

# Run With Perseverance

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right. To seek you, to stop seeking you as a precious jewel might be a fool.!

Take out your Bibles, pull up out of your app, whatever, and turn with me to Hebrews 12. That's right, I'm in the New Testament. I always teach that in the Old Testament. The New Testament stuff, strange to me. What's this stuff? No. We have reached the last of the three-part series of Search Me, O God, and Know My Heart.

Over the last couple of weeks, we have explored what happens when we pray that prayer from Psalms 139. Search me, O God, and know my heart.

Try me and know my anxious thoughts. And see if there is any wicked way in me. We have learned that as we ask God to search us, he will do it, and he'll reveal things in us that need to be addressed.

[ 1 : 41 ] He does it by giving us a test. Last week, we learned that love covers a multitude of sins.

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That we should cover the nakedness of others rather than exposing their faults, failures, and sins by telling others about them. In other words, stop the gossip train.

So, over the last two weeks, how are you doing? How have you done this past week, Christian?

Have you struggled with any of this?

Has the Lord spoken to you at all about this in your own life? And keeping it real, which I don't mind exposing my flaws.

[ 2 : 51 ] Not all of them. Some of them you don't get to know. Some of them you don't want to know. But anyway, over this past week, I've struggled. The things he's shown me that he wants me to change.

You know, I try to change it during the week as I'm going through. And I'm faced with those same tests. And I keep my mouth shut for a while.

And then all of a sudden, I find myself, I can't do it anymore. I've got to say something. And then I wind up saying stuff about other people.

Knocking them down. Exposing their faults. Not keeping them covered. I uncover them by talking. It's so weird. Instead of keeping them covered up.

I like to expose other people's faults and stuff. I must, because I do it all the time. You know, the Holy Spirit, during the week, he kept putting up stop signs.

[ 3 : 52 ] Don't go there. Of course, I blow right through those stop signs. No. Those struggles that I have. I need to ask for help in shutting my mouth and have God's compassion and love for others.

That's my struggle. That's my problem. The thing that he's dealing with me. With that, I was reminded of the Apostle Paul when he tells us of his struggles in Romans 7.

I do not understand my own actions. He says, I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Wretched man that I am.

Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

You know, I appreciate Paul's honesty in sharing his struggle. We need to understand this, though, that a war is being waged against the law of my mind that delights in God and the law of sin that dwells in my members.

[ 5 : 16 ] God is sanctifying us day by day, and it's a battle created by our flesh. Some days we lose those battles, and some days we win.

But we all know this. There is complete victory in the end. Hallelujah. Sorry.

Get adjusted here. Last week, I also shared with you about how much I love it when Jesus, spoke and talked to the multitudes, he used everyday objects to illustrate his point.

I didn't give this example, but when he was in Capernaum, the city of Capernaum, and he told the people, it would be better if a millstone was tied around your neck and you were thrown into the sea than to cause one of these little ones to stumble.

You remember that? What was he doing in Capernaum? I mean, what was happening in Capernaum? In Capernaum, the reason why he used those objects is because all around that area, there were millstones, wine presses.

[ 6 : 34 ] And so they got a visual immediately. It would be better if one of these huge millstones would be tied around your neck and thrown into the sea. Right there on the edge of Capernaum is the Sea of Galilee.

They knew exactly. They had the word picture in their mind. So I'm sure that it resonated and it struck. And it's like, oh, I can see what he's saying.

That would not be good to have a millstone tied around my neck and thrown into the sea. It's worse. Ugh. Not good.

Oh, yeah. I don't want to cause one of these little ones to stumble. So that just, I really like that.

Then also the parable of the sea being thrown on various types of soil.

Well, people were farmers and they would understand that concept. So again, the word picture. And then how about a wedding feast? All the different times he talked about wedding feasts and invited guests.

[ 7 : 32 ] Well, people attended weddings all the time. So again, they understood. They got the point that he was trying to make. Well, you know what? He also uses everyday happenings in my life to teach me.

