

# Running in the Rain

By Dr. Gregory Wiens

This morning, when I went out to run, it was dark, overcast and cold (it was at least for Orlando...the temperature was about 50°). About four miles into my six-mile run it began to pour down rain. Most people would think running in the cold rain would not be too exciting. However, the opposite is actually true. I was dressed appropriately: I wore a skin-tight (Under Armor) shirt to reduce chafing and retain heat and a big brimmed baseball hat that kept the rain out of my eyes...it was great! As I ran, I thought; if you are prepared, the weather won't determine the quality of the run. Sure, I had to back off of the pace and my time wasn't as fast as it would have otherwise been; but I so enjoyed the moment.

This past year has been a challenge on several fronts for me. The economic realities have challenged us to reduce our staff and increase our workload; my grandson was born with Spinal Bifida; my own prostate cancer and a significant staff challenge have made this year much more intense than others. As I reflected on this, I found a number of similarities on the way I have faced these to my run in the rain today.

To the unprepared, these events could have been more challenging. However, as we walk with Christ we are never promised to have days without rain; to the contrary, Jesus tells us in *Matthew 5.45* that you will experience rainy days regardless of whether you are living a righteous life or not. In other words, the amount of rain you experience on your parade is no indication of God's blessing. God's blessing is manifested in each and every situation you go through.

One reason I overcame these difficulties is that I was prepared. As with my run, I had taken certain precautions for rain. My walk with Christ is consistent and solid so, these events didn't shake my relationship with Him. I don't expect God to make my life easy, I expect him to make it effective, and these are two entirely different outlooks. In fact, often effectiveness comes through difficult times. I anticipate rain on some of my runs and so when it comes, I reduce my expectations of the results and enjoy the trip.

I would suggest as you face difficult times, relax on the results you previously may have had. God may have other plans. For example, as a leader, there are times when you might experience significant push back to your leadership. At those times it is possible that God may want you to learn to deal to manage transition better and not anticipate the church to grow or change as quickly as you once thought it would. This is definitely not the time to give in or give up, but rather a time to learn in the midst of difficult times so that once the obstacles are out of the way; you are better prepared to move forward.

So whether you have had a phenomenally effective year or a year of many obstacles and challenges, take heart. God is with you for the long term. He is as interested in working in you as He is in working through you. As you hunker down in the rainy-day

runs you learn to run much faster on sunny-day runs. I know people thought I was crazy this morning as I smiled while running through the pouring rain; but it comes from years of running through all kinds of weather: the good, the bad and the ugly.

Let me encourage you to do the same in ministry and life.