

SECOND WIND

You promised, Lord, that you wouldn't test us beyond what we can endure. You must think I'm a lot stronger than I feel. I tremble to cope with obstacles: help me remember they are a measure of the strength you see untapped in me, not something to be ashamed of or to avoid. Your confidence in me gives me that "second wind"...I feel stronger, fleeter.

The bible sometimes speaks of "strength". Maybe the process I'm going through to become physically strong and endure can give me clues to your kind of strength. As I think of it, my body's strength enlarges only when it's pushed to the very limit...then just beyond. When my muscles are quivering, and pain shoots hot jabs into my lungs...but I keep running, then I grow stronger.

The running course I charted out last month...through the golf course, along the beach, up the canyon hills...it seemed impossible at first. I finished it breathless, ready to collapse...yet now I run it with ease, without panting. It's too easy to become complacent and satisfied, not extending the limits until my lungs gasp and straining muscles cry out in protest.

You are a wise coach, Lord. Remind me of your purpose when I cry out in distress. Remind me that you know me, my limits, my abilities, and even how much faith I have, infinitely better than I know myself. Help me relax in that thought and trust in your training program.

Help me to sprint when I most feel like giving up. Remind me of my hilltop decision not to break stride or stop, even if I leave behind my friends who have chosen a slower pace (no matter how secure it feels to run in step, more slowly, with them).

Sometimes, Lord, you call us to be true to you by being first of all true to ourselves. Comfort me with that thought when my race gets lonely and I frantically look about for a partner who may draw me off course.

Perhaps someday I will discover there are indeed footsteps pounding alongside mine, with the same rhythm and stride. But even that is up to you...ease panic from my mind, let the love of the race, the love of running, the love of you suffice.

By L. Northrup