

Passing the Baton

by Robert Simms



CAST

RunnerA man about 25
Bystander 1.....A woman about 20
Bystander 2.....A woman about 20 or a teen

*A man in a running suit holding a baton stands looking around aimlessly.
Two bystanders standing nearby observe him curiously.*

Bystander 1. What are you doing?

Runner. I'm not sure.

Bystander 2. What's that in your hand?

Runner. Some man just came by and handed it to me. He ran off over there and stopped. I don't know exactly what it is.

Bystander 1. Aren't you in the race?

Runner. I guess so. I've got these clothes on (*gestures to his running outfit*).

Bystander 2. Isn't this the Olympics?

Runner. Yeah. I trained for it.

Bystander 1. Aren't you supposed to run, or something?

Runner. I guess so.

Bystander 1. Well, when do you start?

Runner. I think there's supposed to be a starter gun.

Bystander 2. I think that happened a long time ago.

Runner. Did it?

Bystander 2. I think so, yes. I'm sure I heard it.

Runner. Well, tell me—what do you think I'm supposed to do?

Bystander 1. Don't you know?

Runner. I think I'm supposed to run, at some point.

Bystander 1. Well, I don't mean to tell you your business or anything, but I think you're supposed to take that "thing" and run with it.

Runner. You do?

Bystander 1. Yeah. I think it's a baton.

Runner. What's a baton?

Bystander 2. It's just a stick. But I think you take it and run with it.

Runner. Run with it?

Bystander 2. You run and then you give it to the next person.

Runner. What next person?

Bystander 2. The next person you come to. After you run a while.

Runner. How long do I have to run?

Bystander 2. I don't know. How long did they tell you?

Runner. I don't know exactly. Do I have to run?

Bystander 1. Well if you don't, you'll never reach the next person.

Runner. Why is that important?

Bystander 1. If you don't run and then hand off the baton, I don't think you can finish the race.

Runner. Can't I just stand here and wait for someone to take it from me?

Bystander 1. I think you have to run. I don't think anyone will come along to take it from you.

Runner. Oh. I thought I could just hold it a while until somebody came to relieve me of it.

Bystander 2. I don't believe that's the way it works. You have to run some yourself. If I recall correctly, that's the way it works. You have to do your part or your partners can't complete the race.

Runner. Oh. What if somebody else ran my part?

Bystander 2. Nobody else is assigned your part. You run from here to the next place—out there somewhere—and then somebody else takes the baton and runs from there.

Runner. Maybe they'll come back here to look for me, instead of my running out there to look for them.

Bystander 1. Uh, well, again, I don't want to tell you your business, but I don't think they're going to come back here. You have to catch up to them.

Runner. Catch up?

Bystander 2. Yeah. You have to run to catch up with them, and they run to catch up with the next runner, and so on. The last person crosses the finish line, and the whole team finishes the race.

Runner. I see. So I have to catch up to them.

Bystander 2. Is there an echo out here?

Runner. What if I don't catch up?

Bystander 1. Then you lose. Your mission is to run.

Runner. I certainly don't want to lose.

Bystander 1. Then you'd better catch up.

Runner. Yeah, I guess so. Thanks. *(He runs off.)*

Bystander 1. *(to Bystander 2)* You'd think he would know what to do.

Bystander 2. Yeah, you'd think.

(Optional last line by voice:)

Voice. Missions is a race. Giving is an vital part of that race. Everyone must do his part. If we don't catch up, others can't run, and the church, as a team, can't win. Let's catch up.

END