

## JESUS &amp; THE JOY

REVIEW: From **verse 1**

- Realizing we are surrounded by a "great cloud of witnesses"
- Becoming "*unburdened*" and "*unentangled*"
- Understanding that this "*race*" will be something of an "*agony*" [1 Tim.6:12 "*fight*"]
- Knowing that this "*race*" has been **set for us --- by God himself** and that we are running it **together**: "*let us ... let us ... set before us*"

**PLUS**, to stay motivated: "**keep THE FINISH LINE in mind**" and "**keep JESUS in mind**" as a PREVIEW of **verse 2**.

**Hebrews 12:1-2** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Now here in **verse 2**:

**THE SIMPLE, ESSENTIAL TIP FOR "RUNNING" WITH ENDURANCE**

THE ULTIMATE ENDURANCE TIP: Sometimes there is a "tip" which is both simple AND essential.

e.g. Two such tips for two newlyweds: "*Be nice and don't fight.*"

THE SIMPLE, ESSENTIAL TIP FOR "RUNNING" WITH ENDURANCE: Focus on Jesus as you run.

**Hebrews 12:2** looking to Jesus... [NASB: **Hebrews 12:2** "fixing our eyes on Jesus"]

THREE REASONS why we should focus on Jesus ( We can choose --- and who --- to focus on )

FIRST REASON

a) Because of who he is.

**Hebrews 12:2** ... the founder and perfecter of our faith.

"*the founder* [author, pioneer, beginner, starter] → *and the perfecter* [finisher, completer] *of our faith*" ["the race"]

→ **A MAN WALKS INTO A RESTAURANT.** The maître d' asks: "*Who do you think you are?*"  
[As Jesus walks into your life and asks to be seated; and to be served]

**Hebrews 1:1-3** Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, **through whom also he created the world**. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and **he upholds the universe by the word of his power...** → As the maître d' of your life, what have you said?

A SECOND REASON we should fix our eyes on Jesus

b) Because of what he endured.

**Hebrews 12:2** ... endured the cross...

Compare the race that we are **called to endure**. His specific "agony."

He endured death by crucifixion: *shame, pain and death*.

A Roman idea (from the Carthagians): A form of **execution** deliberately designed to **humiliate** and **torture**.

To be compared to what we are being called to endure.

YET ANOTHER REASON we should fix our eyes on Jesus

**c)** Because of how he endured. Learning from the expert: **Bill Rodgers** on running downhill [450 feet]

HIS METHOD: **Hebrews 12:2** ... for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame

We are being told to focus on Jesus rather than the race that is set before us. **And what will we notice as we do?**

i) He focused on the joy that was set before him rather than the cross ("the race") he was called to endure

→ We are to focus on Jesus, and imitating him, to focus on the joy; **"JESUS & THE JOY"**

THE JOY? **Hebrews 12:2** ... and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.  
Close to God. Approved by God. Honoured by God.

And this joy is offered to us. **2 Timothy 2:12** if we endure, we will also reign with him... → **2 Tim.2:15**

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE PAIN AND SUFFERING HE ENDURED? What did he do about all that?

ii) He "despised" the shame. → the **shame** (and **pain** and **death**) of the cross

"DESPISE" means "looked down on, treated with contempt."

+ As in **1 Timothy 4:12**

**Let no one despise you** ("look down on you", "treat you with contempt") **for your youth, but set the believers an example...**

AND SO SHOULD WE look down on the shame and the pain and the death.

However humiliating and painful and even deadly is our experience of obeying and serving God, we should treat all of it with contempt.

**We should roll our eyes and say "Pfffff!"** And fix "eyes of our heart" on **JESUS -- AND THE JOY** he focused on.

**THREE APPROPRIATE, PRACTICAL TIPS FOR ENDURING THIS "RACE":** To stay focused on Jesus and the joy

( **"About West London"** → From **"How to Get Involved"** on our website: [www.wlchurch.org](http://www.wlchurch.org) )

**As was set out last Sunday**

**3.** Find a way to serve

Joining a ministry team: **e.g.** ESL, Sunday morning GROWZONE ministry  
**Seeing Christ at work through, and in, each other**

**Also set out last Sunday.**

**2.** Join one of our small groups

So as not to run all on your own **e.g.** LIFE GROUP,  
COMMUNITY GROUP,  
PRAYER MEETING, etc.  
**Hearing about Christ at work through, and in, each other**

**1.** Worship with us on Sundays

"living stones" in "the temple" where God is worshipped  
Being God's house of worship in a group attachment to Christ.

**"Tasting and touching" Christ: e.g. "COMMUNION" "**

NEXT SUNDAY: **"ENDURANCE. Part 5"** **Hebrews 12:3,4** (Jude St.John)

## DIGGING DEEPER

**Hebrews 12:2**      *looking to Jesus...*

Add to your understanding and appreciation of the One we should be “*looking to*” as we “*run with endurance the race that is set before us*” by considering what was written about him in the Scriptures below.

**THE SIMPLE, ESSENTIAL TIP FOR “RUNNING” WITH ENDURANCE:** Focus on Jesus as you run.

- b) Because of what he endured.

**Hebrews 12:2**    *... for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame*

**Psalms 22:1-31**

**Isaiah 53:1-12**