

Baby Sunday**UNBURDENED, UNENTANGLED**

THIS NEWS SERIES: The privilege of worshipping and serving Christ as **an endurance race**. (Not a sprint)
 + "Endurance" takes many forms, as the artwork on the sermon slides indicates: sometimes, it's *"just hanging on."*

Certainly, in **63 or 64 A.D.**, when "Hebrews" was written, the circumstances of the original readers called for endurance.

64 A.D.	Caesar Nero and the fire in Rome	
66 A.D.	The Jewish Revolt	
68 A.D.	The Roman siege of Jerusalem.	Luke 21:20,21f.

+ THE METAPHOR USED: **a long-distance race**.

Hebrews 12:1 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...

+ THE METAPHORICAL ADVICE:

Hebrews 12:1 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...

TWO SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR ENDURANCE RACERS (HEBREWS 12:1)

THREE "LONG RACES" TO THINK ABOUT: ~ an actual marathon

26.2 miles; 42.195 kilometres

My personal experience: [1978-2007 A.D.]

~ the "marathon" of child-raising (Because this is **"Baby Sunday"**)

An endurance event: sleepless nights, long days, long school-years, long "stages"

An old parent to a young parent: **"Michael, it never ends."**

~ the "marathon" of living for Christ (as in Hebrews 12:1!)

INSTRUCTION #1: Lay aside every weight: Dress lightly.

the runner's advantage in stripping down to minimal clothing,
laying aside the burden of heavy clothing.

PARENTALLY:

parents committed to child-raising excellence making decisions to **"lay aside"** certain aspects of their lives for the sake of their children

e.g. a job that requires *a lot of time away from home*
 a goal or ambition that will preoccupy them
 expensive or time-consuming hobbies
 My 15-year "hiatus" (1984-1997) → very young children

"CHRISTIANLY":

a Christian identifying the goals and ambitions and plans that will make it unnecessarily difficult to serve Christ and **laying them aside**.

My 15-year "hiatus" (1984-1997) → a very big privilege: to be the pastor of this church!

"Michael, you'll never get another opportunity like this one."

1980. Helping to start a youth camp in Indonesia, where all year long, it's **33 degrees C.; 100% !**
"How can I train for a marathon in that???"

"Looking to Jesus" → and doing what he tells us to do: **Matthew 11:28-30** Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **Take my yoke upon you**, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and **you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.**

INSTRUCTION #2: Lay aside ... sin which clings so closely: Double-knot your shoe laces.

[Easier to picture from **NASB**: "the sin which so easily entangles us"]
the runner's very obvious need to tie his shoelaces tightly.

e.g. **Bill Rodgers:**



From 1975-1980, he won four Boston Marathons and four NYC Marathons. (And Fukuoka.)
His first of those eight wins was Boston 1975.



PARENTALLY: parents committed to excellent child-raising freeing themselves from attitudes and practices and habits and expressions and reactions that distance them from God, from whom comes the help you need!

And from attitudes and practices and habits that make them bad examples to their children, e.g. laziness, profanity, outbursts of anger, gossip ...

"CHRISTIANLY": identifying the sins that you are prone to --- and learning how to lay them aside.

A list from the Apostle Paul to consider.

Colossians 3:5-8 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. PARTLY A PERSONAL THING: like gambling for C.S. Lewis "tight with money and a coward"

A list from the Apostle Peter to consider.

1 Peter 2:1 So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.

ONE MORE THING, FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE:

ONE SPECIFIC TIP FOR ENDURANCE RACERS

Q: How to stay motivated?

For months of training? For hours of running?
For years of child-raising?
For decades of living for Christ?

A: Keep your mind on the Finish Line.



And on WHO is waiting for you at the Finish Line

Whether we see Christ standing and waiting for us at the time of our death... At our personal Finish Line

Acts 7:54-57 Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and **Jesus standing at the right hand of God**. And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him.

Or whether we live to experience his return for his people... At the world's Finish Line

2 Timothy 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

NEXT SUNDAY: "ENDURANCE. Part 3"

Hebrews 12:1

(Jude St. John)

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Scripture references: HOLY BIBLE, **English Standard Version**, © 2001, CROSSWAY PUBLICATIONS

DIGGING DEEPER

That **endurance** is a major emphasis in the ***Letter to the Hebrews*** is obvious from the number of very serious warnings issued to the original readers (and so to us.)

Read and think about the following five warnings, and in each case, the specific sort(s) of **endurance** being called for.

1. **Hebrews 2:1-4**

2. **3:7-12**

3. **5:11-14**

4. **10:26-29**

5. **12:25-27**