

Date : 18 October 2026
Theme : Making Your Election Sure
Topic : The Elect's Going-On Faith
Passage : Hebrews 12:1–3
Key Verse : Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. — Hebrews 12:1–2

Introduction

The Christian life is a journey of faith – a race that we must run to the finish line. The Greek word for race is “agon”, from which we get our word “agony”. This reminds us that following Christ requires perseverance.

It is important that we begin in faith, but it is more important to finish in faith. Along the journey, we will face difficulties, disappointments, temptations, and seasons of weariness. How do we keep going when the journey becomes hard?

The book of Hebrews was written to believers who had suffered for their faith and were in danger of growing weary, drifting spiritually, and shrinking back. Hebrews 11 gives us examples of men and women who finished the race; Hebrews 12 now places us on the racetrack — it is our turn to run.

But before telling us how to run, the author of Hebrews reminds us that others have walked this journey before us. Their testimony encourages us to keep going until we too finish our journey just as well.

(A) Going on faith requires perseverance to keep going

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses – Hebrews 12:1

- “Therefore” connects Hebrews 12 to Hebrews 11, which recounts how the faithful men and women persevered in faith despite difficulties.
 - Noah — He built the ark under God's warning of unseen events, standing alone in a culture that did not listen. He persevered for 100 years. (Hebrews 11:7)
 - Abraham — He stepped out in obedience without knowing where God was leading him. In spite of uncertainty, he kept going in faith all his life, persevering until he was 100 years old before his son Isaac came. (Hebrews 11:8–10)
 - Moses and the Exodus generation — Moses chose wisely, considering the reproach of Christ of greater value than the treasures of Egypt. When the people broke faith, Moses provided the leadership to pull them back to God. (Hebrews 11:25–26).
- They were faithful people who continued to trust God and His word throughout their journey of faith. Because of this trust, they remained committed to doing His will, no matter how difficult the journey became.
- God wants the knowledge of these witnesses surrounding us to spur us on, to encourage us to finish this race: the God who sustained them will also sustain us.

(B) The Call to Keep Going — Running the Race of Faith

Hebrews 12:1-3, shows us how to run this race of faith: lay aside what hinders us, run with endurance, and look to Jesus.

1. Lay Aside – Every weight and sin that ensnare us

Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us. – Hebrews 12:1

a) What are the weights that hinder us?

- Paul says in 1 Cor 6:12, “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful.” Something may be permissible, but not spiritually beneficial; something may not be sinful in itself yet gain mastery over us.
- Things such as hobbies or leisure that are wholesome, but if they occupy so much time that they take priority over spiritual exercise, they constitute such a weight.
 - Career becomes a weight when we put success before obeying God.
 - Financial security becomes a weight when we are afraid to give generously.
 - Comfort zone living becomes a weight when we are unwilling to make sacrifices for God.
 - Past hurts become a weight when we are unwilling to forgive others.
- Mark 10:17–22 — The rich young ruler had tried to keep God’s commandments. Yet when Jesus called him to give up his possessions and follow Him, he walked away sorrowful. His wealth had become something he was unwilling to surrender in order to follow Jesus.
- We may sincerely say we want to follow Jesus. But what happens when following Him challenges our comfort, ambitions, security, or preferences? These aren't necessarily sins, but they are heavy. They sap your spiritual energy until you no longer have the strength to run.

b) What are the sins that ensnare us?

- The word “ensnares” means to trap or entangle. Like a runner whose legs become caught in a rope, sin can restrict us and prevent us from running freely in our journey of faith.
- Sin is deceptive because it can make disobedience appear acceptable. What begins as a small compromise can become a repeated habit. Over time, we may even justify our behaviour and become comfortable with it.
 - Bitterness — We hold on to an offence until we find it increasingly difficult to forgive.
 - Pride — We become so concerned about being right that we refuse correction.
 - Dishonesty — One lie leads to another as we try to cover up the first.
 - Jealousy — Constant comparison makes it difficult to rejoice in the blessings of others.
- Sins involving covering up – when we want to look good in front of others.

2 Samuel 11 – David committed adultery with Bathsheba and tried to cover up his sin when she became pregnant. Instead of repenting, he arranged for her husband Uriah to be killed, showing how one sin can lead to another when left unaddressed.
- The danger is not only that we sin, but that we stop recognising our need to repent. Sin that is left unchallenged can gradually gain control over our hearts and hinder our walk with God.

c) How do we lay these things aside?