And I wonder if I'm aware of them all. I'm aware of a few of them. A few of them. But am I sensitive to what he's trying to tell me or teach me through those things, those circumstances, those object lessons that he's trying to point out?

Things that happen at work. What happened to work? Am I noticing? How about what a child says? I mean, you can pick up on that. You know, the out of the mouth of babes.

You know, sometimes it's maybe the Lord trying to tell you something about yourself. I don't know what truth. Or how about anything that I'm observing traveling through life?

Again, there are so many different things. I told you last week about seeing kids on the way into church. And I saw the kid that was being instructed by his dad of how to mow the lawn.

[ 8 : 39 ] In fact, yesterday on my way home from being here at church, that there was that boy, the son, by himself, out mowing the lawn this time because dad had taught him how to do it.

And God, through that, God was just reminding me that he takes the time to instruct me as my father to teach me things.

And that was just so comforting. And I just loved that. Also about the parents that are teaching their kids, you know, the little girl walking behind a car that was backing up.

No, no, honey, hold on. This is what it means. Anyway, so I just loved that. I wanted to say that again because it was so cool. There was also evil, evil, evil, evil that happened at my house when I got home last from work Monday.

Evil, I tell you. I was bragging to somebody at work saying just earlier that day, saying that our yard is the envy of the neighborhood because I try to keep it so green and keep it going and everything.

[ 9 : 52 ] And just nurture it and going out there all the time. And so I'm boasting about it and everything. And I get home and the evil has struck. I go in my backyard and it's turning brown.

And I'm going, what is going on here? I'm going, no, no. I water it some more. You need more water. It's been so hot, you pour a little grass.

Don't turn brown on me. I go out. Not even 24 hours later, I go out there. And what do I find?

Mushroom. Huh?

Mushroom. That's true. You do find mushrooms. That's the truth. No. I found this even more brown. In fact, it's dying all over the place.

And I'm going, what is going on? And it goes back in my memory of, oh, my goodness. I remember quite a few years ago that when I had an ice cream lawn and all of a sudden I had a, what do you call that thing?

[ 10 : 51 ] A bowl. A bowl. I had a bowl in the yard. And it was tolling around. And what was it looking for? It was looking for grubs. And the grubs were eating the roots of the grass.

And I'm going, ah, it's happening again. It completely destroyed my yard a couple of years ago. And it's like, now what? No, no. We're going to be trying to sell our house next year.

We can't have this. We want top dollar for our home. It's not going to work. Evil struck my yard. I have, the Lord has not shown me what that means yet.

But there is a lesson in there that he's trying to tell me. And I don't know what that is yet. But he will reveal it to me. But it's things like that, that out of the ordinary just pops up.

And I go, what are you trying to tell me, Lord? What do you, or something gets repeated over and over. And I see a pattern. And it's like, what are you trying to tell me? Quite a few years ago, when I lived in Tucson, that we had, anybody know what a century plant is?

[ 11 : 55 ] There we go. I knew Diana would know. A century plant is a cactus. Ugh. If you like cactus, but I don't. But anyway, it's a cactus. And it gets little things that come out like this.

And then in the center of the cactus, it blossoms, or blooms. And some of them, it's once every 100 years.

That's why they call it the century plant. Well, some of them don't do that. They're all called century plants. Although ours, it had been planted, and it bloomed. We were only there five years, and all of a sudden it bloomed.

But when this thing blooms, again, the plant can be about three feet tall and about three feet wide.

And again, in the center, all of a sudden, this stem starts coming out of it.

And it will go, and I'm not exaggerating, it will go 20 or 30 feet in the air. And just the stem just going, bloop, bloop, bloop, bloop. And then at the very top, it blooms.

[ 12 : 55 ] Bloop. And you go, oh, that's actually pretty cool. The only problem is that when it blooms, that then it dies.

It's done. It's expended all of its energy. So this happened. I know this is weird telling you guys all this stuff. But this is me. This is how I really, this is where I feel comfortable, just talking like this and revealing God's truths and stuff in my own life.

