

# **RUN THE RACE**

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As a believer in Jesus Christ, you run a race. It is the race of a lifetime. It should dominate your mind and it should occupy your waking moments.

The writer of Hebrews spoke of this race, "Therefore since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us, and run with endurance the race that lies before us" (Heb. 12:1 HCSB, emphasis added).

## **A. YOU HAVE BEEN CHOSEN FOR THE RACE**

In this race, you have been chosen. God Almighty has picked you. He has chosen you to run the race of a lifetime.

### **John 6:44**

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.

## **B. THE RACE IS BOTH A CONTEST AND A CONFLICT**

The Greek word for race in Hebrews 12:1 is "agon" from which we get our word agony. The race is a contest in order to be transformed more and more into the image of Christ. In many respects we race not against opponents, but against ourselves. Are you more like Jesus today than you were yesterday? The race is a conflict in that there is an internal struggle of the soul. There are so many things that want to cause us to fall out of the race. Often Christians become worldly and partake in that which they know they should not. Are you engaging in the necessary disciplines and activities that will enable you to grow and mature in Christ-likeness? Are you spending sufficient time with God in prayer and study of the Bible?

## **C. THE RACE IS UNIQUE TO YOU**

It has been marked out especially for you. Like the orange cones on the roadway that indicate the path of a long distant race, God has marked out a race distinctive for you that will take you on an adventure. While the destination is the same for everyone - a life like Jesus, the journey that gets us there is different for everyone. Don't compare your track to someone else's track.

## **D. THE RACE HAS NO TIME OUTS**

Like the marathon run, this race has no time outs, no breaks, no intermissions, and no halftimes. We are instructed to run and keep on running. Don't give up in your relationship with God. Winning this race will require great endurance, perseverance, patience, and resolve.

## **E. THE RACE IS FULL OF OBSTACLES**

Unlike the marathon and more like a steeplechase, this race is full of obstacles, barriers, hurdles, and hazards. They can't be avoided or erased. They come in different sizes and at different stages. People might come against you in your faith, but you must overcome that obstacle.

## **F. YOU RUN TO WIN**

"Run in such a way that you may win" (1 Cor. 9:24 HCSB). Winning is not beating the other runners. The prize is becoming a spiritual champion. A spiritual champion is one sold out to Jesus, straining to become more like him everyday. The finish line of faith is a life that is more Christian today than yesterday. The goal constant progress. Just like an athlete, training is very important. Discipline is very important. Races are not always won by the fastest. But rather by the one that keeps hanging on, who refuses to give up. Those who persist prevail. Likewise, the great need for spiritual races is persistence. Time and time again. The Scripture exhort us to persist and endure.

The apostle Paul prayed for the Colossians

### **Col 1:11**

...that you should walk worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit and increasing in the full knowledge of God;

Paul reminded Timothy,

### **2 Tim 2:12**

"if we endure, we will also reign with Him"

Then the writer of Hebrews states,

### **Heb. 10:36**

"For you need endurance, so that after you have done God's will, you may receive what was promised".

## **CONCLUSION**

Will you engage in the training so that you will have the endurance to run the race? Attend Christian gatherings, training, worship session. Give yourself to proper training in order to help you finish well. Don't just attend Sunday services, get involved in the Body of Christ.

At the end of his life, the apostle Paul said this about his race:

### **2 Tim 4:6-8**

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on the crown of righteousness is laid up for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but to all who crave His appearing....