

# Running to Win the Prize



Hebrews 12:1-11

# Analogy of the Christian life as a race...

*The "race" is that life of faith and obedience, that pursuit of personal holiness, to which the Christian is called by God. Turning from sin and the world in penitence and trust to Christ is not the finishing-post, but only the starting-point. The Christian race begins at the new birth, and ends not till we are summoned to leave this world. The prize to be run for is heavenly glory. (Pink, Arthur W)*

# Faithful Encouragement

Hebrews 12:1–11 (NASB95) — 1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us,

- Who is the team of encouragers?
- “great cloud of witnesses” of chapter 11

*“who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. <sup>35</sup> Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their <sup>[u]</sup>release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; <sup>36</sup> and others <sup>[v]</sup>experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup> They were stoned, they were sawn in two, <sup>[w]</sup>they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated <sup>38</sup> (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes <sup>[x]</sup>in the ground.*

*<sup>39</sup> And all these, having <sup>[y]</sup>gained approval through their faith, did not receive <sup>[z]</sup>what was promised, <sup>40</sup> because God had <sup>[aa]</sup>provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.”*

# Faithful Encouragement

Hebrews 12:1–11 (NASB95) — 1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us,

## NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLE: TIMOTHY

**2 Timothy 2:1–4 (NASB95)** — **1** *You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 3 Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier*

# Removing Hindrances

let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us,

## 2 Categories that hinder the Christian's race

### 1) "Encumbrance": Lit: "mass' "weight"

*"it weigh us down, diverts our attention, saps our energy, dampens our enthusiasm for the things of God" (MacArthur)*

*It is anything which retards our progress, anything which unfits us for the discharge of our God-assigned duties, anything which dulls the conscience, blunts the edge of our spiritual appetite, or chokes the spirit of prayer. (A W Pink)*

# Removing Hindrances

let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us,

## 2 Categories that hinder the Christian's race

### 2) "the sin which so easily entangles us"

- "the sin" ....UNBELIEF!!!

*Ask of them (those in Hebrews ch 11) what they have found in such cases to be their most dangerous enemy; what hath had the most easy and frequent access unto their minds, to disturb and dishearten them, of the power thereof they have been most afraid; they will all answer with one voice, it is the evil of their own unbelieving hearts. This hath continually attempted to entangle them, to betray them, in taking part with all outward temptations.*  
(John Owen)

# Removing Hindrances

let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us,

- How do we throw off sin?
- Begins with the spiritual reality...we are dead to sin

***Romans 6:11–13 (NASB95) — 11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, 13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.***

# Removing Hindrances

let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us,

- How do we throw off sin?
- Put off sin...renew our mind...put on the biblical truth by faith

***Ephesians 4:22–24 (NASB95) — 22*** that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, **23** and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, **24** and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth

# Determination

and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us

- “RACE”: get our word “agony”
- “endurance”: A steady determination
- How are we to continue with endurance?...by faith
- And as we do so God empowers us to run the race well

# Our motivation to run

2 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. 3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

- “Author”: Archegos...pioneer
- “perfecter”: “to complete”

- 1) *“Joy set before Him”*
- 2) *“endured the cross”*
- 3) *“despising the shame”*
- 4) *“sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”*

# The discipline needed to finish well

*The History of God's discipline: "You have forgotten what was addressed to you"*

4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; 5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons,

# The discipline needed to finish well

*The nature of God's discipline: "deals with you as sons" "Whom the Lord loves"*

"MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; **6** FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES. **7** It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? **8** But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

# The discipline needed to finish well

*The purpose of God's discipline: "for our good"*

**9** Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? **10** For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good

# The discipline needed to finish well

*The fruit of God's discipline: "sharing in his holiness" "Yields peaceful fruit of righteousness"*

so that we may share His holiness. **11** All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

# Conclusion...

- Don't regard the Lord's discipline lightly (indifferent, callous, complaining, worrying, questioning)
- Submit yourself to God's discipline. For through it, we are "filled up with the fullness of God".
- Take time to evaluate the hindrances and sins that are entangling you. What plan will you create to address these issues?