

## The Amazing Race, Running the Race as One

Why are we doing this *Doing Church As a Team* (DCAT) series? Why get you excited to know that you are —**uniquely, intentionally, and wonderful made for God’s purposes, his masterpiece in the making?** And to know that you’re not here by accident? And why is it important for you to know that you and I were shaped for something **bigger than ourselves**—to live for a **grander vision**?

Last week, Plori talked about how true success isn’t about sports achievements, money, or status. It’s about becoming like Jesus—a *humble servant*. So what’s the end goal of all this? What’s the **finish line** we’re running toward, that we should remember to focus and give our best efforts to doing this side of heaven? That’s what I want to talk about today. You ready?

### 1. The Real Finish Line

Ever watch *The Amazing Race* on CBS? Been running since 2001—38 seasons deep with Teams race across the globe, facing crazy challenges, pushing through obstacles, dealing with conflict, all for a \$1 million prize?

#### Let’s Watch Season 38’s trailer with me now (37 secs)

As amazing as that race is, we’re all in an **amazing race**, too. But it’s not to win a million dollars—it’s for something more valuable, it’s an **eternal prize!**

Paul tells the church friends in Corinth this: (Keynote)

Don’t you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! <sup>25</sup>All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that

will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. <sup>26</sup>So I run with purpose in every step. . . (1 Corinthians 9:24 - 26a NLT).

Paul urges us to run this race of faith to WIN. Not for fame, or fortune. **It's for an eternal prize. Dass right!**

And there are only two things in this life that last forever:

1. **God's Word, His truths &**
2. **People** (Everyone lives forever—either with God or apart from Him)

So if that's true, we should spend our lives focusing on **God's Word of truth** and helping **people** find Jesus and invest in making them be fruitful followers for Jesus expanding God's country where he's the king. You with me?

## **2. Jesus, Himself Gave Us the Goal, the FINISH LINE**

After Jesus rose from the dead, He gave His followers their finish line.

“Go and make disciples of all nations... and I'll be with you always.”

(Matt. 28:18–20) **(KEYNOTE)**

That's our mission. That's the goal. That's the **WHY** behind DCAT.

We want to see more people come to trust in Jesus and grow into solid disciples—who then help others do the same. Hasn't your life been amazing cuz you've said yes to Jesus?

We're not just running aimlessly—we've got a purpose: **To make Jesus known.** And the race Jesus wants us to run? It's the best one ever. **Da bestess** one fo shua!

## **3. The writer of Hebrews speaks about how to Run OUR Race**

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us (Hebrews 12:1 - 2 NLT) **(KEYNOTE)**

In *The Amazing Race*, it's not how you start—it's how you finish. Same with the race of faith. This race has twists, turns, and plenty of obstacles. You might feel disqualified, behind, unworthy, or too broken. Maybe you've been watching others—how fast they run, how gifted they are—and thinking, "*I can't measure up.*"

But hear this truth: **God has a special race designed just for YOU.** So how do we run it well?

We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith (Hebrews 12:2 NLT). **(KEYNOTE)**

Don't get distracted by your neighbor's race, your past, or your limitations. When you take your eyes off Jesus, you start drifting—doubting, comparing, even stumbling. It's a sickness we all battle—I call it "Comparisonitis."

If you keep watching someone else's race, you'll lose sight of your own. And even if your race path feels harder or slower, God is building something in you through those challenges. Every obstacle is part of His training plan. Never forget—your finish line is not theirs. Stay focused on Jesus, and finish *your* race strong.

Tell the person next to you, "**Keep your eyes on Jesus.**"

Now tell the other one, "**Run your own race!**"

Neva mind da odda guy's race.

You might think, "*I'm not as gifted, smart, or qualified.*"

Maybe you even feel **disqualified** 'cause of your past.

But Jesus says, "*I can redeem that. I can use that.*"

He's not done with you yet. **So jump back in the race—your race!**

And when we run our race with endurance, like Paul, we can say what he said near the end of his life: (Keynote)

As for me, . . . I have finished the race, I have remained faithful. And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of His return. And that prize isn't just for me, but for all who eagerly look forward to His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:7–8 NLT)

Paul ran his race all the way to the finish line. He stayed faithful, kept his eyes on Jesus, (look eye) and now he gets to look forward to something *great* from the Father.

That same prize—the crown of righteousness—is waiting for *you* too... if you just stay in the race and keep your eyes on Jesus.

#### **4. My Race Almost Looked Different**

You know my story—I could've been coaching baseball or teaching English in Japan. I was great at that. Waipahu HS all star BBall. Went to school to be one English teacher. I trained for that! Lived there for three years. Got my MA in ESL.

But God had a different race set for me—one I didn't expect.

And I believe because I chose *His* race, not *mine*, I can be a pastor today and lead over the **Hawaii Pidgin Bible Ministries** where I get to lead

others to trust Jesus through not only the written word, but through da audio and video of da very words a God, in my and some of yours, people dat talk jalike me, Hawaii Pidgin.

God's race for you isn't always easy, or makes sense at the moment, but it's always worth you running it and running it to WIN.

