

My Sister the Iron Man

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By Joseph F. Dumond

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Lake Placid IRONMAN 2007

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Since starting this web site I have received and talked to, and met with many people who are struggling in their walk with Yahweh. Some are caught up in pornography, some steal an extra half hour at work here and there or take other things, others have continued or returned to work on the Sabbath.

There are brethren who are gossiping and pointing fingers at brethren and some whose self-righteousness has caused them to hate those who are having troubles or those who have fallen out of grace for a time.

Those who know they are not doing what is right, are struggling with their conscience, in a constant tugging back and forth. But they seem to think they are always slipping up and then they give up because they know or think they know they are not good enough.

This self-doubt leads them to drink and to give up and curse and become upset at all things around them. They do not know why they are mad, but they have no reason to restrain their anger or their degrading passions.

There are others who are dealing with a whole host of abuses, from the past which seem to hang over them and affect everything they do in life.

It is these people whom the churches of this world are quick to purge out of their mist, as not being worthy of their supreme righteousness. Yet it is these very people that the Messiah Yehshua went to.

It was He who said the healthy do not need a doctor.

Not one of us, who is truly honest, can say we do not struggle with our sins and our past. It is only those who are brave enough and willing enough to confess their weaknesses to a trusted friend that they are able to break free of that sin which holds them. It is by keeping it a secret that Satan is able to hold them in his grip of darkness.

It was while I was considering how to deal with the many concerns of those who call and write that Yahweh provided the answer. It was while I was in Lake Placid July 22, 2007, watching my sister compete in an Iron Man competition. I was struck at how this awesome competition is a metaphor for the struggle, we all endure on our journey in this way of life.

Allow me to explain.

First of all let me say up front, I Love my Sister. She has been training for this for over a year now and dedicated to this one event for the past ten months. She has gotten up early each day and swam in chilly waters for two hours at a time for a distance of 2.4 miles, followed by a seven hour bike ride up and down the steep hills in this area for a total distance of 112 miles. On other days she rises early to go for 5, 10, and 15 KLM runs building up to a 26.2 mile long, marathon run.

Although she may train for these individual events on separate days, she has to do all three on one day in the Iron Man competition.

My sister not only is doing this for her own personal desires, but she has 40 other people from this area who are also competing, and they have all raised a total of \$140,000 dollars for sick kids while training.

Along with the 40 competitors, 250 family and friends from this area also went down to give moral support as loud as possible. We all wore bright orange T-shirts so the competitors would be able to see us and be encouraged as they went by. Even the Doctors office my sister works in shut down and all the staff came down to support her and the others. I found this remarkable.

It was 5:30 AM and we are gathering at the lake where the race is to begin at 7. Excitement is in the air, adrenaline is running high. I can feel the excitement and I am not even competing.

As I watch her get ready, I see over 2200 other competitors ages 18 to 65, gathering in the cool water of Lake Placid. At the same time 20 to 30 thousand spectators are crowding in on the shore line. To see this many people awake at this hour and alert and excited and eager to get started was exciting for me to see.

My sister is about to leave so I reach over and give her a hug and tell I am proud of her and love her. The next thing I know we are both weeping and wiping tears. As she hugs her other friends and competitors wishing them a good safe race and to better their time each one also begins to tear up. No one knows why. They all know that the hard training and hard work was now all behind them. After today they could rest.

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I watched my sister walk down to the beach and slip into the water to join the other 2200 bobbing heads that were treading water awaiting the start. I began to realize the danger that was here at the beginning. She could be kicked or elbowed in the head by so many other swimmers. Some one more aggressive could climb right over her and push her under. I could see many in scuba tanks who swam below watching for such a thing. There were also a hundred on small boats to help in case someone did get hurt at the start. In all there were 3500 volunteer helpers for this event.

At 6:30 AM 24 professional Iron man [woman] were started so they could compete without the large crowd hindering their times.

At 7 AM the cannon sounded, the crowd roared and applauded and 2200 athletes began to churn the water that was up until then flat and calm. At the same time the sun came over the mountain to shine on the water as it gave off a beautiful mist in the cool air.

Somewhere in the middle of this mob was my sister. Was she all right? Which one was she? We did not know but we cheered them all any way. Yes we cheered for all the competitors.

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As each one exited the water we cheered. As they ran down the walkway toward the bikes the crowd cheered them on, as they went by, almost like a wave effect in a stadium. It was inspiring to watch and to hear.

