

The Faith Race
Hebrews 12
11-20-22

Hebrews 12:1-2 – *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."*

I. How Do We Run With Endurance?

1. We run...in light of our predecessors.

"...surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses..."

2. We run...laying aside weights and sins.

"...let us lay aside every weight and sin..."

~ How does God help us do this? - Through His discipline.

Hebrews 12:4-11 – *"In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?"*

'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.'

It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

3. We run...looking to Jesus.

"Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith"

II. Why Do We Run?

Our reward is an **“Unshakeable Kingdom”**.

GROWING DEEPER THIS WEEK

1. What did you think about the message this week? What stood out to you or challenged your thinking?
2. Why is comparing the Christian life to a race such a good analogy for the original audience and us today? How does the analogy of a race apply to your life?
3. How is the Christian race going for you? How can you be encouraged by Jesus' example?
4. What are some things that hinder your running today that you need to put aside?
5. Do you think Christians are afraid of the discipline of God? Why or why not?
6. READ Hebrews 12:4-11 together. How does the authors' explanation of God's discipline encourage you?
7. How does this definition of discipline differ from our cultures understanding of discipline?

Activity Idea for your group: Contrast the way the world uses discipline and the way God does.

8. What are some ways we can encourage one another to run with endurance in the face of persecution and hardships?