



April 2013

# SWEATY SHEEP



*How charming is DIVINE PHILOSOPHY!  
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,  
But musical as is Apollo's lute,  
and a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,  
Where no crude surfeit reigns.*

-JOHN MILTON

**JOHN 5:39-40:** YOU STUDY THE SCRIPTURES DILIGENTLY, THINKING THAT IN THEM YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. THESE ARE THE VERY SCRIPTURES THAT TESTIFY ABOUT ME, YET YOU REFUSE TO COME TO ME TO HAVE LIFE.

In a society that has grown accustomed to having all the answers at the touch of a finger, googling tough questions on smart-phones well standing in line for lunch, we do not blindly accept much. Why would we when technology has taken the difficulty out of our pondering? Honestly how many high schoolers have ever set foot in the research section of a Library? For the many who grew up in the church though, questioning of ones faith is not always too welcome; nor are the answers a quick googling away. Instead, we have too often been institutionalized and taught formulaic responses, using memorized Biblical verses, that hide our doubts and temporarily satisfy our hungers. How blessed are we though as Sweaty Sheep to be a part of a community that is not afraid to break tradition, occasionally substitute a bike saddle for a church pew, and certainly not too afraid or punished for asking the "tough" questions.

To start, understand there is an often overlooked difference between faith and belief. Belief is safe and it fills many of the chapels around the world. Belief is important, it gives us grounding and confidence; however, remember that belief is not synonymous with faith...

Faith is much bigger than belief! "Belief" as Richard Fuller states, "is when someone else does the thinking." Faith on the other hand is personal, exciting, and uniquely unproven. Jacques Ellul defines faith as that which "forever places us on the razor's edge," and when one understands the riskiness of faith, they also understand that doubt isn't in opposition to it, but an element of it. Faith requires us to constantly seek and forever ask. One of the reasons that I love a good trail run lies in its ability to turn me, temporarily, into a philosopher. When I hit the trails, God and I speak a different language than the rest of the world and enjoy our own unique faith conversation. My gallivanting in the woods seldom leaves me with definitive answers and that is just fine. I cannot say that I have ever had a Moses-type experience on the trails of

which God has spoken to me through a burning bush; however, I always return from these runs rejuvenated and energized because questioning and seeking is what keeps faith fun and alive.

Faith is infinite and can be squelched by a finite answer; instead, faith is personal and undefined- its emersonian in a way as faith is about being yourself and "to be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the ultimate accomplishment."

God will always answer our questions, but not always as we would have expected. In school, math is always an easier class than philosophy. Why? Because though one might spend hours on a single mathematical homework assignment, the mathematician is able to go to sleep that night knowing the answer was 4.32. In Philosophy though, one may not even have a homework assignment, but they are kept up all night with thoughts and questions that will never have an answer, dancing around in their minds.

Running is the perfect metaphor for faith. Maybe you are running a marathon this spring, maybe a 5k, or maybe you are just going to jog in the park. Whatever the distance or event, when you start your run you don't know for certain what will happen. You believe that you can make it based on your training, your nutrition, and the goal that you have set, but you don't know. In your faith journey you might have read the scriptures, said the creeds, and gone to church, but this is merely the training of our souls for the race that lies before us. Jesus, in John 5 encourages us to keep studying the scriptures that testify about him (to keep training,) but to come to Christ requires us to seek God in our own unique way. There will be periods of doubt on the course, times when fatigue seems insurmountable and belief impossible, but faith is what will fuel your spirit so that we may reach the finish line. Furthermore, we are all (though possible on the same course) running different races, so embrace your questions and continually seek the answers that make your faith truly authentic and ready for a any challenge! Godspeed!

### Some of Our Upcoming Events:

Sweaty Sheep open Leadership Meeting: Thursday April 11th at 6:30pm (2008 Eastern Pkwy)  
Papa John's 10 miler: April 6th

Derby Expo & Marathon: April 25-27th (Come visit our expo booth!!!)

Post Derby Marathon Church service @ Central Presbyterian! 11am April 28th!

Sweaty Sheep Tri-weekend: May 24-25 (Overnight accommodations and dinner options! [http://www.pyoca.org/docs/2013%20Retreats%20and%20events/Pyoca\\_Sprint\\_Triathlon%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.pyoca.org/docs/2013%20Retreats%20and%20events/Pyoca_Sprint_Triathlon%20(1).pdf))

SPIN CHURCH: Sundays at 5pm at the Downtown YMCA starting April 14th!!!

More @ [www.sweatysheep.com](http://www.sweatysheep.com) or on Facebook!

