

Hall passes test at Boston

Where does your strength come from?

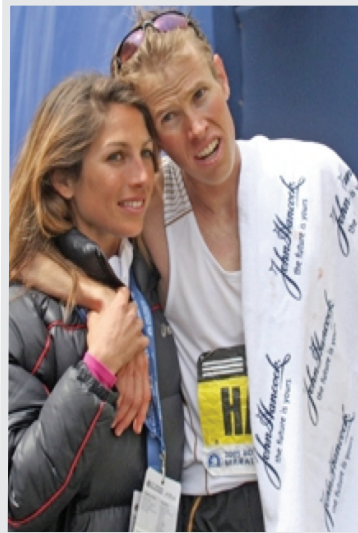
America's newest marathon sensation, Ryan Hall, is a religious, introspective 26-year-old who hopes someday to leave a legacy by bringing peace to the world and help to the less fortunate according to the Boston Herald.

Yesterday, Hall did his best to leave an imprint on the 113th Boston Marathon by finishing in third place in 2:09:40. He is the only American man to finish in the top three in the race since 1985.

"I'm not disappointed at all," said Hall, of Mammoth Lakes, Calif. "I ran the very best I could, especially coming off the Olympics (where he placed 10th in 2:12:53). I thought this was a step in the right direction for me. I'm 26 years old and I feel like I'm learning so much all the time.

"I felt like it was a really great run for me. . . . I'm excited to go back home and train and come back here and take another swing at it."

"I planned to run my own race from the get-go," Hall said. "I'm just going to try and find my right effort level and go with it. It was kind of a bummer out there because it was windy. It was a tough race out there for everyone. The wind was in our face the whole way. . . . I was trying to keep my eyes on the guys up front. I knew that anything could happen over the last couple of miles.



During a pre-race with Jordan Schilit, Ryan mentioned that a scripture passage emerges in his head during his races. In Isaiah 40:29-31, it reads, "He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." I feel like it's the Lord running through me, and I feel like I'm under His wings—like He's the One doing the work and I'm just catching a ride."

Ryan believes that optimism is the key to all of his races and that one should look at every angle of a race after the fact; never be disappointed, since we can learn something from any performance. "Don't expect anything and be ready for everything," Ryan noted, was a valuable lesson he learned from his coach, Terrence Mahon.

There is a general principle in Isaiah 40:31 that patient, praying believers are blessed by God with strength in their trials. Ryan Hall passed his test at the Boston Marathon with the strength of the Lord. That same strength is available to all believers in Christ.

WARMUP

1. Watch the internet interview with Ryan Hall. Go to www.youtube.com and search for "STV Interview with Ryan Hall"

WORKOUT

1. What stood out to you from watching the interview with Ryan Hall?
2. To whom do you look first when you need strength?
3. Read Nehemiah 8:10: "Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." Do you face all situations with the joy of the Lord?
4. Do you remember the times the Lord's strength helped you overcome situations?
5. What does Ryan mean by "I'm under His Wings—like He's the One doing the work and I'm just catching a ride."

WRAPUP

This week, memorize . . .

"but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:31 (ESV)

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for giving me the strength to compete my best in every practice and competition . . .

GOSPEL FOCUS

The gospel is not preached if Christ is not preached, but not just the person of Christ, but his atoning death and resurrection. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are not merely historical events, or merely theological precepts. They set forth a way of personal salvation. Paul says this is the gospel which you received and on which you take your stand. This is not an abstract. It is personal. – Don Carson

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