

Running with Endurance

Hebrews 12:1-3

In this study we come to the central challenge in the book of Hebrews. The original readers, the Hebrews, needed this challenge because they were being tempted to drop out of the race. In the past they had run well; they had endured persecution and hardship joyfully. But now they weren't so sure if it's worth it to sacrifice for the cause of Christ. They needed to be reminded that the Christian life is an endurance race and that it matters how you run and whether or not you finish well. And of course, the same is true for us and so may we hear what God wants to say to us through this passage.

Opening Question: What's the longest distance you've ever run?

Read Hebrews 12:1-3

1. The author makes a connection to the previous passage here using the term, "Therefore" (v. 1). What's the connection?
2. How does the "cloud of witnesses" provide a source of encouragement for our endurance (v. 1)?
3. What are the commands in this passage?

Steve said:

In the endurance race known as "the Christian life" we need to "lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us." An encumbrance isn't necessarily inherently sinful; it is anything that weighs you down and keeps you from running with endurance. This is where we need to be wise about how we practice our "freedom in Christ." In 1 Corinthians 10:23 Paul pointed out that, "All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable." You may be able to identify things that you shouldn't do even though you have the freedom to do those things. They may not be inherently sinful, but they may be unprofitable in the race you're running. Given your past, your weaknesses, your personality, your circumstances, what things weigh you down and keep you from running with endurance?

4. What kinds of things come to your mind as possible encumbrances in your life that might be hindering your ability to run the Christian with endurance? What might it mean to lay them aside?

Steve said:

We also need to lay aside “the sin which **so easily** entangles us.” Sin is analogous to vines and undergrowth that would entangle someone running through the woods. In each of our lives, certain sins slow us down and keep us from running well. Given everything we’ve seen in Hebrews about sin, the author is NOT saying that God expects us to get rid of our sin on our own. He’s not saying that until you clean up your life you can’t run the race. . . .When Hebrews tells us to “lay aside the sin that so easily entangles us” we understand that we do so by trusting in Jesus alone, by crying out to Jesus in times of temptation, and by living a transparent life before a few others who are committed to encouraging us. . . .What sins demoralize you and make you want to drop out of the race? What sins “so easily entangle you” and keep you from running well? Are you willing to engage your will and do the hard work of “laying aside” those sins?

5. What sins are you easily entangled in? What might it look like to lay these aside?
6. What does this passage teach about Jesus?
7. What does it mean to fix our eyes on Jesus (v. 2)?
8. How does fixing our eyes on Jesus (v. 2) and considering Him (v. 3) help us live with endurance?
9. What do you sense is the main thing that God is saying to you through this passage?