

# RUNNING THE CHRISTIAN RACE

SERVANT LEADERS



# RUNNING THE CHRISTIAN RACE: INTRODUCTION

*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. Hebrews 12:1-3*

#### **4 Components:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ for the race
2. \_\_\_\_\_ for the race
3. \_\_\_\_\_ the race
4. \_\_\_\_\_ the race



**QUALIFYING FOR THE RACE**

**Questions:**

- 1. Is it possible that someone could run the entire Christian race, get to the finish line and hear, "Get away from me, you evildoer, for I never knew you!"? Let's take a look at Matthew 7:21-23:
- 2. Who is the "Cloud of Witnesses" in Hebrews 12?
- 3. How did they qualify? BY FAITH - PUTTING THEIR FAITH IN ACTION

**The 2 Kinds of Faith Found in the Bible:**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_

**James 2:4-14 & Hebrews 10:38-39**

SIMPLE FAITH	SAVINGFAITH

**Questions for personal reflection:**

What type of faith am I relying on? Am I a true son of God? Am I relying on someone else's qualification? Does my faith reflect a genuine life-change? What am I going to do about it?



## TRAINING FOR THE RACE

### 2 Essential Components of Training:

1. Discipline by your \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

#### I. Discipline by your Coach / Trainer

4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, "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 the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son." 7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? 8 If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. 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 spirits and live! 10 They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order 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. Hebrews 12:4-11

#### Hebrews 12:4-11

- A. Our trainer is \_\_\_\_\_ - Our Heavenly \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. Goal is \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 10).
- C. It is \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 11).
- D. The pain is \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 11).
- E. It produces a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 11).

#### II. Self-Discipline

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. Hebrews 12:12-13



**Hebrews 12:12-13**

A. Find your \_\_\_\_\_.

B. Develop a \_\_\_\_\_.

**Examples:**

<b>WEAKNESSES</b>	<b>SAMPLE TRAINING EXERCISE</b>
Patience	
Love	
Generosity	
Selfishness	
Self-control	
Laziness	

**Let's practice:**

<b>WEAKNESSES</b>	<b>YOUR PERSONAL TRAINING EXERCISE</b>



## RUNNING THE RACE

### Part 1 - \_\_\_\_\_ (Hebrews 12)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ - Violation of a God-given \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

Examples:

2. \_\_\_\_\_ - That which \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_.

Examples:

### Questions for Personal Reflection:

1. Am I tangled up in any sinful habits?
2. Are there hobbies that take up too much of my time?
3. Are there friendships that bring me down spiritually?
4. Are there habits that hinder my walk with God?
5. Are there personal goals that slow me down spiritually?
6. Are there any fears that keep me from obeying God?

### Part 2 -RUNNING WITH PERSEVERANCE

"\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are inversely proportional."

The \_\_\_\_\_ the level of excess weight, the \_\_\_\_\_ the perseverance.

The \_\_\_\_\_ the level of excess weight, the \_\_\_\_\_ the perseverance.

### Part 3 -STAYING ON THE COURSE

"We should avoid all \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_."



Examples of shortcuts and detours:

DESIRABLE END	POTENTIAL SHORTCUTS OR DETOURS



## **FINISHING THE RACE**

*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. Hebrews 12:2-3*

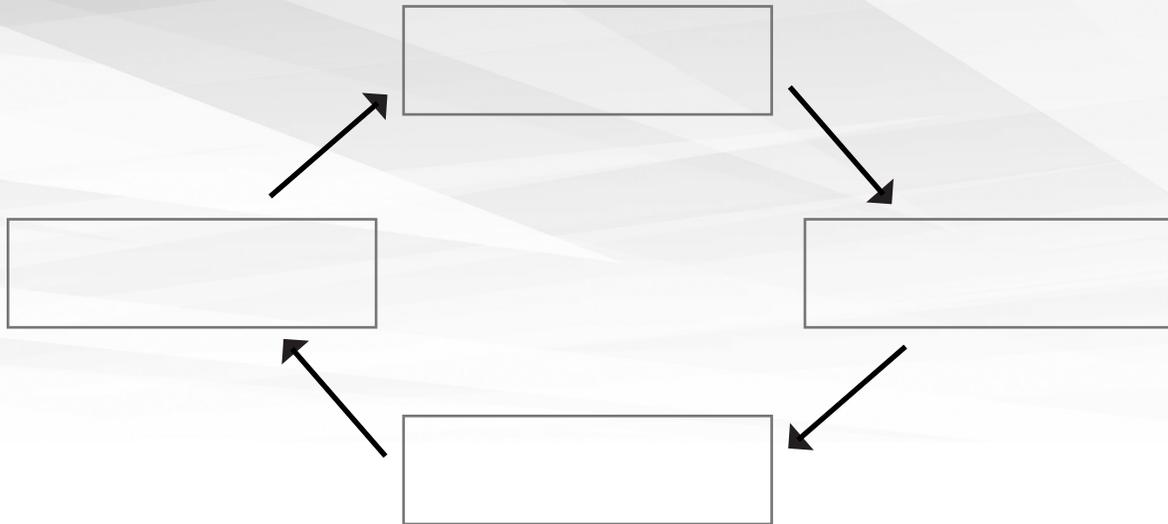
**The Goal:**

**The Process:**

**The Problem:**



## FINISHING THE RACE



1. Our \_\_\_\_\_ controls our \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Our \_\_\_\_\_ determine our \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Our \_\_\_\_\_ become \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Our HABITS build \_\_\_\_\_.

