

(Hebrews 12:1-4 NASB)

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;

10 Habits To Successfully Run Your Race

Habit #1 Institute a daily quiet time

- The most important spiritual habit to develop
- Remember Martha and Mary
- Self-care – you must nurture your own soul if you want to be effective in helping others. (Remember airline cabin pressure oxygen mask illustration)
- Trying to serve Jesus without having your quiet time is like trying to give CPR to somebody while you're suffocating
- No set time (can be morning, night, etc... based on schedule) but make sure you schedule it every day
- Consists of at least Word time and prayer for yourself

Habit #2 - Count the cost of following Jesus ahead of time

- Luke 9:62 - ***But Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."***
- Making the decision that you are going all the way with God no matter what comes your way ahead of time will give you power when hard times come

Habit #3 – Remember the 'Great Cloud of Witnesses'

- The men and women of the Old Testament are like a great cloud of witnesses. We look to their lives and their lives speak to us
- As we see how they negotiated their race it gives us wisdom, encouragement, and strength to run our race

Habit #4 – Lay aside what will slow you down.

- Every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us
- Encumbrance: mass, weight, heaviness, or excess body fat
- The picture is that of a marathon runner stripping out of unnecessary clothes and losing excess body fat
- Ask yourself: "What things do I have that are preventing me from running in the best way possible? (Doesn't necessarily refer to sin)

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- Sin that entangles: The word 'entangles' probably refers to something that clings so closely that it impedes movement
- Ask yourself: "What sin keeps tripping me up, slowing me down, or stopping me in my tracks?" (Wait a minute vines)
- Never accept defeat from something God says you should have victory over

Habit #5 - Let endurance have its perfect work

- ***Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*** (James 1:2-4 NASB)
- God is using your trials to produce endurance in your life for His glory and your benefit. He's strengthening you so you can go the distance!

Habit #6 – Fix your eyes on Jesus

- Remember Peter. When he kept his eyes on Jesus he could walk on water. When he took his eyes off of Jesus and looked at the waves (problems) he began to sink
- Jesus The Author and Perfector of our faith: ***"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*** (Philippians 1:6 NASB)

Habit #7 – Despise the shame

- Jesus treated the humiliation of the Cross, the thing that was supposed to make Him feel valueless and insignificant as if it were insignificant. He despised the shame
- Just like Jesus, we can consider the things that belittle or demean us because we follow Christ as valueless. In that way we can 'despise the shame'

Habit #8 – Focus on Joy

- Jesus focused on the joy of bringing many sons and daughters to glory, rather than the negative aspects of the Cross
- We were created to be positive
- Make the choice to rejoice!

Habit #9 - Consider the sufferings of Jesus to help get through your own suffering

- When we are at our end, full of weariness of soul and emotional fatigue Jesus understands
- Render praise to Jesus for His willingness to suffer for us
- Receive comfort from Jesus in your suffering

Habit #10 – Visualize the end of the race

- Let that moment, yet future when we will see Jesus face to face give you strength to live for Him in the present

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