Anyway, so this century plant, it blooms. It lasts for, I don't know, about a month or so. And then it dies. When it died, then it's so top heavy that it just falls over and the roots get exposed.

And so I go out there to go clean this up and everything. And what do I find underneath the roots or entangled with the roots?

I find those grub worms. And I'm going, what is this? This is, how far is this going to go? Now it's going to get into everything else. And it was quite disgusting.

[ 13 : 58 ] And, but I cleaned it up and everything. And I was just asking the Lord, what, what does this mean? This is so weird. And besides it being nature, he said, Mark, he was warning me.

And I know this sounds weird. And, but I felt it in my spirit. Mark, Satan is going to attack your beautiful family. An attack is coming.

And those worms represented Satan. And sure enough, within six months, we had all kinds of problems in our family.

And our daughter just went off the tracks. One of our daughters. And yet it was a horrible, horrible time.

Anyway, so, but the Lord warned me. He just, he showed me a regular thing, a rather regular object. And he used that to warn me and teach me.

[ 14 : 57 ] It was just really cool. And I love the way the Lord does that. But, so lately, I shouldn't even say lately. God has done this.

He's been warning me about this all my life. And that is the warning about my propensity to not finish things.

I have that propensity. I, I, I, I am just, for some reason, I'm drawn towards that. I get so close to the end and I stop. I don't know why.

I don't want to finish things. You know, I can work on a project and work and work and work. But when it comes time to doing the final touch on it, no. Not interested. I would do that with movies that we would watch.

Shows that we would watch. We'd be sitting there watching a movie. Do, do, do, do, do. And I'd get up and leave before the ending of it. I don't care. I don't need to finish watching it. My dad told me when I was in high school.

[ 16 : 01 ] He tried to warn me. God tried to warn me through my father. That he told me, son, oh, hang on. I was in wrestling. I did not like wrestling.

I loved to play wrestle. But when it came to the sport, I didn't care for it. Because too many people were competitive so much. I'm not competitive like that. But anyway, my dad encouraged us, me and my brother, to go out for wrestling.

He said, how is it? I said, I hate it. He said, son, the decision is up to you. But I will tell you right now, do not quit. And why you shouldn't quit is because when you start quitting things in life, you will quit everything.

Everything will be easy. When times get hard, when times get difficult, you'll want to quit. And it'll get easier and easier and easier. And so, good old dad was trying to teach me that lesson.

Guess what I did with wrestling? I stuck it out. Because I wanted to make dad happy. Freshman year, not only did I do it freshman year, I did it all four years.

[17:11] Got beat every time. I was horrible at it. But I didn't quit. And I remembered that. I kept that in the back of my head. And I always hear my father saying, don't quit.

When you quit, you make it easier and easier to quit. And it's like, ah. So at least that holds me in check for those times that I want to quit.

Which is quite often. But at least that comes to my mind. My job. Our jobs. I've stayed in them far longer than I ever should have.

Stayed at Walgreens for 18 years when I should have quit after the first three. But I stuck with it. I always heard my dad, don't quit. Had another job.

Stayed with it for 11 years. Should have stopped with it within the first three months. The job I'm currently in. I don't mind it. I'm waiting until retirement.

[18:09] But anyway. So majorly, I've had four jobs in my entire life. So that actually is pretty good, I thought. Because I stuck with it. My wife.

I was thinking about her divorce. And I'm just kidding. She knew I was kidding too. Because that is not true.

That's bad. I should not even have brought that up. Bad Mark. Bad. Bad, bad. Anyway. Sure he's laughing a little. I know. It's because she knows it's a joke.

I didn't prep her on that either. I don't know why it came out. Sorry, honey. Sorry. So. Question is. Does God talk to you like that?

Does he show you things like that? I think he does. Yes. You just need to take time to consider your way. What's happening in your life. And look at it in that light.

[19:08] See. See what he may be trying to show you with these everyday objects and everyday happenings. Especially if they repeat themselves. Teach me your ways.

