

Run With Endurance

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The famous quote by Dr. Phil, "*life is a marathon, not a sprint*" has taken on new meaning for me during this pandemic season. I've never ran a marathon though it has been on my bucket list for several years, but I have run both 10K and 5K races several times. The idea of running 42.2 kilometres (26.2 miles) for hours is not something to be taken on a whim, requiring months of training and a lot of discipline. As I looked into the origin of the marathon, I discovered the legend that marathons originated when a Greek soldier, who had just fought in the Battle of Marathon, ran from Marathon to Athens to deliver a message that the Persians had been defeated when he then collapsed and died. (Source: [Wikipedia](#))

This very long haul of adhering to restrictions imposed by Public Health authorities, with the goal of flattening the coronavirus curve, has been difficult on many of us.

How are you holding up? And what are you doing to endure this marathon?

The writer of Hebrews was trying to encourage a group of believers (among others) who were getting worn down from rejection and persecution by fellow Jews and offered some practical advice to them which are equally relevant for us today as we run our race.

In [Hebrews 12:1-3 \(NIV\)](#), the writer offers the following: *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, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.* (Emphasis Added)

I've highlighted the practical takeaways that I see from that passage for quick reference; did you catch them?

1. **A great cloud of witnesses** – these not only refer to the people referenced in the previous "Hall of Faith" chapter ([Hebrews 11](#)), whom we can read about in God's Word but also the godly leaders whom God has entrusted to us today, including those within our local church. QUESTION: *Are you in God's Word regularly and are you staying connected to your local church?*
2. **Throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles** – those things would be different for each of us. "Everything" or "the weight" (used by some translations) are not necessarily things that are inherently wrong, but they are things that can slow us down as we run our race. QUESTION: *What is that "thing" that may be slowing you down?*

Similarly, the sin that so easily entangles (some translations use the term "besetting sin") would be different for each of us. And we all have at least one of these! Perhaps it's impatience that leads to angry outbursts, intolerance or hatred of others made in God's image, gossip, slander, lying or cheating in the form of subtle inaccuracies that make you look more favourable to others. QUESTION: *What is that besetting sin for you?*

3. **Fixing our eyes on Jesus** – We are encouraged to "fix" our eyes on Jesus. Fixing involves intentionality and determination. Part of "fixing" requires that we regularly reflect on what Jesus endured on the cross so that we have a solid understanding of how He is able to relate to our suffering AND it encourages us not to grow weary or lose heart. Did you notice the text mentions that Jesus sat down? That's significant – it means that Jesus, our High Priest, is finished making atonement unlike the Jewish High Priests who used to have to go back repeatedly. Jesus did not stay on the cross, Sisters; He is now **seated** on the throne, interceding for you and me. QUESTION: *How does this fact change your perspective of your current circumstances?*

May I encourage you to reflect on the questions above in the coming week and know that God is on your side. Our Christian life was not intended to be easy especially when we attempt to do it on our own. But God has provided us all we need to run our race; Jesus saved us, and the Holy Spirit empowers us, so let us run with endurance and finish well by His grace!

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