

## LET'S SERIOUSLY RUN THE RACE OF FAITH WITH ENDURANCE

Hebrews 12:12-17

Pastor Bruce Henry

Sunday AM, August 28, 2016

### "GOING FOR THE GOLD" A 4-Week Series from Hebrews 12

#### August 7 "Let's Run the Race!" Hebrews 12:1

We discovered the *challenging exhortation to run the race of the Christian life.*

#### August 14 "Let's Run the Race with Endurance!" Hebrews 12:2-3

We discovered *how to live the Christian life so as to finish strong at the end.*

#### August 21 "Let's Run the Race with Endurance as God's Children!" Hebrews 12:4-11

We discovered *how and why God uses hardship in the Christian life.*

#### August 28 "Let's Seriously Run the Race with Endurance as God's Children!" Hebrews 12:12-17

We discover *challenges that make the Christian life such a serious undertaking.*

*In this message,*

*we discover the challenges that make the Christian life a serious undertaking.*

The writer of Hebrews has just explained why God disciplines His children. Suffering and hardship can easily discourage us and make us feel rejected. Instead, we can accept this discipline, remembering that God loves us as only a perfect Father can. With these truths in mind, the author returns to the image of running the race (12:1-2). He gives direct commands to those who have been weakened by discouragement and need to get back in the contest. These exhortations instruct us in the way of renewal. We need to:

### I. LIVE STRONG. Heb. 12:12

Owing to the beneficial nature of trials used in God's hand as discipline, "**therefore**" summons the **weak and ... feeble** believers to **strengthen** themselves and to get back in the race, serving their Lord.

### II. WALK STRAIGHT. Heb. 12:13

In making **straight paths for their feet**, they are to live as the gospel prescribes. This is so those who are spiritually **lame may not** deteriorate further and become **put out of joint** or defect from their faith in the Messiah, **but rather** be spiritually **healed**.

### III. BE STRATEGIC. Heb. 12:14

The yield of moral "righteousness" (12:11) leads easily to the summons of the pursuit of holiness. But the writer begins urging his readership to **pursue peace with** the help of **all men** and women. The **peace** in view is less that of harmony among believers, and more of tranquility of heart, freeing one of anxiety caused by the trials and discipline in 12:3-13. But individuals are especially to **pursue ... sanctification**. This growing virtue is essential, for **without it no one will see the Lord** in heaven and throughout eternity.

### IV. BE SERIOUS. Heb. 12:15-17

In their corporate pursuit of peace and holiness, the readers are to **see to it** that three dangerous circumstances are avoided.

#### A. About God's Provision. 15a

See to It That No One Misses Out on God's Grace!

First, they must **see to it that no one** in their congregation **comes short of the saving grace of God**. They are to do everything possible to ensure that each actually possesses it.

#### B. About God's People. 15b

See to It That No One Defiles Others Through His Bitterness!

Second, they must prevent any **root of bitterness** from springing up. This is not an attitude of resentment; rather, this expression is an allusion to Deuteronomy 29:18, "that there will not be among you a root bearing poisonous fruit and wormwood" – an Israelite who spurns the Lord for false gods. In Heb. 12:15 it figuratively refers to an apostate forsaking Christ. In the body of Christ such an individual can cause trouble and defile **many**.

#### C. About God's Purity. 16-17

See to It That No One Forfeits His Soul to Lust and Idolatry!

Third, the congregation must ensure none becomes **like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal**. He illustrates an apostate who forfeits his spiritual **birthright** for something far less, namely mere outward ritual or the temporal safety that denying their faith might bring. As Esau later tried to regain his lost **blessing** but **was rejected**, finding no opportunity **for repentance**, so it will be for the defector from the faith.