

Run the Race with Patience

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I. Introduction.

- A. Few Christians finish well. (1 Corinthians 9)
- B. As our faith matures, our relationship with God should become more vibrant, not less so.
- C. God is looking for finishers, not starters. There are some practical ways that we can finish well from the Bible. (Hebrews 12:1-3)

II. We need to dress lightly in order to run the race. (Hebrews 12:1-3)

A. Sometimes we carry the extra weight of things that are not wrong, but are not helpful to our walk with God.

- 1. Undue attention to our jobs can be a distraction.
- 2. Becoming slaves to the schedules of our children.
- 3. Meaningless pursuits that buy up our time.
- 4. Anything that keeps our eyes on this world.

B. We must lay aside our sin.

- 1. We must lay aside our unbelief and trust God's Word daily.
- 2. Doubt cuts at the very heart of our Christian life.

III. We must run with perseverance over the long haul of life. (Hebrews 12:1-3)

A. A distance run involves discipline and training.

- 1. Self-control is not legalism because it does not seek to earn God's favor- it is simply what is best for us.
- 2. Examples of necessary disciplines include: getting God's word into our hearts and minds, prayer, etc.

B. A distance race involves pacing yourself.

- 1. We don't have to do everything all at once. (Proverbs 20:21)

C. Run with perseverance.

- 1. The testing of our faith produces perseverance. (James 1:2-4)
- 2. Suffering produces perseverance. (Romans 5:3-4)

3. We don't need to seek out trials, but we do need to profit from the trials that God allows into our lives.

D. Run your own race. (Ephesians 2:10; 1 Corinthians 12)

1. God has not equipped you to run the race that He called someone else to.

2. He has equipped you to run your own race.

IV. We must keep our eyes on the goal. (Hebrews 12:1-3)

A. Look at Jesus as our leader who goes before us on the race.

B. Jesus considered the reward He would receive instead of focusing on the cross.

C. Jesus is the object of our faith and the entirety of the Christian life; we cannot run the race without Him. (John 15:5; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 2:9-10)

D. Jesus is the rewarder of our faith. (Hebrews 12:3)

Application questions:

1. Are there things in your life that are not sin, but that are distracting you from doing what God has called you to? What are they?

2. What does Jerry mean by saying that we need to pace ourselves in the Christian life? In what way are we tempted to do everything all at once? How can we learn to make more reasonable commitments as Christians?

3. How does "keeping our eyes on the goal" practically look in daily life?