I soon realized that we were all cheering each athlete because these people were competing in this race. Not to win although a few might be, but they were competing against themselves. To better their own time and mostly, just to finish the race. So we cheered their determination and we cheered their stamina, and we cheered them when we would see some get discouraged or others fall. We cheered them when their chains came off to let them know we were pulling for them. We did the same when they blew a tire as one man did on the very first curve.

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We cheered them all because they were doing what was going to be a very hard task.

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And at the end of the day we all cheered them as they entered the stadium and crossed the finish line. Even until the last one finished at midnight. Some finished early at around 6 PM. And as each one crossed the line they were told over the loud speaker by name that You ARE AN IRONMAN! They had finished.

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They were ragged and tired and sore and injured and jubilant and tearful and weak as many collapsed into the arms of the waiting friends and family. They were exhausted and completely spent.

My sister had started with the large crowd in the water, and had been number 1950 over all to get out of the water. She was 1908 by the time she finished the bike ride. She was 1714 overall after the run for a total time of 14 hours 51 minutes and 46 seconds. The most important point is that she finished the race. And she did it strongly moving up over 236 positions.

No I am not going to talk about being in a race and comparing it to those things Paul said. My sister competed in something that was an enduring and long competition and she much of the time felt like she was alone.

Three times she wanted to quit during the marathon. Three times as she came up against the monster hills. And each time there were a group of people there who read her name on her bib

and said come Wendy you can do it, don't slow down, go, go, go. She felt she would be letting them down so she pushed on and began to run again.

A little while later, another hill, more people on the side cheering her on calling her name, and encouraging her to keep going, she was almost done. So she kept going.

Yes brethren we are in a race, not against others, but against our own selfish desires. Our own rebellious attitude against Yahweh. We are never finished until our death or we are changed.

Those of you reading these articles and the News Letters and those of you who are excited to learn new things are the ones being called. You have been drafted into a lifelong race. No you did not volunteer, you were called. The choice to answer was yours.

Some of you who have been called have decided to turn back, you have come up to that hill that was so big, and you decided enough was enough.

Know this, you are not alone. Yahweh has set His angels over you to cheer you on. To encourage you. Many of you have encouraged me over the past couple of years. It is truly appreciated. And we all need to be encouraged.

I have been to many groups who are quick to point a finger and condemn someone to the fiery pits of hell, for not doing something that this group says is the commandments of God.

Many of these self-righteous types have never been to the bottom of the barrel where you have to face your sin alone and see it with your own eyes. To see just how despicable you are, in comparison to Yahweh. No, they tend to sit up front where they can point down on you.

These self-Righteous types have no idea how important is the parable about the man who was forgiven a great debt. That man went out and would not forgive those who owed him.

Each of us has been forgiven a huge debt. It was paid for at a huge cost. None of us should be pointing fingers and accusing anyone. Instead we all need to encourage our brethren, friend and stranger alike, cheering them on when they have problems and encouraging them when they fall down.

The apostle Peter denied he even knew the Messiah not once but three times. After a time he overcame his shame and was a powerful speaker on Yehshua's behalf. Our trials are to test and to build our character.

Encourage each other, cheer our brethren on as the angels are cheering when a sinner turns back from sin. You are in a race for your life. Encourage the others who are racing with you, help when you can, but cheer and cheer loudly and joyfully.

A friend once pointed out to me, after I had pointed that accusing finger, that I may not have had all the truth. That in fact the beam in my eye was blinding me from seeing just how far along that person had already come. Had they of heard my remarks I would have set them back.

Instead of accusing the brethren as Satan does we need to be encouraging them all, right up until the last one crosses that finish line, no matter how long it takes. Call an old friend and just say hello. Call the young family and go and visit them and help them out. Visit the elderly or the widow or widower and listen. Let them all know they are not alone or forgotten.

My Sister would not have finished the Iron man had it not been for those strangers along the way encouraging her to keep going. At one point she broke down in tears, as it was so late and had taken so long. A voice from the side line said you can do it Wendy, just get to the next water station, then from there she was told to just get to the next aid station, and then she was told the finish is around the next bend, and the crowd cheered her on up that final long huge hill. She was so happy to have finished. Yet she wanted to quit. She needed that encouragement from strangers.

Will you be so kind as to offer that same kind of encouragement to a brother or sister who needs some kind words? Can you do that without condemning them? Will you do this, this Shabbat? Will you show them your love?

Will You encourage them so Yahweh can say will done good and faithful servant, you are a son of Yahweh, when they have finished the race.

Shalom

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