

The Right Race or the Rat Race?

Ready:

¹ Therefore since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us, and run with endurance the race that lies before us, ² keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that lay before Him endured a cross and despised the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of God's throne.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Set

The first race I ever ran was a marathon. Talk about starting with a bang! I always played team sports and raced until I ran the dreaded 26.2-miler. It was an incredible experience my body will never forget. I learned firsthand the four key aspects to every race, and they all can be related to our spiritual life.

The race is against the competition. There were thousands of competitors I wanted to beat and who wanted to beat me. In the same way, when we run the race for Christ, we have three main competitors: the world, the flesh, and the devil. Each one intends to prevent us from crossing the finish line.

The race is against the clock. The clock at every mile marker was a constant reminder that the race was coming to an end. Praise God! People say that since you only go around once, you should live it up. Christ says that since you only go around once, you should make it count. James 4:14 compares our lives to "a bit of smoke." Gone in seconds! The great missionary Amy Carmichael said, "We have all eternity to celebrate our victories, but only a few short years to win them."

The race is for the prize. I received a medallion suspended by a ribbon for completing the marathon. Not much of a prize. But as Christians, our prize is heaven and a life with God that lasts for eternity!

The race is for the praise. It was awesome to have hundreds of people cheering for me as I finally crossed the finish line, but it won't compare to one day hearing the words from Jesus: "Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25:21 NIV). That is the ultimate praise!

My pastor asked, "Are you running the right race or the rat race?" Even if you win the rat race, you're still a rat. The rat race is anything that gets our eyes off Jesus. Run the right race – the race of Christ.

Go

1. What race are you running – the right race or the rat race? How do you reach that conclusion?
2. Which one of the three competitors – the world, the flesh, or the devil – do you battle most? Why?
3. How can you be reminded daily that your life is “a bit of smoke”?
4. What needs to change in your life for you to run the right race every day? What are some things that hold you back?

Workout

1 Corinthians 9:24-26

Philippians 2:16

Bible Reference:

James 4



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