### Question:

Where do we break into the cycle to make it work for us, instead of against us?

### Option A: CHARACTER

Problem:

Can I just wake up one day and say, "Yesterday, I was bad. Today, I am good." Not really. Our character is who we are. We can't just decide that we aren't who we are. This is the exact definition of "deceiving yourself." 1 Corinthians 3:18 says, "Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become "fools" so that you may become wise." You can't just decide to be wise and "poof!" you're wise. There is a process (which begins with understanding that you're a fool!) If we try to reverse the cycle by starting with our character, we deceive ourselves. We call ourselves good, but we're still bad.



## **Option B: HABITS**

Problem:

Can we make a personal commitment to reduce our sinful patterns, bit-by-bit over time? It's important to remember that we're talking about sinful patterns. Some things are not sin in moderation, like a bowl of ice cream. It becomes sin when we eat in gluttony. In this case, we could reduce the frequency of the action, thus making it perfectly ok to eat ice cream. But when it comes to sinful behavior, can we change our habits by giving less occasion for the sin while permitting it in diminishing amounts over time? No. That can never work! Why? Because we will develop the habit of permitting sin (even in small amounts.) Sin, by its very nature, tends to grow, not shrink.

1 Corinthians 5:6 says, "Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough?" The idea is that once we see sin as permissible, it will spread. It will contaminate the rest. This is the foundation of Paul's argument for church discipline. It's not so much the gravity of the sin that destroys the church, it's the tolerance of sin that does so.

## **Option C: ACTIONS**

Problem:

Is it enough to say, I will no longer do "X." "X" could be anything from looking at pornography to sharing confidential information to your friends. Can we just shut off our sinful actions as if they had an on/off switch?

Imagine you just finished washing your car. The water is still running out of the hose and you decide it's time to turn it off. So, you try to cap the end of the hose with your thumb. What happens? For some, it doesn't work at all. It only causes a bigger mess. Others who have stranger hands can make it work... for a while. Eventually though, the thumb will tire and the water will spray out again.

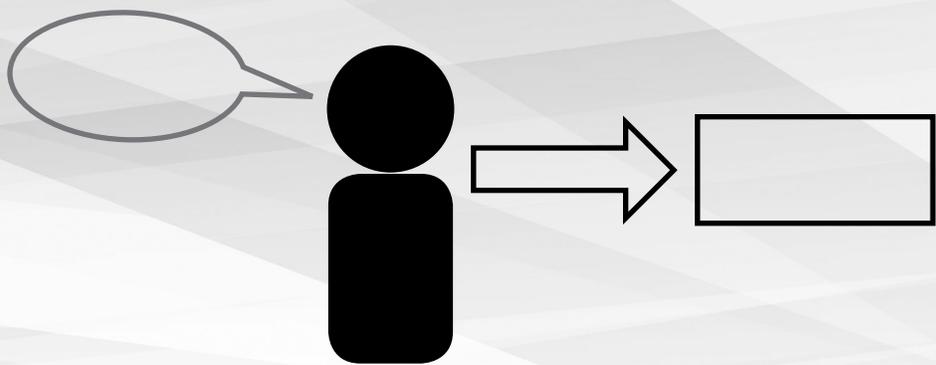
It's the same with our actions. A disciplined person with a strong will (or even a stubborn person) can just decide to stop an action, and it will work... for a while. But if we always maintain the desire to sin, over time, it will wear us down.

## **Option D: THOUGHTS**

*17 So I tell you this and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. 20 You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. 21 Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. 22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*  
Ephesians 4:17-24



The Key to Overcoming Sin: \_\_\_\_\_



Believing \_\_\_\_\_ will always lead to wrong \_\_\_\_\_. Renovation of the \_\_\_\_\_ replaces the lies with the \_\_\_\_\_ of God's Word.



## SO WHAT FROM HERE?

From here, we will focus on 3 things:

### 1. Discipline from our Trainer, God (The Spiritual Disciplines)

- Prayer
- Fasting
- Bible Memorization
- etc.

### 2. Self-Discipline (Fruit of the Spirit)

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Forbearance
- etc.

### 3. Renovation of the Mind (Process for Overcoming Sin)

- Put on
- Put off
- Renew the Mind

