide today that you are going to have *sheer determination* to finish the race, and remember, if you *listen* the Spirit He is always willing to help you.