

Run with Endurance

Acts 20:24; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 2 Timothy 2:3-6; 4:7-8

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. (Hebrews 12:1, NASB)

Picture a stadium. We living believers are the athletes, in the midst of a long and grueling race. At times we glance up and all around us. Who fills the stands in this immense stadium? It is the witness of all the heroes of the faith listed in Hebrews 11...plus so many more.

Are all those believers who have left this world actually watching us now? We don't know. Their witness is what's in view in Hebrews 12. Their example encourages us and urges us on. If they could speak to us right now, what would they say? Or to phrase it another way, what is their example shouting to us?

"God is always, always, ALWAYS faithful!"

"Just keep trusting Him!"

"The hardship lasts only a short time. It will soon be over. Hold steady!"

"Your obedience and faithfulness will bear fruit far beyond what you can imagine!"

"Rejoice!"

"Don't let anything hinder you!"

That last statement is what the scripture emphasizes here: let nothing hinder you...absolutely nothing! This is a long and demanding race. Top marathon runners ruthlessly shed anything that will weigh them down. They get rid of everything that will hold them back in any way. Their clothing, their own body weight, their diet, their daily habits—every aspect of their lives is examined in detail. Anything that's a hindrance, even to the slightest degree, must go.

Consider this: even the marathon is short in comparison to life. The struggles of life are so much greater, and its stakes are infinitely higher. Our rewards are deeper, richer, and forever. If a marathon runner must exercise such self-discipline and ruthlessly shed all hindrances, how much more should we who are racing for our eternal destiny?

I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it. Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. (1 Corinthians 9:23-25, NASB)

Honestly examine your life for anything that hinders your race. What about that *small* sin? What about that *small* distraction that eats into your time, energy, or devotion? Ask

a marathon runner if there are any *small* irritants or *small* encumbrances. By the end of a long run, they all loom large. Shed them now! God will be glad to help you.

Then you will be prepared to *run with endurance the race* that is set before you.

*Father, help me lay aside everything that is
weighing me down and
holding me back.
Everything, Lord.
Every habit,
every false and fuzzy way of thinking,
every misplaced priority,
every laziness.
Fix my eyes on Jesus—
His life,
His holiness,
His complete devotion to You.*

Hymn: [We Fix Our Eyes on Jesus Christ](#)

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