

## “The Race of Our Lives...Continues!”

Hebrews 12:3-17

November 24, 2024

**Introduction:** Two weeks ago, we talked about impediments to our running with endurance the race that GOD HAS SET BEFORE US.... And the weight and sin that slow us down, cause us to veer off God's predetermined course for us, or convince us to stop in our tracks because of the weariness created by taking our eyes off our only true power and life source, Jesus. In verses 3-17, the writer of Hebrews continues to teach, reprove, and correct for the purpose of the Holy Spirit training us to be who we are: the righteousness of God in Christ.

**Five things we do to run the race of our lives with ever-increasing faith until death:**

1. Be spurred on by the faith of others who have gone before us.
2. Lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely to us.
3. Run with endurance the race set before us (and don't run it alone!)
4. Look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith (our lone power source)
5. Apply Joy! Jesus' finish line was the joy of winning us! Our finish line is the joy of winning HIM! (His joy is our strength provided by the Holy Spirit!)

### King of Kings, Lord of Lords, *and* Sufferer of Sufferers

**Hebrews 12:3** Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

**Consider** (analogizomai from *aná* = again - idea of repetition + logizomai = reckon, think) means to think, reckon, count up or reason with thoroughness and completeness and so to think out carefully, reason thoroughly and with careful deliberation, consider accurately and distinctly or again and again. The verb can also include the idea of meditation.

Definition from [www.preceptaustin.com](http://www.preceptaustin.com)

**Philippians 2:5-11** <sup>5</sup> Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

### Three things to consider when considering Him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself

- The Emotional trauma of Him who endured
- The Spiritual trauma of Him who endured
- The Physical pain and trauma of Him who endured

The book of Hebrews is a very mature and sober book when it comes to the pain and stress of Christian living and the endurance that it takes to run the race and fight the fight and finish well. It's not a book that people (especially teenagers and strong young adults) gravitate toward — unless they have suffered and struggle for some explanation of how that relates to God. In other words, the easier and more pain-free your life has been, the less you will cherish the kind of spirituality taught in this book. And the more you have suffered, the more you will cling to the precious teachings of this book — if you are willing to believe them.

**The Painful Discipline of Our Heavenly Father, John Piper August 24, 1997**

**1 Peter 2:21-24** <sup>21</sup> For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup> He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. <sup>23</sup> When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. <sup>24</sup> He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. <sup>25</sup> For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Now, for a most interesting segue.... 1 Peter 3:1 and 7,8

## The Weight Room and the WAIT Room

**Hebrews 12:4** In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

struggle (*antagonizomai*: to struggle, literally [to compete for a prize], figuratively (to contend with an adversary; fight, labor fervently.)

There are no accomplished athletes who become excellent in what they do that train only once a week. There are no Hollywood or Broadway performers either, nor are there any successful businesspersons, doctors, lawyers, or teachers, etc. There are no students who go to class once a week whose expectations would be very high. And there are no followers of Christ that should think only showing up in "the building" every other week or so, is going to build the spiritual muscle necessary to run with endurance the race and battle set before us, much less lay aside the weight and sin that clings so closely to us.

**1 Timothy 4:8-10** <sup>8</sup> **for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way**, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. <sup>9</sup> The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. <sup>10</sup> For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

**Isaiah 40:28-31** Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. <sup>29</sup> He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.

<sup>30</sup> Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; <sup>31</sup> but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

## Discipline, Fruitfulness and Giftedness

➤ "So, what's the difference between discipline and punishment?"

**Romans 8:1-2** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

**Hebrews 5:6** Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.

From Hebrews 12:5-11, the word discipline(ed)(s) is used \_\_\_\_ times.

Discipline (Gk. 'paideia (Pahee di'-ah); tutorage, i.e. education or training; by implication, disciplinary correction; chastening, instruction, nurture

✠ **Fruit of the Spirit:** Galatians 5:22-23

✠ **Gifts of the Spirit:** 1 Corinthians 12:7-10

**1 Corinthians 13:13; 14:1** So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.

**Romans 5:1-5** Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>2</sup> Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup> and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, <sup>5</sup> and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

## Training In Righteousness

**Hebrews 12:11-** For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

- Who's been convicted of their righteousness, lately?
- Do you "consider" much; sometimes; ever; that by his doing, you are righteous in him and that God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us that in Christ we would become the righteousness of God?
- Who, aware of their sin, is more aware of their righteousness?

**2 Corinthians 4:16-18** So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, <sup>18</sup> as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete equipped for every good work.

The more we compete physically, the greater our lung capacity and therefore the less we "lose our breath". The more we compete spiritually, the greater our spiritual lung capacity, and the more we "gain our breath." (The Greek Word for Spirit or breath is "pneuma",

**James 1:22-25** But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup> For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. <sup>25</sup> But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

➤ "Practice makes permanent, not perfect." – Vince Lombardi, Green Bay Packers

❖ Training wise, what league are you in? You in the "Bigs" or "Pee Wee"?

**Psalms 144:1-2** Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle;<sup>2</sup> he is my steadfast love and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield and he in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me.

The Spirit of God, who as we submit to his "coaching discipline", is constantly training us in righteousness; and is training not only us, but the entire LCC team. This means we are reading out of and are together studying the same playbook and running on the same track. We are not only individually participants in the race of our lives but also one another's lives as well. And sometimes, we must act as Holy Spirit filled team "trainers", not only lifting our drooping hands, strengthening our weak knees, making straight our paths, striving for peace with everyone ourselves, and for our personal holiness, but also bearing those burdens of our LCC brothers and sisters. We are to pursue and cheer on the saints at LCC and beyond to not fail to obtain the grace of God, and that no root of bitterness springs up and causes "track" trouble, and by it many become defiled.

For THIS is the Race of our Lives!