

Running by the Rules

Hebrews 13

Ben Johnson of Canada was stripped of the Olympic gold medals he won at Seoul in 1988 because he broke the rules about drug use. Similarly, the Christian's faith race is much more than a sprint to the finish line. It's a race that brings glory to God by the way the runners behave.

GROUP DISCUSSION

How do you account for the attitude among some Christians who apparently think that it does not matter how they live, as long as they are "saved" or "belong to the church"?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

On what do you base your assurance of salvation? What have you learned from your study of Hebrews that has given you hope, encouragement and strength for your faith race?

In the concluding chapter, the writer to the Hebrews sketches a variety of duties to God and humanity. Together they reveal an exalted level of personal morality and duty. *Read Hebrews*

1. Verses 1-3 tie in with verse 16. What actions are described here?
In what sense should these actions be considered "sacrifices" to God?
2. Sexual purity is one of God's absolutes (v. 4). How do you account for sexual impurity among professing Christians?
3. What facts about God help keep you from loving money (vv. 5-6)?
4. Obligations to spiritual leaders are laid out in verses 7, 17-18. What is here that we should follow?

5. How can you do this in your church?
6. For their part, what should spiritual leaders be doing?
7. Suppose someone challenged you to prove the flat claim of verse 8. Based on Hebrews, what would you say?
8. The writer cannot resist another magnificent portrait of Jesus, again set against the backdrop of the old system (vv. 9-10). What new application is made of Jesus' suffering and which teachings have you encountered before in Hebrews (vv. 13-14)?
9. In what sense is our praise a sacrifice to God (v. 15)?
10. What insights do you gain about the writer (vv. 18-19, 22-25)?
11. Verses 20-21 are a benediction, a summary prayer. In making it a personal prayer, what kind of "equipment" would you ask God for? Why?
12. On the basis of your study of Hebrews, what do you think God would like to "work" in you that would please him?

Allow thoughts of praise and thanksgiving to fill your mind and heart. Give your will to Christ. Ask him to enable you to keep all of the injunctions in this chapter.