



# Grace Snap Shot

*"Viewing life through the lens of God's grace!"*



## The Race

Written by Art Henkel

As my home city of Vancouver hosted the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, I found myself intrigued with the individual stories of athletes and their commitment to their sports. Hearing their stories reminded me of my own athletic career and one particular event that took place during my childhood.

It was 1967 and I was participating in my elementary school's annual sports day. They called it the 'non ribbon' race. This event was for any student who hadn't won a ribbon that day and I was a prime candidate. 'Bang' went the starting pistol and off went all the runners including me. This was my last chance to win a ribbon and I was determined to do so. As I crossed the finished line, I looked up to see that I had come in fourth place, one placing shy of winning a ribbon.

As sad as that may sound, what if I told you that in recent years I found I had been running a race on the wrong track? Matter of fact, it was a race that I had no business participating in. I call it the 'performance' race. It was a race that would bring me to a place of frustration and exhaustion. I'm so thankful for God's grace-filled intervention which revealed the futility of this self appointed race.

I had come to know Christ when I was just a child, I loved Jesus and by the age of eighteen. I had entered full time ministry. That's when I unknowingly started what I call my 'performance' race and I was good. It was a very sly and deceiving track I found myself running on. Convinced that it was my duty to serve God by my doings, and being cheered on by others, I gave it my all, for far too many years. You see the problem was this; I was trying to live the Christian life, when the truth is only Christ can. Even as a Christian, my well intended effort and good intentions could never manufacture what only he could.

Now don't get me wrong, during my 32 year 'performance' race, not everything was dark and glumly. There were many, many times that I experienced God's undeniable presence in my life. There were countless times when He worked through me to touch the lives of others. I shared my journey with many other fantastic people and I knew the joy of creatively serving Him, but still things were not right. The deception laid in this; I thought I had to do something before God 'would' do something. I knew I couldn't 'do' anything of lasting value in myself but I still thought I had to 'do' something to initiate things. In my mind, I thought that if I performed right for God, He would respond with favor. I was totally off track. God's favor does not depend on my **doing** but on my **being** in Christ.

It wasn't until recently that I began to comprehend God's amazing grace towards me, a grace that could never be earned through performance. Through his Word and by his Spirit, my Heavenly Father (Daddy God) began to deeply reveal Christ and his finished work in my life. It's been much more than a mental comprehension it's been a spiritual awakening. I now understand the difference between trying to live the Christian life and Christ living his life in and through me. I understand my identity in Christ. During this grace journey I've come to realize that my life is not to be based on what I do for Christ but only on what Christ has done for me! Rather than concentrating on 'doing' for Christ I am enjoying 'being' in Christ. This in no way results in inactivity but rather full out, Spirit-led, Jesus activity.

I thank God that through His grace I've been placed on the right track. I now find myself in a race that is run without any self effort. I don't need to strive for a ribbon, because the race has already been won and is run, in Christ.