## **5. So what's our Part of God's Master Race Plan**

Let me give you one picture. When someone accomplishes something big in Hawai'i—graduation, retirement, birthday, get one award, win one championship, what do we commonly do—we give them one what? **One lei. (KEYNOTE photos)**

My daughter's been selling **Pua Kenikeni** leis on IG from our tree in our yard. And it's so amazing that her Pua keni keni lei selling business has taken off! How many people know about this? I call her the "*Pua Ting Girl*." And she's been able to use that money to help pay for her Masters in Global Missional Leadership at Fuller Theological Seminary. **(Keynote)** I climb the ladder and pick the hard fo reach blossoms and I gotta do um gentle kine cuz easy fo damage um. Gayle helps too, she pick the low hanging ones. And then Da Pua Ting Girl, string um up. It's a team effort. Each blossom on its own is beautiful. But when you string um together by a master lei maker, **It becomes something fragrant, unforgettable and attractive. One lei onaona!** You see where I'm going with this?

**God is the master lei maker.**

He picks each of us—individual blossoms with our own unique scent, and

He strings us together into a beautiful, sweet-smelling lei for the world to see and smell, all to draw everybody to **Jesus**.

Ipo Sarpomones wen make dis shirt if you like one fo all us wear. Plenny people wear one lei kine shirt, you see um all ova. But we get fo wear one different kine shirt, one that smells so good for Jesus. And da smell come from within us. Check um out and use this QR code fo get yours.

## **6. So what's your Role in the Race**

We get to be part of God's "Winna Parade"—where we shine for Him, smell sweet for Him, and help others experience His love so that they too can choose to follow him and help others follow Jesus too, jalike you.

But thank God! He has made us his captives and continues to lead us along in Christ's triumphal procession. Now he uses us to spread the knowledge of Christ everywhere, like a sweet perfume. <sup>15</sup>Our lives are a Christ-like fragrance rising up to God.

<sup>14</sup>But no matta wea I stay, I like tell God "Mahalo plenny!" Cuz Christ, he lead us in his winna parade, cuz us guys stay tight wit him. Wen peopo see us, dat show how awesome fo erylbody know Christ. Dass jalike wen someting smell real good, an erylbody can smell um. <sup>15</sup>An us guys, we jalike one sweet smell a Christ fo God.

But here's the key:

We gotta **let Him pick us**. And let him place us and let him string us together as ONE LEI, **one body, one Church**, all on mission to help more people find Jesus. You see dat? Cuz you know we always mo' betta **togedda**. So what's your part in this lei?

### **God like tie this lei togedda already fo present it to the world**

The race God marked out for you isn't meant to be run alone. Fix your eyes on Jesus. And do your part in being a fragrant blossom in His master lei. And that's why we're doing DCAT.

I'm not sure about all of you, but I'm getting super excited for what God has in store for us as we're getting ready to extend this lei back into Mililani again—gonna need all of us. Some of you will serve here. Some will go. But either way, we're all part of the same lei, the same race, the same sweet-smelling purpose. **So this is our ACTION STEP fo today**

**(If time permits) WATCH THIS VIDEO (2:57): Picture yourself in this race (Derek Redmond)**

- Go to the Ministry Fair.
- Find your fit. Seek your S.H.A.P.E (online assessment you can do)
- Get a DCAT shirt from Ipo—scan the QR code, wear it with purpose.
- Be reminded: You're one of God's blossoms, meant to draw others to Jesus.

## **FINAL CHALLENGE**

Run your race well.

Let God string you into His beautiful, world-changing lei.

Keep your eyes on Jesus.

And never forget the finish line:

**To live a life that helps others know and follow Him.**

**You ready? Let's run fo da eternal prize fo see everybody trus Jesus an come solid in him. Dass it?**

**Benediction and release! (This is the way)**

**Ohana Group and Self Reflection Discussion Qs:**

1. What "race" has God marked out for you right now?

- Discussion: Think about where God has you in this season—at work, in your family, or at church. Are you running *your* race, or are you distracted by someone else's lane?

- Action Step: Write down one way you feel God might be calling you to step more fully into your lane (e.g., serving, leading, reconciling, starting something). Share it with the group for prayer and accountability.

## 2. What are the “weights” or sins slowing you down in this race of faith?

- Discussion: Hebrews 12:1 challenges us to throw off everything that hinders. What are some things (even good things) that might be distracting you or tripping you up?
- Action Step: Choose one weight or sin you will actively surrender this week. Pray as a group and ask God for strength to lay it down and keep your eyes on Jesus.

## 3. How do you see yourself as a blossom in God’s lei?

- Discussion: The image of the pua keni keni lei beautifully represents unity, fragrance, and purpose. What unique qualities or spiritual gifts do you think God has given you to bless the whole?
- Action Step: Take the S.H.A.P.E. assessment (if not already) and identify a next step—whether joining a ministry, talking to a leader, or praying about where to serve.

## 4. Who are you discipling—or who could you help move closer to Jesus?

- Discussion: Jesus gave the Great Commission to everyone, not just pastors. Who in your life might need encouragement, prayer, or a spiritual nudge toward Christ?
- Action Step: Ask God to identify one person to intentionally pray for and reach out to this week. It could be a friend, coworker, or family member. Be available, and let God use you.

## 5. What part of “Doing Church As a Team” excites (or challenges) you most?

- Discussion: Which aspect of this series or vision is stirring your heart—teamwork, mission, the expansion to Mililani, unity, or personal growth? What might God be saying to you through it?
- Action Step: Talk to at least one ministry leader, and ask, “Where could I help carry the mission?” Be open to where God leads.