He's consistently talking to us throughout the day. Creation itself. It's not just. I love this. I saw this on something.

And it's a creation itself. It's not just a static backdrop to human existence. But a dynamic and ongoing revelation of God's nature and character.

I love that. Again. He uses nature to teach us too. I love that. If you don't see this happening around you. Ask God to open up your eyes.

He'll do it. He'll do it. And you'll see how he's working. The apostle Paul. Getting back to him again. About using objects as ways of teaching.

[20:09] Or as metaphors. He did the same thing. He used it as a technique. Technique just as Jesus did. He painted a picture with words and events.

To help us grasp. What he was trying to teach. And Paul. Gives us. A common action. To explain. How the Christian life. Can be viewed. That's right. That was the introduction. This is going to be a long message. Stand with me if you're able.

We're going to read. Out of Hebrews. The reading of God's word. Hebrews 12. Verses 1 through. Let's see how far we get. Therefore. Since we have so great. A cloud of witnesses. Surrounding us.

[21:03] Let us also lay aside. Every encumbrance. And the sin. Which so easily entangles us. And let us run with endurance. The race that is set before us.

Fixing our eyes on Jesus. The author. And perfecter of faith. Who. For the joy set before him. Endured the cross. Despising the shame.

And has set down. At the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him. Who has endured such hostility. By sinners against himself. So that you.

Will not. Grow weary. And lose heart. So reads the word of God. Let's pray. Father. As we do. Look at these verses.

And look at our life. And see. How you are. You talk to us. May we see the. The. I guess correlation.  
[ 22 : 02 ] Between running a race. And the Christian life. As Paul is trying to. Show us here. We just ask for eyes to see. And ears to hear.

And hearts to receive it. In Jesus name. Amen. Yeah. Long introduction. And.  
There comes the other part. In these. Three verses. Actually. Only two of them. I'm going to be using. I got nine points.

So. Hold on. In this passage. Paul is comparing. The Christian life. To running. A race. Now. In your mind's eye. In the theater. Of your mind. What kind of race. Does that conjure up. Does it.  
[ 22 : 58 ] Conjure up. A 40 yard dash. Or a 1500 meter run. Or a 5k run. How about a marathon.

Maybe even. The race you envision. Is like a. 200 meter hurdle. In describing the Christian life. Paul is taking. Is talking about a race.

Much. Much. Much. Longer. It's a. Life. Long race. Me.

I'm winded. And ready to stop. After the 40 yard dash. Maybe I can do the 1500 mil. Or. Even with some conditioning.

And a little training. I could do the 5k. But I don't even want to think about. Doing a 26 mile marathon. Throw hurdles into the mix.

[ 23 : 56 ] You can count. Me. Out. There's no way. I can even conceive. Of doing a. Life. Long. Race. Sometimes.

When we just think like that. That makes us want to quit. Before we even start. Or at least. When we realize it. That this. Christian.

Life. Is a. Long. Journey. A lot of us. Act. Like the Christian life. Is a once.

A week. 40 yard dash. But hey. Then we become realistic. So maybe it's a 200. Meter. Hurdle. It's race day.

We show up. We stand at the starting line. We hear the gun go off. And off we go. We're running. Here comes the first hurdle.

[ 24 : 51 ] And another. And another. I'm getting tired. But just one more hurdle. And we cross the finish line. Now I can go home.

And take a well deserved. Rest. See you next week. Let me describe. That.

In a different way. We show up for church. We stand for the opening song. We hear the music. And off we sing. Songs are longer than we thought.

Looks like today's race isn't just a 40 yard dash. There's some hurdles in it. Here comes the message. It's going a little long.

Longer than I had hoped. But I'll get over this hurdle too. Oh man. I'm getting sleepy. My mind is wandering. It's just another hurdle.

[ 25 : 51 ] I'll get over it. He's still preaching. Hurdle. Oh good. I see the finish line ahead. And the last song is over.

