

STUDY NOTES

SUMMER 2019

at New City Church

www.newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message “Run Well and Finish Strong” on 6/30/19 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these study notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 12:1-2

RUNNING DIFFERENT RACES

The writer of Hebrews compares living the Christian life to running a race. Even though it's hard, we can run well and we can finish strong. We all have a different race. Yes, the race is difficult, but we have Jesus and the Holy Spirit that empowers us to run with endurance.

- *Why do you think the Christian life is compared with athletic metaphors multiple times in Scripture? What parallels do you see, or have you experienced?*

BY REMEMBERING IT CAN BE DONE

The writer of Hebrews says that we are surrounded by “a great cloud of witnesses.” What he means by this is that we don't have to run alone. We can look at the people who have already done it, and it can be a reminder that we can run well. Looking to others can give us a sense of encouragement.

When it isn't easy, look at those who have walked before.

- *How has the faith of others been an encouragement to you personally?*

BY REMOVING WHATEVER HOLDS US BACK

Whatever holds you back, get rid of it. So that you can run with endurance the race that is set before you in Jesus. One of the primary things that hold us back is sin. Sin can come in many different forms, but the root of sin here is the lack of faith. The writer of Hebrews tells us to lay that sin aside.

However, it isn't always sin that holds us back. Sometimes good things can hold us back from what God wants from you.

“Good” is often best's worst enemy.

- *How does sin feel like a weight that keeps you from running toward Jesus?*
- *Describe a time when you realized that something good held you back from something better*

BY REFOCUSING ON WHO WE ARE IN JESUS

Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith. Before Jesus went to the cross, he had to walk in the garden. It was there where he felt the excruciating pressure of what God called him to do. Jesus ENDURED the cross and DESPISED the shame. Sometimes God calls us to something that is excruciating.

- *Has God ever called you into something that was difficult? If so, how did that go?*

But Christianity isn't masochistic. We aren't just called live a painful life. We can look to the example of Jesus. While he was called to something excruciating, he did it for the joy set before him. That joy was each of us.

Jesus ran the earthly race well so that we could live in eternity in relationship with him.

- *Especially when facing difficulty in life—why do you think it is important to remember that our relationship with Jesus was important enough to him to give up everything for us?*
- *Pray with each other to focus on who we are to Christ this week.*