



Personal
BEST

I WAS NEVER GOING TO WIN;
I just didn't want to come in last again.

By DeeAnn B. Haroldsen

After taking last place in the 880-yard race for the fourth meet in a row, the enthusiasm I once felt for track was beginning to fade. It wasn't just losing; it was the fact that I could barely finish my races.

One night while reading the Doctrine and Covenants, I read section 89, the Word of Wisdom. Verse 20 says, "And [ye] shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint." That was a promise I wanted. I didn't smoke or drink, but I remembered the coach saying that consuming soda pop and sugary foods could make breathing difficult in longer races. I decided to cut back on them and also thought I'd try eating something besides hamburgers every day for lunch.

With those thoughts in mind, I knelt by my bed in prayer. I remember promising the Lord I would keep the Word of Wisdom and stick to my diet so that He could bless me to do my best.

I had my temptations. My friends were doing fun activities after school while I ran the bleachers around the football field. My brother and sister slept in while I woke up early to jog. A cute guy offered to buy me a soda at lunch, and I had to tell him I preferred milk. And some friends decided to sit and talk rather than do our exercises and weightlifting in gym, forcing me to do my workouts alone. I found inner strength from keeping the commitment I had made to myself and to the Lord.

The day of regionals was a warm day. We were divided into two heats according to our previous times, so I was in the slow heat. This was the first race I had felt good about, win or lose, since I started track this year.

"Runners, take your mark!"

"Get set."

The starter's pistol went off. I sprang forward, each step in unison with the rest of the pack. I was holding fourth place, but the rest of the runners were gaining on me. A thought came to mind: "I have kept the Word of Wisdom; I CAN DO THIS!"

Explaining the WORD OF WISDOM

To those who aren't members of the Church it may be unclear what the Word of Wisdom is and why we have it. Here are some ways you can explain why you obey this commandment.



- It teaches you to keep your body in the best condition by abstaining from tobacco, alcohol, tea, and coffee and by following other principles designed to maintain health.



- It allows your mind to be alert so you can receive spiritual promptings that can guide and bless you.



- It promises you protection, knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual blessings.

To learn more, turn to page 48.

I focused on third place and pushed myself harder. New energy exploded in me, and I was gaining on them. The runner in second place was only a few feet ahead, so I reached out with all my mind and body.

The girl in first place was starting down the straightway just as I was turning the last bend. She was 5 feet ahead of me with 20 feet to go. With all the energy I could muster, I reached and stepped—go, go, GO!

I raised my arms and crossed the finish line first. A natural high glowed within me. My time was slower than all the runners in the fast heat, so I didn't get to participate in the state track meet, but I knew the feeling of running and not being weary and of finishing a race and not feeling faint. I understood then what was meant by "a principle with promise" (D&C 89:3). I knew it was true when the Lord said, "I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say" (D&C 82:10). **NE**

DeeAnn B. Haroldsen lives in Utah, USA.