Now I can go home. And take a well deserved. Week long rest. See you next week. So many people.

Act. Like Sunday is. Is the Christian life. Is the Christian race. And it's just a quick 40 yard dash. Maybe with some hurdles thrown in.

The mix. And then the rest of our week. Is the well deserved. Long rest that we need. We may not talk like this.

Or want to admit it. But you know what. We sure act like it. Sunday. And of course. We got it backwards. Sunday is not the race.

[ 26 : 53 ] It's the water station. During the race. To get a drink. It's the aid station. To get recharged. And refreshed. It's a place where we can get medical care.

From the injuries. We obtained. During the week. Long race. Just stumbling. Over those hurdles. Don't you just love. Word pictures. I do.

I can picture myself. That happening to me. I say to myself. If Paul is talking about a race.

That is lifelong. That's too long for me. How will I ever make it? Well. Let's find out. Getting into our text.

Verse 1. Therefore. Since we have so great. A cloud of witnesses. Surrounding us. Let's stop there.

[ 27 : 52 ] Who. Or what. Is this cloud. Of witnesses. Surrounding us. Anybody have any idea? I mean. I'm sure.

You don't have to say out loud. But. I just want that. You guys to ponder that. For a moment. Who is this cloud. Witnesses. Or what is this cloud. Of witnesses. Surrounding us. But. I'm sorry. Okay. But first. Backing up for a moment. What's. What word. In this sentence. That I just read. Therefore. Since we have so great.

A cloud of witnesses. Surrounding us. What word. Jumped out at you. Therefore. Therefore. That's right. Hopefully. Hopefully. That was what. Jumped out at you. What. And of course. We know. Bible. Bible's. Study 101. When you see the word. Therefore. You ask the question. What's it there for?

[ 28 : 48 ] Yep. And so. It's there. To take us. Back to. Chapter 11. Which of course. We didn't read. Which.

And also. What we. Commonly. Refer to as. The hall of faith. The faith chapter. The hall of faith. It's. In it. It lists. Many of the saints. From the old testament. Very good there James. It's those in the past.

Who showed. Faith in God. During their race. Even while. Encountering. The hurdles. And trials. And hardships. Of life.

You know what. So then the question. Gets asked. Or. I like to ask the question. Or I like to think about the question. If the Bible. Were still being written. Today.

[ 29 : 48 ] You know what. I would think that God. Would want. Your name. Your name. In the hall of faith. Don't you think he would. I think he would. But you know.

If your name. Was written. For what type of faith. Would it be for. I know what I don't want it to be. As all the people are being listed.

For their faith. Oh. And by the way. Mark. Did nothing. With his life. I. I don't want that.

I don't think anyone. Wants to live that way. And yet. Some of us are. Doing nothing. For the Lord. If you want.

Your life. To count. You have to make. Different choices. You need to. Re-examine. Your life. You need to ask.

[ 30 : 47 ] God. Search me. And know my heart. Show me. Where I need. To change. Ask him. What he has. For you.

What is it. That you want. From me. But again. When you ask that question. Be ready. For the answer. Because I think.

The answer. From heaven. Would be something like. When you ask it. What is it. That you want. From me. Here comes. The answer. Everything.

I want. It all. I don't want you. To hold anything. Back from me. I own you. By the blood. Of my son. Jesus. I want. Everything. Christianity. In our. Western culture. Has become. So low. And insignificant.

[ 31 : 42 ] In people's lives. So low. On the list. Of importance. And priorities. It's just. Something to do. A hobby. Or an obligation.

Or a quick. 40 yard dash. Remember. God's will. For your life. And mine. Is that you would.

Bear. Much fruit. This is tough stuff. And. Again. Sometimes we say. That's way too much.

I'm too tired. I want to quit. We need encouragement. And that's why Paul refers. To this cloud of witnesses. Surrounding us.

They were men and women. Just like you and me. Facing overwhelming times. And yet endured. And kept their faith in God. Their testament. Alone.

