

12

The Runner's Discipline

Hebrews 12

We often wonder why thousands of marathoners seem to enjoy punishing themselves in those grueling races. Certainly, for most, it's not the hope of winning. What is it then? Explaining it to his readers, writer Art Carey said, "The real joy of the Boston Marathon is just finishing, just winning the contest with yourself—doing what you have set out to do."¹

GROUP DISCUSSION. Why is perseverance usually not at the top of the list of the qualities we most admire in people?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. What are your faith-race goals?

This chapter focuses on the disciplines of faith. Like the heroes mentioned in chapter 11, believers are called to stay in the faith race until the end. *Read Hebrews 12.*

1. What hindrances and entanglements get in the way of your Christian faith race (v. 1)? Why?

2. Up to this point in the letter, how has the writer encouraged perseverance by pointing to Jesus?

3. What value is it to keep your eyes on Jesus (vv. 2-3)?

How do you accomplish this?

4. What discipline of the Hebrews do you think the writer alludes to (vv. 3-4, 7; 11:35-38)?

5. How do the values of God's discipline cited here help us to respond positively to discipline (vv. 10-12)?

6. How have you been able to “strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees” when under discipline (v. 12)?

7. Identify the writer’s specific instructions in verses 14-17.

What principles are they based on?

8. How could you identify a “bitter root” or a “godless Esau” in your life (vv. 15-16)?

9. What encouragement do you find in verses 18-24 to run the faith race with perseverance?

10. We’ve all been tempted to drop out of the race. Why would the warning of verses 25-29 cause us to reconsider?

11. In what ways does your worship reflect (or fail to reflect) the fact that God is a “consuming fire” (v. 29)?

Fixing your eyes on Jesus, confess your sins. Ask him for the determination to keep following him, regardless of the cost.

Now or Later

What circumstances feel like a spiritual marathon in your life?

What can you do this week to regain your strength and resolve to keep running your faith race? Look for help in your church and community.