

YOUNG ADULTS

Staying on  
Course  
to the

# TEMPLE



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Church Magazines

It was a sunny Saturday morning in June. I was running a half marathon in Provo, Utah, USA. After getting separated from my running buddy, who'd been keeping our pace for the first nine miles or so, I could tell I was slowing down. I was on the home stretch but still had about four miles to go, and I didn't really know if I could make it the rest of the way. I was quickly losing steam around mile 10 after what I hoped would be the last hill of the course.

I grabbed my phone to stop the music streaming through my headphones and call my moral support—my then-boyfriend, Ben—for a pep talk. “Just focus on your breathing,” he said. “Lean forward, chest up.” I did as he said, feeling some momentum as I leaned into my run. “And keep your eyes straight ahead.” I looked up. Straight ahead of me—just about three miles away—was the new Provo City Center Temple. I could see its spire and the angel Moroni perched atop.

“I can see the temple!” I exclaimed. “Okay, keep going, then,” Ben

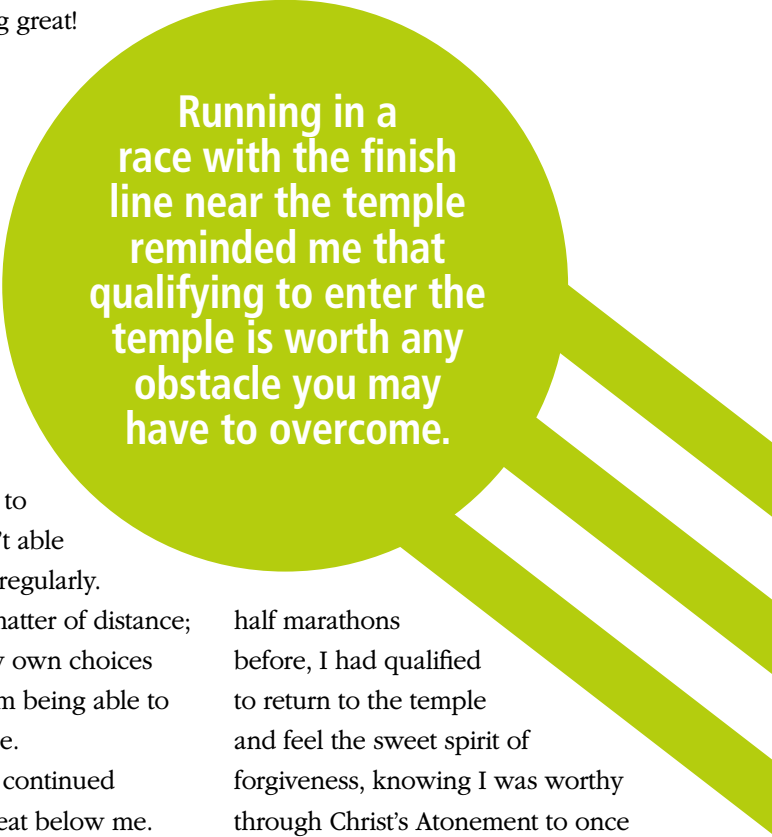
replied. “You’re doing great! Finish strong!”

### The Seemingly Insurmountable

We hung up and I continued running. I looked again at the temple ahead of me, thoughts rolling around in my head. I thought back to the times that I wasn't able to attend the temple regularly. Sometimes it was a matter of distance; other times it was my own choices that had kept me from being able to enter the Lord's house.

My feet somehow continued pounding a steady beat below me.

I remembered how difficult it had seemed to me to be worthy to return to the temple. The changes I'd needed to make in my life had seemed insurmountable, just like finishing the race seemed to me right then. But I had been successful. Just as I'd finished



Running in a race with the finish line near the temple reminded me that qualifying to enter the temple is worth any obstacle you may have to overcome.

half marathons before, I had qualified to return to the temple and feel the sweet spirit of forgiveness, knowing I was worthy through Christ's Atonement to once more partake of temple blessings.

I thought about being in the temple, where we learn about the Father's plan for us and are symbolically led into His presence. It's the closest place to heaven on earth. Being qualified to enter there is

the best way to know that we are “prepare[d] to meet God” (Alma 34:32).