[ 32 : 36 ] Should be cheering us on. That's why he says. Therefore. Since we have so great. A cloud of witnesses. He's going to give us reasons.

And he's going to give us. Help. In running this race. And seeing it to completion. That was the first one. The first help. There are nine of the things.

In here. That will help us. Run this race. We just talked about. Encouragement from the cloud of witnesses. But let's continue in verse one. Let us also.

Lay aside. Every. Encumbrance. Or weight. Or burden. Let us lay aside. Every weight.

And burden. The weight. Of past sins. Guilt. Shame. You know what? A runner. In a race.

[ 33 : 34 ] They don't add weight. To themselves. They don't put on. A backpack. Full of rocks. And expect to continue. For a long distance. We must learn.

To lay aside. Those things. That are heavy. And burdensome. In our life. Again. The weight. Of past sins. How about the weight. Of financial debt.

Or strained relationship. The weight. Of responsibilities. Don't pick up. These things. And put them in your backpack. And carry them around.

Lay them aside. They zap. Your energy. But how do we lay them aside. How do we do that? What does that look like? Well.

The weights of past. If you're. If you're. Holding on to weights of past sin. Guilt. And shame. And regret. Remember. That you're forgiven.

[ 34 : 32 ] And there is no condemnation. In Christ Jesus. That's one way. To lay it aside. Remembering that. Quoting that. The weight of financial debt.

How do you lay that aside? Well. Stop going into debt. Pay off your bills. And stop. And then you don't have to. Hold that. And carry it with you. Strained relationships.

Restore them. Make peace. Make peace. Forgive. Have mercy. And grace. Restore those relationships.

How about the weight of responsibility? Well. Stop taking on things. That aren't yours. So many times.

We take on these other. Things. And we say. Oh. That's got to be done. Nobody else is doing it. I'll have to do it. The Lord's saying. No. I'm waiting for somebody else.

[ 35 : 28 ] To step in. Don't short circuit that. Be patient. And if it doesn't happen. It doesn't happen. You don't need to take on. Take on the responsibility. He's giving you.

Your own responsibilities. Just. Keep those. And do them well. Don't get so tired. And worn out. By taking on. Other people's. Lack.

Of responsibility. All right. So that's another way. That he helps us. Run the race. Besides the. Cloud of witnesses.

That. We will also. Run the race. Better. If we lay aside. Every cumbrance. Verse two. Moving on. Our verse one. Moving on.

Not only laying aside. Every cumbring. Encumbrance. But. And. The sin. Which. So easily. Entangles us. The sin.

[ 36 : 24 ] Which so easily. Entangles us. If you notice that little word. We're back to one of those. Small words again. The. Sin. The sin.

Which so easily. What could that sin. Sin. Be. Think about that. For a moment. The sin.

That he's talking about. It ensnares us. It holds us. Captive. And it prevents us. From going anywhere. Well I think the sin.

That he's talking about. In context. Of what we've been looking at. In the hall of faith. The sin. The opposite of faith.

Is unbelief. I think that that. Is what he means. Because the cradle. Of all sin. If you think about it. The cradle. Of all sin.

[ 37 : 21 ] In life. Is. Unbelief. We don't believe. In something that God. Has said. And because of that. Unbelief. We go in our own direction.

We do what we want. We think what we want. Think our. Thinker is correct. And we sin. We fall into sin. I believe that that's what. The sin.

Is talking about. It paralyzes us. We don't move forward. When we have unbelief. Because we don't believe.

God will take care of things. So the question is. What is he called you to. And you don't do. Because. Of fear. And unbelief.

As scripture tells us. Without faith. It's impossible. To please God. We've got to have faith. In him. Still continuing.

[ 38 : 21 ] In verse one. Or yes. Verse one. Point number four. And let us run. With endurance. The race. Set.

Before us. This will help us. Run the race. Well. Understanding. What this means. The race. The race.

Is the Christian life. Not the world. Not the world's race. The world's rat race. And also.

