

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.



— *Hebrews 12:11*

BEFORE THE GREEN FLAG DROPS



Before the green flag ever drops at a racetrack, engineers and mechanics pour over every inch of the racecar. They run mechanical tests. Each racecar is taken to the wind tunnel to determine the drag. A fast racecar is an aerodynamic racecar. Optimum performance goes into every car before it reaches the track. Preparation is the key to victory.

The same is true for our spiritual life. We must prepare. Spiritual discipline will help us grow our relationship with God. Each moment we spend in prayer, in solitude, in reading the Holy Scriptures, the closer we get to Christ. And if you long to be more like Christ, then learn to prepare your heart. Take a moment each day, and ask God to fill you with his presence. It's always a good way to prepare before the green flag of the day drops. Then discipline yourself to do this each day. Soul preparation is the key to having a great day no matter what the day may bring.

First you learn to drive fast. Next, you learn to drive fast in traffic. Then, you learn how to do it for 500 miles.

— *Alan Kulwicki*

One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”



— *John 5:5–6*



TWELVE
LUCKY DOG

The first car that is down a lap receives the Lucky Dog when a caution comes out. It’s his free pass. It puts him back on the lead lap. But it is never based solely on luck. This is why drivers keep digging and keep putting themselves into position to receive the Lucky Dog. A lot of hard work is involved. A driver has to position himself to receive it. He must be the first car a lap down when the caution comes out.

Take the man at the pool of Bethesda. For thirty-eight years, he put himself in position to receive a healing. For thirty-eight years, he lay beside the pool crippled because he had no one to carry him to the water when the angel stirred it. But he never gave up.

So keep doing the right thing. Keep positioning yourself for a blessing. It may take thirty-eight years, or it could happen today. Are you ready? Are you in position?

We just need some luck, however I can get that. I don’t know.

There’s not a store where you can go buy that.

— *Dale Earnhardt Jr.*

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.”



— Acts 2:14



EIGHTY
THE “PASS IN THE GRASS”

One of the greatest passes is Dale Earnhardt’s “pass in the grass.” His racecar bobbled, and he ended up in the infield grass, but he never lifted. He didn’t slow down. He gained control, came back onto the racetrack, and even advanced his position in the race, making the pass in the grass at close to 180 m.p.h. It’s one of NASCAR’s greatest clips in racing history. No one knows how he kept from wrecking.

Maybe you are at a place in your life where you will either wreck or do something miraculous. The Apostle Peter was in this place after he had denied Jesus three times. He had failed as a disciple. Then came the moment when he stood and preached his greatest sermon. But if he had been thinking about his failure, he would have told himself he wasn’t worthy to preach. But he didn’t. He stood with new power in his soul. So should we. Never let a mistake hold you down. Get straight and make the pass.

[Bill] Elliott clipped me and knocked me sideways.
I was lucky I came back on the pavement when I did.

— Dale Earnhardt