

Running with Perseverance!

Hebrews 12:1-4

During the Olympics, athletes represent their nations or countries. These nations send their best athletes in their discipline to compete and bring honor to their nations. Following Jesus is spoken of in Scripture as entering into race. The moment you agreed to be a follower of Jesus, you enter that race. The Christian life is a race; at times you may feel very good in how you run and progress in your walk; but at times it turns out to be very difficult and the temptation to quit or give up will always be there. *Perhaps you know people who stopped running their race; they stopped following Jesus because it got too difficult.* **Where would you find the motivation, to continue running your race for God? When do you get encouragement and strength to run?** The author of Hebrews wrote to Christians who were going through lots of trials and persecution; their running their race had gotten difficult. However, he motivated them to keep running with perseverance. Here is where you will find motivation to run well.

Hebrews 12:1-4 Where you find motivation to run your race.

Remember those who ran before you: (cloud of witnesses) In chapter 11 the writer talks about people throughout Scripture who displayed great faith in the midst of uncertainty; in the midst of persecution. **Their faith was worthy of mentioning because they ran their race well.** Their example speaks to us telling us to persevere, to not give up trusting. We are surrounded by lots of people who ran their race well and they can be in our faith hall of fame. You may be in the Faith Hall of Fame of someone tomorrow, who considers you a great example of someone who ran well.

Since we are surrounded by a cloud of hall of famer when it comes to their faith.

Decide to throw away anything that hinders your progress in your race.

What is keeping you from running well?

Anything that doesn't allow you to progress or move forward in your walk with Christ; you must lay aside. Sometimes it may be a relationship you must let go; friendships, (unfriend people on FB) your job, family, entertainment; attitude etc. Anything or anyone who does not promote progress in your race, you must let go **-Sin can weigh you down in your running your race.**

The sin that so easily entangles us. (So easily cling to us) Where there is sin, there is shame and guilt and these things will keep you being ineffective in the kingdom of God. The temptation to sin is always present and when we give up to the

temptation, we tend to go backward in our running the race; we get stuck in an ungodly pattern.

To show progress in our Christian race we must lay aside whatever hinders us from running well, this includes sin in our lives.

Keep your focus on Jesus. (fix your eyes on Jesus)

In order to run with perseverance, you must keep your focus on Jesus. The founder and perfecter (the one who will complete our salvation) **Why Jesus?** He also had to endure lots of things in order to accomplish the mission of redemption. Jesus endured the cross and its shame, pain and agony. He endured because he knew the joy of victory. His goal was to finish the task appointed to him. He said that his food was to do the will of the Father. God's will for the Son was to finish his mission.

-Think of Jesus (consider Jesus) v.3 when you are tempted to give up or grow weary. When it's painful, think about Jesus. When you feel downcast, tired and ready to give up look to Jesus. Remember what he did for you.

In any struggle we may have, we have not yet resisted to the point of shedding our blood. But Jesus did and this is why we must look to him when tempted to give up. **(v.4)**

1996 Summer Olympic in Atlanta, Georgia. Wasiqi [represented Afghanistan](#) at the [1996 Summer Olympics](#) in [Atlanta](#). He injured his leg (hamstring muscle) before the [marathon](#), but took part nonetheless.^[1] He completed the race despite his injury, after limping the whole way, with a time of 4:24:17, well short of his personal best of two hours and thirty-three minutes.^{[2][3]} He finished 111th and last, nearly an hour and a half behind the second-slowest competitor. Wasiqi reached the stadium and found "workmen [...] preparing the arena for the closing ceremony" and "tarpaulin being laid across the running track".^{[4][5]} Preparations were suspended long enough for Baser to reach the finish line.

Why didn't he give up? He was hurt and the winners were already announced. He thought about the country he was representing.

"I am Baser Wasiqi, and I am from Kabul. I represent my country to the world...to see... that Afghanistan is living, has not died, after 16 years...of war." "It is not important to be first, second or 20th," he continued. "It is important to come here and finish."

This man knew what it means to represent his country. You and I represent God in this world and he has given us a race to complete, run with determination, do not give up even when it is painful to continue. Keep your eyes focused on Jesus if you want to finish your race