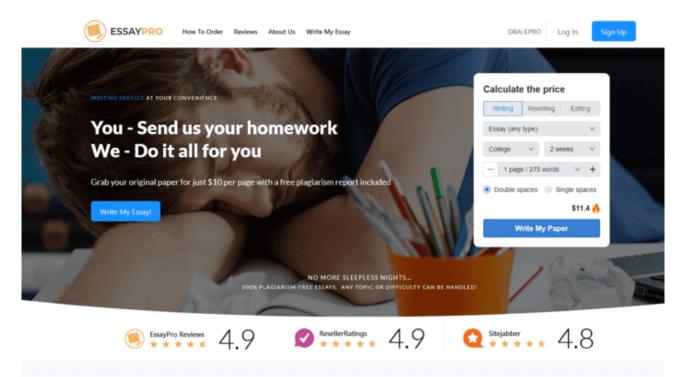
My Power of Prayer



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The power of prayer is an amazing thing. In sports it is not uncommon to see someone pointing to the sky after a touchdown, or a team prayer before a big game. While I was running cross-country in high school I came across many obstacles. I had to ignore people telling me, "cross-country's not a real sport," or "why don't you do a real sport like football?" I did not have much experience in cross-country running; therefore, I experienced doubt and lack of self-confidence at some points.

I started running when I was a senior in high school. I made it through the first <u>couple</u> of races all right, but began to get angry at myself because I was not improving at the rate I had wanted to. I was very excited for the season and often found myself distraught when I did not do well and I could not understand what the problem was. I <u>always</u> assumed that if a person runs fast one day, he/she should run faster the next day.

In addition to the internal pressure I put on myself during my tenure as an athlete, I felt a lot of outside pressure. My uncles, who are currently high school coaches near me, were high school standouts in the sport and ran extremely well in college. I always thought that if I did not perform at the level that was expected, I would be looked down upon. Of course that was not the case, but I always wanted to impress them. I remember running in one

invitational which both of them attended. I put such a tremendous amount of pressure on myself to perform that I ended up getting a cramp in my side, causing me to run one of the worst races of my life. I found myself asking why this would happen.

Therefore, I decided to start training very hard for my next race, even though it was only a small race against a weaker team. I found myself very relaxed and ran a comfortable race. I finished with amazement, because I had dropped my best time by about twenty seconds. For the first time, I had broken the seventeen-minute mark for a five kilometer race. I immediately thought of my uncles; how great would it be to tell them about the race?

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