

Finish Your Race

Why is Hebrews 12.1-2 of such importance? It details our purpose. It fills our hearts with confidence. It sets our direction or focus. It shows us what the life of faith looks like. The writer has just focused on the heroes in chapter 11 to commend them as believers of the highest order. And now in chapter 12, he calls on us to follow in their example. How do we finish the race?

I. Run the Race

- A. Hebrews 12.1: *Let us run with endurance the **race** that lies before us.*
- B. What is the race?
 - 1. The actual living out of the Christian life.
 - 2. 12.1: race = “agony.” Conflict in the moral struggle of life.
- C. A marathon. Constant training required....
- D. How We Run: We run with **endurance**...
 - 1. Finish strong: 1 Corinthians 9.24b - *run in such a way to **win** the prize.*
 - 2. Run with purpose: 1 Corinthians 9.26a - *do not run like one who runs **aimlessly**.*

II. Get Encouragement from Those Gone Before

- A. Hebrews 12.1: *we also have such a large **cloud of witnesses** surrounding us...*
- B. Who are those in the cloud of witnesses? The listing of heroes of faith from Hebrews 11.
 - 1. They testify that faith wins. We run our race based on the testimony of these witnesses.
 - 2. They persevered. So can we. How?

III. Lay Everything Aside

- A. Hebrews 12.1 - *lay aside every hindrance and **the sin** that so easily ensnares us.*
- B. What must we lay aside?
 - 1. Anything holding you back. Materialism; sexual immorality; ambition; etc.
 - 2. *The sin that so easily ensnares us...* What sin has the greatest impact on your faith? Doubt.
 - a) Ephesians 6.16 - *In every situation take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.*
 - 3. Lay aside **every hindrance** ...

IV. Look to Jesus

- A. Hebrews 12.2: *keeping our eyes on **Jesus** .. the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.*
- B. Look up:
 - 1. Jesus is the supreme example of a life of faith.
 - 2. Philippians 2.8: *he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross.*
- C. Look Ahead:
 - 1. You look ahead toward the finish. You look to Jesus ...
 - 2. He's the perfect pattern.
- D. Why do we look only to Jesus?
 - 1. He is the **pioneer**/author of our faith.
 - 2. He is the end of it all. The **perfecter**.

V. As We Close...

- A. What do we get at the end?
- B. Hebrews 12.2: *For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*
- C. What are you running for?
 - 1. Joy (subjective)
 - 2. Triumph (objective)
- D. Are you in the race?