

## **Let's Run**

### **Hebrews 12:1-2**

With physical health, we know that real fitness only comes with effort. The same is true for our spiritual health. The writer describes the Christian life as being like a race, we need to throw off stuff that hinders us running, we need to run with endurance, and we need to look to Jesus. But first he reminds us of those who have gone before.

#### **The crowd in the stand**

We are surrounded by those who have run this race before us. However lonely it sometimes feels running this race of faith, you are surrounded by this immense crowd, cheering you home.

But they aren't just spectators, they are witnesses: their lives testify to God's faithfulness.

#### **Throw off what hinders**

In a race with eternal consequences you can't afford to give space to stuff that will hinder you or trip you up, you've got to throw it off.

The writer says there are weights, things that are not necessarily sinful, but neither are they helpful. They hinder you. It might be a possession, a hobby or a friendship. When we sense the Holy Spirit convicting us that something needs to go, we need to let go.

But there is also sin, that saps our energy and time and it eats away at our relationship with God. It's like running with baggy clothing. We need to let sin go if we are to run well.

#### **Run with endurance**

The Christian life is not a sprint, it is an endurance event. It should not surprise us that it can be hard, and we feel like we cannot go on. We are called to endure, trials, criticisms, desertions, temptations. How can we do that? By looking to Jesus.

#### **Look to Jesus**

As the runner fixes his eyes on the finishing line and the prize, we are to fix our eyes on Jesus, not looking elsewhere, not allowing distractions to trip us up.

But what does it mean to look to Jesus? It means to enjoy a deep, rich relationship with Him, a relationship that gives us all that we need for the race. Jesus is the founder of our faith: the source of all that we need. And he is the perfecter: he will finish what he has started. Thankfully, it does not depend on us to cross the finish line, but on him.

Jesus endured the shame of the cross for the reward of joy. He is our supreme example in the race. But, the shame of the cross also tells us that the disciples didn't make the story up (who would?). It tells us something dramatic must have happened (the resurrection) to persuade them Jesus was the Son of God. It tells us the depth of God's love for us, and knowing that gives us strength for the race ahead.