

VINCE PARKER

Sr Central Ministry Leader for Life.Church.

Vince Parker serves as the Central Ministry Leader for Switch, the youth ministry at Life.Church. With more than 12 years on the Life.Church team, he uses his pastoral experience and eye for excellence to lead a team of more than 50 youth pastors across 11 states. He is passionate about seeing students and leaders live out the calling that God has placed on their lives.

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“God’s primary plan for your life is spiritual maturity, but most of the time we are more focused on our own race than the race that God wants us to run.”

REACT

The life of a follower of Jesus in this world is a marathon, not a sprint.

Your current season can seem all important, but your race of faith is ultimately composed of thousands if not tens of thousands of decisions over the span of decades.

Each step either keeps you on the path of obedience or takes you off of it.

REFLECT

“You were running the race so well. Who has held you back from following the truth?” —Galatians 5:7

When you consider your race of faith, what has caused you to stumble? Are there times you have gotten completely off-course? Recognizing your stumbling blocks will help you to avoid them in the future.

Further along in Galatians, Paul clearly lays out the paths of the flesh and of the Spirit— *“When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality. . .quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition. . .But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”* —Galatians 5:19-20, 22-23





THINK ABOUT HOW YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE. DO YOUR WORDS AND ACTIONS CAUSE PEOPLE TO WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT GOD?

You look at the other runners and see that their stride, pace, and plan is different from yours. You watch as some take advantage of shortcuts and others even trip other runners to get to the finish line first.

But does thinking only of yourself really lead to success?

RESPOND

Your life of faith requires strength of spirit, clarity of purpose, and a daily acknowledgement of your reliance on God's wisdom.

But, don't be misled into thinking that constant activity is the key. God gave us the gift of the Sabbath to remind us of the importance of simply resting and being in his presence.

"On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work."
—Genesis 2:2

Jesus also modeled this cycle of Sabbath as he worked hard, prayed hard, and then rested hard. "Hard" designates a complete and total immersion of heart, mind, and spirit into each activity.

REVIEW

- God has laid out a race of faith for your life.
- There are many stumbling blocks that can disrupt your progress.
- Prayer, Bible reading, community with other believers, and setting aside the Sabbath all strengthen your faith journey.



MEMORIZE

"FOR ALL WHO HAVE ENTERED INTO GOD'S REST HAVE RESTED FROM THEIR LABORS, JUST AS GOD DID AFTER CREATING THE WORLD." —HEBREWS 4:10

ACTION STEPS

- List three circumstances that have disrupted your faith journey.
- Pray and ask God for wisdom and strength to overcome each of them.
- Set aside a day of Sabbath for four consecutive weeks.