And yet, for some who are not currently living up to temple standards, it can seem like an uphill battle to qualify or even desire to enter the temple—a feat of marathon-size proportions. The adversary doesn’t want us to make the changes necessary in order to be worthy to attend the temple. He doesn’t want us to even *want* to attend.

### Closer Than It Seems

A fellow runner lagged beside me, slowing to a walk. “We’re almost there!” I called out. She smiled painfully back, perhaps not appreciating my attempt to be encouraging.

I thought of those who had encouraged me in returning to the temple. The support of priesthood leaders had been

vital to my progression and reaching my goals. Through their eyes I had been able to see myself as a daughter of a very loving Heavenly Father who believed in me and wanted to bless me.

The running app on my phone told me I had passed mile 12. Only a little over a mile left to go! But the mile marker on the course was nowhere to be seen. My legs were exhausted, my feet were hurting, and my body just felt weak. Again I looked ahead to the temple and kept moving forward.

Finally, several blocks later, mile marker 12 appeared on the side of the road. Why had it been placed in the wrong spot? I wondered. I felt sorry for those runners who might have been wondering why mile 11 seemed so long. And then I thought of how the closer we come to achieving our goal of being worthy to attend the temple, the farther away Satan can make that goal seem. He wants us to feel that we are farther away than we are, that we’re not making as much progress as we really are.

### There Is Rest

The finish line was so close. Just beyond it, the temple. I kicked

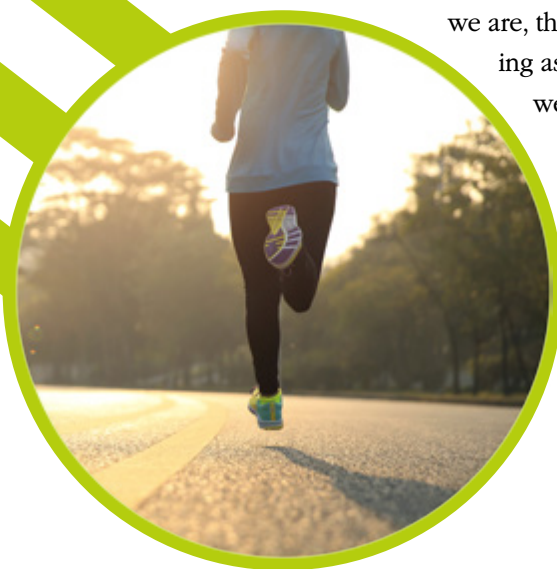
it up a notch, sprinting to the finish line, wanting only to finish and be able to rest. Tears came to my eyes as I thought about my regular temple attendance and the opportunity I would have the following week to attend the temple. As I thought about the knowledge and blessings and rest that awaited me there, the words of President Thomas S. Monson came to my mind: “There is rest for our souls and a respite from the cares of our lives [inside the temple].”<sup>1</sup>

Satan, the enemy of our souls and of our happiness, wants us to believe that if we have sinned, the path to the temple is difficult. He wants us to believe that we can’t change, can’t repent, can’t qualify to enter the house of the Lord. He will do anything to make us believe that it is impossible. But it’s not.

As I crossed the finish line and looked up at the temple, I thought back on my path to the temple—the literal one that I struggled with that morning, as well as the spiritual one I’d taken in the past—and realized that qualifying to enter the temple was and is worth every obstacle I had to overcome. And despite what the adversary would have us think, it’s always possible, as long as we keep our eyes on the temple. ■

#### NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Blessings of the Temple,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 91.







## **MAKE CHANGES TO SEE YOURSELF IN THE TEMPLE**

“It is our great desire that members of the Church will live to be worthy of a temple recommend. Please don’t see the temple as some distant and perhaps unachievable goal. Working with their bishop, most members can achieve all righteous requirements in a relatively short period of time if they have a determination to qualify and fully repent of transgressions. This includes being willing to forgive ourselves and not focus on our imperfections or sins as disqualifying us from ever entering a sacred temple.

“The Savior’s Atonement was accomplished for all of God’s children. His redeeming sacrifice satisfies the demands of justice for all those who truly repent. . . .

“Brothers and sisters, I pray that each of us will honor the Savior and make any necessary changes to see ourselves in His sacred temples. In doing so, we can accomplish His holy purposes and prepare ourselves and our families for all the blessings the Lord and His Church can bestow in this life and eternity.”

**Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “See Yourself in the Temple,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 98–99.**