

Q. Dear Pastor Shawn and Auntie Lian. I like sports and I'm really good at it. I've recently qualified for a national event. The problem is, it's on Sabbath. My friends say I shouldn't break the Sabbath. I'm thinking, why would God give me such abilities if He doesn't want me to use them? What do you think?

A. **Pastor Shawn and Auntie Lian:** Let's look at this from two different angles. First, the Bible says, "Don't wear yourself out trying to get rich. Be wise enough to know when to quit. In the blink of an eye wealth disappears, for it will sprout wings and fly away like an eagle" (Prov. 23:4, 5, NLT).

This passage wasn't written about sports, but it does apply to your situation. It's talking about focus. Whether your focus is on riches or sports, no matter what you achieve here on earth, it will be lost. Money is always slipping through our fingers—whether we're buying a new phone, books for school, etc. The same is true for sports. No matter what heights you reach, your achievements of today will fade in the sands of time, and if you're lucky, you may be remembered by sports historians.

However, whatever we invest in today to strengthen our walk (or someone else's) with Jesus has eternal benefits that are not forgotten by God (see Matt. 6:19, 20).

The second thing to consider is what is the best way to use the ability God gave you to glorify His name? Remember, the devil is always trying things to weaken and even cause us to lose our faith. So it's no surprise that when athletes attain a high level of excellence, it seems the only way to reach the next level is to

participate in competitions that require them to sacrifice the Sabbath.

If you want to use the abilities God has given you to the fullest, we suggest taking time to reach out to other Adventist athletes and ask them what they have done to succeed without having to compromise on the Sabbath. Ask your parents, friends, pastor, even your local conference, for possible connections. The information you find might surprise you. For example, we know the story of one athlete who made the intentional choice to change the type of race they ran in. This allowed them to reach the highest level of their sport without ever once having to run a race on the Sabbath.

As you work through your decision, don't forget: God has a plan for you! Remember the Bible verse in 1 Corinthians 10:31: "So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (NLT). In your prayers, ask God to make sense of this verse, considering your gift. He will lead you to the right decision. We will pray for you as well. ■

*Do you have a question for Pastor Shawn and Auntie Lian?
Email it to messenger@adventist.ca.*

NOCAP
Straight Talk

w/Pastor Shawn and Auntie Lian