- Laying aside every sin requires sanctification. ‘Sanctification’ means being set apart for God and made holy. It is an ongoing process that requires us to respond actively to God's Word and depend on the Holy Spirit.

- Therefore, take time daily to read His Word and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal sin in our lives. When He convicts us, we must respond with repentance and a willingness to change. This may mean setting boundaries, changing our priorities, or letting go of unhealthy habits. We take responsibility to act, but the power to change comes from the Holy Spirit.
 - Going-On Faith requires us to disentangle ourselves from unhealthy habits.
 - Personal reflection: What habits are God calling me to lay aside today?
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2. Run with endurance – The race God has set before us

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. – Hebrews 12:1

a) What is endurance?

- The Christian life is not a short sprint but a marathon race of faith. The author of Hebrews calls believers to run with endurance because the journey will not always be easy.
- The Greek word for endurance is “hupomoné”, which carries the idea of remaining steadfast under pressure. It means that when life becomes difficult, we don’t give up. Instead, we continue trusting and persevering until we finish the race.

b) What does endurance look like in everyday life?

- Abraham obeyed God's call to leave his homeland without knowing where he was going. He lived as a stranger in a foreign land, waiting for God's promises to be fulfilled. Hebrews 11:13 tells us that he died in faith without receiving the fullness of what was promised. Yet he continued trusting God.
- Likewise, some of us have been praying for our children, waiting for a breakthrough in our families, struggling at work, or serving faithfully without seeing results. Endurance means continuing to trust and obey God even when nothing seems to change.

c) How do we develop endurance?

- In 1983, 61-year-old Australian farmer Cliff Young entered an 875-km ultramarathon from Sydney to Melbourne. Despite his age, he kept a steady pace and won the race in just over five days, demonstrating remarkable endurance.
 - How did Cliff Young develop such remarkable endurance? It wasn't overnight. For years, he had been running long distances while working on his farm. His endurance was built through years of consistent effort.
 - And the same is true of our journey of faith. Spiritual endurance doesn't develop overnight. Endurance is part of our ongoing sanctification. God uses difficulties to develop perseverance, character, and hope (Romans 5:3–4), shaping us to become more like Christ as we continue trusting and obeying Him.
 - Personal reflection: When following Christ becomes difficult, do I remain obedient or choose the easier path?
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3. Look unto Jesus – His example

Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross... - Hebrews 12:2-3

a) What does it mean to “look unto Jesus”?

- The Greek word for “looking” is *aphoraō*, which carries the meaning of looking away from everything else in order to fix our attention on one person or thing.
- Think of a runner in a race. He cannot keep looking behind him or comparing himself with the runners beside him. He must keep his eyes focused on where he is going.
- Looking unto Jesus means deliberately turning our attention away from whatever distracts us and fixing our faith, trust and dependence on Him.

b) Why must we look unto Jesus?

- Hebrews 12:2–3 tells us that Jesus endured the cross, despised its shame and endured hostility from sinners. But His suffering was not limited to the cross. Throughout His earthly life, Jesus faced temptation, rejection, opposition and deep anguish.
- Yet Jesus looked beyond the suffering to the joy set before Him — the fulfilment of the Father's will and the salvation accomplished through His sacrifice. And after completing His sacrifice, He sat down at the right hand of God.
- If Jesus endured the cross and completed the work the Father gave Him, we can look to Him for the strength to persevere in the race set before us.

c) How do we keep looking unto Jesus?

- Hebrews 12:3 says, “Consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.”
 - The word “consider” calls us to think carefully about Jesus — who He is, what He has done, what He endured and why He endured it. This means reflecting on how Jesus endured and allowing His example to shape our responses.
 - When obedience is costly, remember Jesus in Gethsemane and choose to obey God despite the sacrifice.
 - When people hurt us, remember how Jesus endured rejection and choose forgiveness over bitterness.
 - When we see little fruit, remember how Jesus endured the cross and continue faithfully, trusting God with the results.
 - Going-On Faith is not simply about trying harder to finish the race. It is about continually looking to Jesus, trusting in His finished work and allowing Him to transform us as we follow Him.
 - Personal reflection: when following Christ becomes difficult, am I responding more like Jesus?
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