

SERMON NOTES: Hebrews 12:3-17

Question: “How can we overcome the desire to quit the race?”

Hebrews 12:1–17 (NIV84)

1 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. 2 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. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

FOCUS ON THE RACE

- LIGHTEN THE LOAD
- RUN WITH PERSEVERANCE
- FOLLOW THE LEADER

4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons:

“My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline,
and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,
6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves,
and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.”

7 Endure hardship as discipline; **God is treating you as sons.** For what son is not disciplined by his father? 8 If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. 9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! 10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but **God disciplines us for our good**, that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, **it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.**

EMBRACE THE DISCIPLINE

- GOD IS TREATING US AS HIS CHILDREN
- GOD HAS OUR GOOD IN MIND
- GOD’S DISCIPLINE IS WORTH THE PAIN

12 Therefore, **strengthen** your feeble arms and weak knees. **13** “Make level paths for your feet,” so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

14 Make every effort to **live in peace with all men and to be holy**; without holiness no one will see the Lord. **15** See to it that **no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many**. **16** See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. **17** Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears.

WORK THE PROGRAM

- **EXCHANGE WEAKNESS FOR STRENGTH**
- **WATCH YOUR FORM**
- **KEEP TRACK OF YOUR PROGRESS**

CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE: Hebrews 12:3 - 17

OPENING

- In your group, can you recall a few examples of how a disadvantage actually proved to be a decisive advantage?

GOING DEEPER

- What are some things that are weighing you down in your life of faith? How does the teaching we received in Hebrews address these issues?
- Discuss a few ways to build our endurance to run the race of faith?
- What was the primary reason Jesus persevered? How does your answer relate to Hebrews 11:1?

CHALLENGE

In his book Outliers, Malcolm Gladwell tells the strange story of Christopher Langan, a genius with a staggering IQ of 195. (For some perspective, Einstein's IQ was 150). During high school, Langan could ace any foreign language test by skimming the textbook 2-3 minutes before the exam. He got a perfect score on his SAT, even though at one point he fell asleep. But Langan failed to use his exceptional gifts and ended up working on a horse farm in rural Missouri.

According to Gladwell, Langan never had a community to help him capitalize on his gifts.

Gladwell summarizes the story of Langan in one sentence: "[Langan] had to make his way alone, and no one—not rock stars, not professional athletes, not software billionaires, and not even geniuses—ever makes it alone."

Malcolm Gladwell, Outliers (Little, Brown and Company, 2008), p. 115

In Hebrews 12:1-17, what help does God provide that will keep us in the race?