The race. Is not a competition. To be number one. The race. Has many trials. And difficulties. Almost like. An obstacle course.

Or a triathlon. Or. Decathlon. Is that how you say it? Decathlon. Decathlon. That's it. I know I get it out there. But one.

[ 39 : 19 ] Where. Instead of being. Only concerned about yourself. Getting across the finish line. You help others. Along the way. It's kind of like. The military.

Where they are training. To never leave. Anybody. Behind. You help those. Who are struggling. To get over the wall. In the obstacles. Of course. And.

In the military. Everybody. Finishes. There is no. I. In team. And guess what? There is no. I. In church. And we are the church.

Right? Because I think. That we get in our head. When I. When I. For the longest time. And looking like. At this. And other passages. About that.

You strive to be. Number one. To get the goal. To get the prize. That we think that. Well. Paul. Paul's already got it. He already got the trophy. He's already getting the crown.

[ 40 : 14 ] No more crown. What do I need to run for? Well. No. That's not what. It's not. The competition. To be number one. It's. The goal is.

For everybody. To get across. The finish line. And we. As our. Brothers and sisters. Are stumbling. They're falling around us. We're helping them up. You've seen those pictures.

Or those videos. Or whatever. When. You do have runners. And somebody falls. And. Somebody will. The. One of the runners. Will stop. And help them up. And just. Moves you.

And you see that. It's like. Wow. They would. Sacrifice. Winning the race. To help somebody else. Achieve. The same goal. Of getting across.

The finish line. Because of the obstacles. We encounter. We may want to give up. And have yet. Another reason.

[ 41 : 08 ] To quit. We are told. We must run. With endurance. We need. Perseverance. During those hard times. We need to press.

Into God. Hold on. To his promises. One of which. We'll look at. In a few minutes. We need to keep. The faith. Like those. For us. We need to be like.

Dory. From. Finding Nemo. Swimming. Swimming. Just keep swimming. Swimming. Or however. That goes. I love Dory.

I don't know. Why that came to mind. But it did. So you keep swimming. Until you get. Where you're headed. Home to heaven. Keep swimming. And remember.

Whatever. Is happening. It's always. Too soon. To quit. Point number. Five. Or.

[ 42 : 09 ] Help number. Five. Now we get to move on. To verse two. Fixing. Your eyes. On Jesus. Looking at Jesus.

It's important. That we do that. Every day. In this word. Fix your eyes. On Jesus. It means. To look. Intently. That means.

To. Really focus. On him. You know. Letting other things. Distract you. In. Because if you're focused. On this. This other stuff. It's almost like.

You got blinders on. That's how we're supposed. To do it. Very difficult. In this world. You're not supposed to get. You're not supposed to look. And get fixated. On the things. Of this world.

world. Because remember. The world. Doesn't give us. Such good directions. Or guide us very well. But Jesus does. That's who we get.

[ 43 : 07 ] Our direction from. He gives us. Our goes. And our nose. When to go. And when to stop. When to move forward.

When to. Stay back. A little bit. so many things in life try to divert our eyes from Jesus they are distractions just like a billboard on the side of a road we're driving along and it catches our eyes a billboard it's got something that caught our eyes and what happens if we look that way and if we look at it for more than a glance if we look at it for too long what happens all of a sudden we go where we're looking we go in the direction of what we're looking so if you're looking at those distractions in life and getting your eyes off of Jesus what's going to happen?

you start going that way not good fortunately on the road there's those little grooves so as you start to get out of your lane all of a sudden thump thump thump thump on your tire and it's like whoa okay well that's just like God's word when we're getting off the road when we're getting that off track we get a thump in the head okay sorry and we get back on track thump thump thump I like that one because that happens to me all the time or it needs to you know getting distracted with a one ton vehicle can do great damage and harm to others getting distracted in life can do great damage and harm to others we can other people could follow us you know there's the thing and um

