

Consider Jesus: Resources for the Race Hebrews 12:1-3

In the first three verses of chapter 12, the author reminds us why it is so important to "consider" the supremacy of Jesus Christ for all of life. In Him, we lay hold of every resource needed for living as God intends for us to live.

Life on earth can be like an agonizing, cross-country race - with ditches, rocks, streams, briars (cow patties!) and, of course, mostly we run head long into the winds of a fallen world. Regardless, each of us needs to run "the race that is set before us" - not necessarily the one we would choose! We will certainly have need of "endurance" (three times in vv1-3!). The ability to "stand + under" the pressure, the strain... to keep on running even when we feel like quitting is essential.

It will help, if along the way, we learn to "lay aside" certain things that only make the running more difficult: the "entanglements" of self-absorption (=sin) and the "encumbrances" of erroneous beliefs (i.e., "life should be fair/fun") -along with anything else that didn't come from God in the first place.

But most importantly, running this race well to the end requires a personal familiarity with the Author and Finisher/Perfecter of faith - Jesus Christ the Lord! After all, He is the first to enter the race and finish it... PERFECTLY! And His was certainly a life beset with difficulties - resistance and rejection, opposition and persecution, criticism and crucifixion. How did He do it? HE KEPT HIS FOCUS FIXED ON HIS FATHER! (Jo 5:19; 6:38; 8:29; 14:10) - not on His circumstances, adversaries, or Himself. He let these very things press Him into His Father - He depended upon His Father for all He needed, derived from His Father everything necessary to run and finish well.

Endurance comes from an "inner-stantial", rather than a "circum-stantial", perspective. Some see only the "race" (=agonia), He saw through it into "the joy set before Him". With His heart and mind on the things above (Col 3:1-4), He layed hold of the holy gladness rooted in the unseen things of God - the joy of His Father's "well done"... the joy of blessing others. And that joy become an energizing power upon His life - "the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh 8:10).

Don't get the wrong idea - Jesus is not merely our "model" or even our "motive"... HE IS OUR "MEANS" for running well in the race set before us. The life of faith in all its perfections abides in us - we look away from all else to Him and trust Him to be His faithful, enduring Self in and through us. Then we realize the promise of Psalm 19:5 when the race gets hard—"strong men start to run their course with joy".

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Greetings

As we "March" into a new month (or, crawl, race, glide or fight our way in), let's do so "fixed" on Jesus. In with the "Lamb" of God, out with the "Lion" of Judah, lets "consider Him" as the beginner and finisher of our faith, no matter what storms we face or blue-bird sky days we enjoy.

Faith chooses - it is constantly choosing and acting upon what it believes to be true. Will we believe appearances or what the righteous judgment of God tells us? (Jo 7:24) Will we trust in what we see or what God says? (II Cor 5:7) Will we "see with" or "see through"? (Eph 5:20)

God is in the business of purifying our faith - of inviting us to exchange our "feeling" faith, our "understanding" faith, our "evidence" faith for a "Because You Say So" faith. Faith that has no witness, at times, except Him - His character and His "say so".

Let's "march" into this month taking our "orders" from Him, subordinating our body/soul reactions to His Spirit truth, exchanging our "story" for His "story" and see, by month's end, whether or not the winds of His peace, His joy, His contentment are blowing more perceptibly upon our lives!

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