



PRESENCE - Week 5

RUN the RACE

Hebrews 12:1-11

CONNECT

As a group take time to TALK ABOUT and PRAY ABOUT:

- **Worship Night, January 11th @ 6:30-8P**
- **Men's Retreat is coming January 10-20!** Who is going? Perhaps take time after the group to ask questions and discuss the retreat.

REGISTER at www.hacamps.org/mens-retreat.html

1. Are you a runner? Have you ever been? What do you like/hate about running?

READ TOGETHER

Take some time as a group to read our passage from Sunday.

Read Heb 12:1-11

DISCUSS TOGETHER

2. What stuck out to you or what challenged you from this week's message or the bible reading?
3. Who has been an example of faith to you? Why did you choose them?
4. What 'encumbrance entangled you' in 2018? You can keep it kind of generic or you can get really specific.
 - a. What would make 2019 different than 2018?
5. Do you agree with the statement "where the eyes go the body goes?" Do you have an example of this in your life?
6. What has helped you to fix your eyes on Jesus in your daily life?
7. Do you tend to act differently when you forget that you're part of God's family?
 - a. If so, why? What impact does being God's son/daughter have on you?

NEXT

Based on what we've looked at this week...

- For 2019 will you "lay down what takes you down"?
- Who can you look to as you "study the faithful" people in your life?
- What new thing did you learn from other group members that might help you "fix your eyes on Jesus"?
- What do you need to do NEXT?
- How can we HELP each other?

CONNECT

Take some time to CONNECT together and PRAY for one another

- Are there any areas of your life that we can celebrate?
- Are there any areas of your life where we can help?
- Are there any areas of your life that we can be praying about?

FURTHER READING

Question: "What is the meaning of Hebrews 12:2?"

Answer: [Hebrews 12:2](#) says that we should be "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

In [Hebrews 11](#), the writer goes through a long list of faithful examples that the readers of the letter would do well to follow. He begins chapter 12 with this: "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." So believers are pictured as being in a race. They can look at the examples that have gone before them. The people in [Hebrews 11](#) are the "cloud of witnesses" mentioned in [Hebrews 12:1](#). In order to "run" effectively, believers need to get rid of sin and other entanglements. People who are serious about running races do not carry extra baggage—you have never seen an Olympic runner carrying a suitcase or talking on a cell phone during the race. Everything that is not absolutely essential is left behind. And to win the race, the runner must finish. The athlete must not give up before finishing. Perseverance is required.

The author of Hebrews then calls believers to consider the ultimate example of perseverance—Jesus. Runners in an athletic competition cannot be distracted by peripheral objects. As runners in the race of life, we must "fix our eyes on Jesus." As we run, we must be looking at Him in faith. He is more than our example; He is our final destination. We must run toward Him with all our might, in the promise that we will be conformed to His image.

[Hebrews 12:2](#) says that Jesus is the "pioneer" of our faith. He is the one who blazed the trail. He is the one who made the way into the Holy of Holies so that the rest of us could follow into God's presence ([Hebrews 10:19-20](#)). Jesus is also the "perfecter" of our faith—He is the one who brought it to completion. He did not just start it; He finished it. The verse goes on to explain just how He finished.

First, [Hebrews 12:2](#) says that Jesus endured the cross. There in Gethsemane, He determined to carry out the will of the Father ([Matthew 26:39](#)). He did this by focusing on the joy that was to come. He knew that He would be resurrected and restored to the place of glory that He had with the Father from the beginning ([John 17:5](#)). He looked forward with joy to the people He would save. He willingly gave His life to save His sheep ([John 10:10-11](#)).

Second, [Hebrews 12:2](#) says that Jesus scorned the shame of the cross. [Crucifixion](#) was a gruesome, tortuous death, and it included public humiliation and shame. Jesus was ridiculed as He was hanging on

the cross. The sign hung above Him read “King of the Jews,” a cruel irony since it was true, but those who murdered Him did not believe it. Others on the ground mocked Him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One” ([Luke 23:35](#)). The cruel irony is that He could only save others by not saving Himself. He was truly the Messiah, and this prevented Him from coming down off the cross. He was the Chosen One, and He had been chosen for the very purpose of dying as God’s sacrifice for sin. It is also an irony that God would deliver Him, but only after He endured the cross.

Third, [Hebrews 12:2](#) says that, after Jesus’ death, God raised Him from the dead, and Jesus ascended into heaven where He now sits at the right hand of God the Father. This signifies Jesus’ authority (at the [right hand](#)) and the fact that His work is finished (He sat down). This position is contrasted with the priests at the time who were standing and offering daily sacrifices ([Hebrews 10:11-13](#)).

The original audience of the [book of Hebrews](#) seems to have been Jews who had professed faith in Christ but who were now facing persecution from the unbelieving Jews. They were tempted to turn back, to renounce Christ and to go back to the temple and the sacrificial system. Believers who read the book of Hebrews today are faced with a similar temptation: the world and what we have left behind are always calling to us, wanting us to go back—if not to permanently return, at least to go back for visits as often as possible. But we are running a race. There is not time to backtrack or dillydally. The race we are running is probably more like a military-style obstacle course than a nice and neat Olympic race. There are real dangers along the way, but we must keep moving forward. We have the examples of past saints to follow, but our supreme example is Jesus Himself, the one who blazed the way, finished the race, paid for our sins, and is now seated in the place of highest honor and authority. We look to Him, not only as our example but as our source of strength.

From <https://www.gotquestions.org/Hebrews-12-2.html>