I don't know if you've been to um well no this is in Arizona so I doubt you guys have been anyway anybody else been in Arizona you're driving through the desert and they have all these signs saying that uh beware or be careful of the sandstorms because if you're driving during a sandstorm and all these signs tell you what to do you pull off the side of the road you take your foot off the brake you put it in park and then you take your foot off the brake anyway and you get as far off the side of the road and you don't follow lights in front of you if you see because it can be it could be like a whiteout I guess that would how it would be here that you don't follow the car in front of you because you don't know if they're going off the road or if they're even stopped and wham it can cause a lot of damage so those signs are there for a reason to warn us and that's how it is going through life don't be following other people or people may be following you too so if you're going off the road you know you got people following you it's not good don't get in the crash keep your eyes on Jesus that's the uh the point and that will help you run the race number six still in verse two the author and perfecter of our faith how does that help us run the race how does that help us get to the finish line who is the author and perfecter of our faith of course it's Jesus and understand that as you look at Jesus when you're looking at him that he is the author of your faith understand that so as you're looking at Jesus intently know who you're looking at you're looking at the author of your faith what does that mean it means it means that you can trust him you can trust him to lead your life the author the writer of your life he writes out your life he's the one who writes it he knows what's going to happen he writes what's going to happen in your life he writes the guidelines and the rules and the instructions that's why we need to look to him but he's also the finisher

Philippians 1:6 being confident of this he who began a good working will complete it isn't that encouraging if we just remember that that he is the author of our life and if he has if he's authored your life and he started you down this road this Christian life this Christian run this marathon this lifelong marathon he is going to see it till it's finished and rest in that it'll help you run the race keeping that in mind point number seven verse two for the joy set before him what's the joy that's set before him we are we're the joy it is because of his sacrifice and taking our place on the cross for our sins giving us forgiveness by washing away our sins because of that we have been restored unto the father and we can have eternal life with him knowing the results of the cross and that we are the results that that is the joy that was set before him that's kind of neat we can so also maybe the joy that can be set before us is knowing that we get to inherit that we get to inherit what he's given us what he because we are his adopted children and we get adopted into the family we get to inherit everlasting life life with the father just keep that joy forefront your mind too number eight we're moving through faster because

[ 49 : 49 ] I got lots of time left oh my goodness hurdle no number eight verse two still he endured the cross despite in the shame we look to Jesus for the endurance he had he endured the cross and the shame it's funny because the word not funny it's interesting that the word endured here is a form of the same word he used in verse one when he talks about when Paul is saying that run with endurance it's the same word so in other words Jesus has already gone before us he's already done it he's given us the example he endured we can endure because he's overcome right take take not console take comfort in that

I don't know what word to use anyway I don't have a big big big vocabulary anyway so but anyway take comfort in that he went before us in fact the trail the trail that we're running on he's already cut it for us have you ever been on a trail that hasn't been cut yet you're walking through the weeds and everything but somebody who has come before you and they've taken the time they've blazed the trail they cut the weeds out of the way and so it's smoother you've still got rocks and things like that in the way but still so that's what Jesus has done for us he's cut the trail for us he's our example so number nine we finally got to the end number nine verse two the end of it and he has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God it is finished you've arrived

Jesus has crossed the finish line and he's bringing us along he's helping us on the way what in comfort still got to use that word comfort and encouragement to help us run the race and not quit verse three just basically does a recap of the first two verses but how comforting to know that we have help to run this race we don't need to quit it yes it's a long one don't give up keep swimming amen amen see you at the finish let's pray father your word is so neat just how you speak to us how you love us and you're just trying to guide us in our walk in our race and navigate this life and warn us of the pitfalls the different things that can trip us up and ensnare us because you want us to run well you want us at the end for you to be able to say well done good and faithful servant and we

want to be that father help us help us as we're running this race we can't do it on our own we need those aid stations we need to come here on Sundays and be refreshed remind us of that when we want to just not go to church not pick up our bible remind us that we need this thank you for the tools that you give us to be able to run a good race in Jesus name I pray amen!  
amen amen amen! amen