

## Superior: Hebrews - The Race

Icebreaker: Have you ever competed in a race? How was it?

**The Christian life is an intentional race for an eternal prize...**

*Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly... (1 Cor. 9:24-26a)*

When you race(d), why do you race (ie; joy, competition, exercise)? Do you view the race of Christianity similarly? Why or why not?

**A strong finish requires that I...**

- **Drop the weight (repentance)** – “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles...” (Heb. 12:1a) – What allows you to walk lightly in life? What consistently weighs you down?

‡ **Repentance isn't just a change of heart, it's a change of choice** – “When he came to his senses, he said... ‘I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.’” (Luke 15:17-18) – From the above point, is it in your power/choice to change from whatever is weighing you down (past, legalism, personal sin, etc)? If so, what steps can you take to “throw it off?” Have you consider repentance as a means to “drop the weight?”

- **Endure the pain (grit)** – “...and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.” (Heb. 12:1b) – What part of your Christian journey has been the most painful for you to endure? Do you feel like stopping, checking out? What part of the race metaphor could you apply in those times?

‡ **With God the pain always has purpose** – “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” (James 1:2-4) – Consider a time when pain, brought about maturity and perserverance? What changed in you? If you currently are enduring pain, what could God be doing to advance perserverance and maturity in your life?

- **Aim the eyes (focus)** – “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. 12:2) – Where do you typically look while running the Christian life: yourself, others, finish line, Jesus, something else?

‡ **Spiritual health is tied to personal perception** – “Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness.” (Luke 11:34)

“...I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12)

Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Heb. 12:3) – What do you have to do in order not to grow weary and lose heart? Consider the points in this study and apply them. What specifically could you pray about in this regard?