

Life's Most Important Race  
Hebrews 12:1-2

*Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. . . . I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. (1 Corinthians 9:24-26)*

*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, <sup>2</sup> 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. (Hebrews 12:1)*

I. We must eliminate anything that may slow us down or trip us up.  
*let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, (v.1b)*

A. We must *lay aside every weight* that might slow us down.

B. We must *lay aside every . . . sin which clings so closely* and trips us up.

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)*

*No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)*

II. We must put forth consistent effort and stay on course.  
*let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, (v.1c)*

A. We must *run with endurance*.

*And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)*

*For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Phil.2:13)*

B. We must *run with endurance the race that is set before us*

**III. We must stay focused on our goal – Jesus.**

*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. (v.2)*

- A. We must run with our eyes fixed on Jesus. The writer explains why:
1. Jesus is *the founder and perfecter of our faith* (v.2).
  2. Jesus has already *endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.* (v.2).
  3. Jesus did that *for the joy that was set before him* (v.2).
    - a. He knew that He would return to His place of honor, *seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*
    - b. He knew that He would have completed the work of providing salvation for all who believed in Him.
- B. We need to keep our eyes of faith fixed firmly on Jesus every day for two reasons:
1. To follow His example.
  2. To experience His power.

*I can do all things through him (Christ) who strengthens me.* (Philippians 4:13)

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.* (2 Timothy 4:7-8)