

Spiritual Exercise in the New Year

Hebrews 12:1-3

12-28-25

1 Timothy 4:8, “For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.”

Hebrews 12:1-3 “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

I. Four Spiritual Exercises

A. Remember Forerunners of the Faith. (vs. 1a)

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses...”

Hebrews 11:39, “These were all commended for their faith.”

Q. What heroes of the faith can you learn from today?

1 Corinthians 4:16, “Therefore I urge you to imitate me.”

Q. Who might be imitating you and who can you mentor?

B. Remove Hindrances to your Faith. (vs. 1b)

“Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles...”

2 Timothy 2:5, “If anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor’s crown unless he competes according to the rules.”

Q. What is hindering your faith today?

1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Q. What sin has you all tangled up today?

C. Run the Race of Faith. (vs. 1c)

"And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." Greek 'agon' = race (struggle or fight)

Q. What are you struggling with in your faith today?

1 Corinthians 9:24-25, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever."

2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

D. Recover the Focus of Faith. (vs. 2-3)

"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

Colossians 3:1-2, "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things."

Luke 9:51, "As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem."

Q. Have you resolved to fix your eyes on Jesus?

How can we apply this lesson to our lives today?

A. Study the heroes of faith in the Bible and read some Christian biographies in 2026.

1 Corinthians 10:6, 11 speaking of the Israelites – "Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warning for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come."

B. Get rid of any sin that is hindering your faith.

1 Peter 2:11, "Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul."

C. Get in the race...it's a marathon!

Philippians 3:12-14, "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

D. Focus on God's Word and living for Him.

2 Timothy 2:15, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."