

Running In the Arena of Faith Hebrews 12:1-3

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1. I like to hear stories about people who won't give up.
 2. Now in this passage the Christian life is not compared to a sprint, but to a marathon. In a sprint you run as fast as you can for a short distance. But in a marathon, endurance is the critical factor.
 - a. Paul said, "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." 2 Timothy 4:7, 8
 3. All of us realize that it is easier to start things than it is to finish.
 4. I want us to look together at some various aspects of a race as they are compared to the Christian life and see that it's "easy to start but hard to finish."
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- I. **Run Your Race.** Hebrews 12:1, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."
 - A. We are to run the race in light of the encouragement. "We are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses." (12:1)
 - B. We are to run the race without distractions. "let us throw off everything that hinders." (12:1)
 - C. We are to run the race to the end. "let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."
 - II. **Fix Your Eyes.** Hebrews 12:2, "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith,"
 - A. Consider our Supreme example.
 - B. This is the supreme motive and the highest encouragement.
 - III. **Focus on the Joy.** Hebrews 12:3, "who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."
 - A. When Jesus ran the race, the Hebrew writer says he "endured the cross."
 - B. Jesus enables us to look beyond present discouragement to future encouragement.
 1. "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands." 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1