

Upcoming Events

Business Meeting: Today at 4:30 p.m.

Ladies Bible Class: Today at 4:00 p.m.

Father's Day: June 16

Panera Bread Open Bible Study: Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m.

Hebrews class: Mondays at 10:00 a.m.

Perseverance

“Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan “press on” has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.” – Calvin Coolidge

June Birthdays

9 Debbie Pescador 12 Celina Perales 19 Tamasi Letalu

June Anniversaries

5 Kurt & Debbie Hoffman 9 Sue Tanner

11 Marcos & Celina Perales

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Sunday.....6:00 p.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Preacher:
Mike McKnight

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Finishing the Race

By Dan Jenkins

There are many illustrations used in the Bible to describe our lives as Christians. We are warriors in His army (Eph. 6) and harvesters in His vineyard (Matt. 20). We are boxers who do not simply throw blows into the air against an imaginary foe (1 Cor. 9:26). One illustration used repeatedly is that we are competitors in a great race.

This figure is used in the book of Hebrews. After describing those heroes of faith throughout chapter eleven whose lives were all lived by faith, the Lord then turned His attention to the Hebrew Christians. That this chapter is directly tied to the men of faith is evidenced by the first word in chapter twelve. *“Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses...Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”*



Keep our eyes on Jesus.

How do we maintain our strength and stamina in this race? The answer is found in the next verse. *“Looking unto Jesus...who for the joy set before Him endured...”* He never let up. He ended the race by saying, *“It is finished.”* He is our model and our example of endurance as we are faithful until death.

Yet, we struggle in this race. When we first read the words of Isaiah, we may not realize just how difficult the race can be. *“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint”* (Isa. 40:31). We may overlook the fact that even this verse speaks of renewing strength and forget the energy expended by eagles as they soar above us.

Look further into this passage to see the importance of endurance in our race. The trials of this race are part of how God uses adversity to chasten and mold us (vs. 3-11). We are told to not despise these difficult times for afterwards it *“yields the fruit of righteousness”* (v. 11). As we run the race, we need to keep our eyes on Jesus and finish the race at whatever the cost.

The Lord then urges us to realize that we owe a debt to help others in the race. *“Strengthen the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees”* (v. 12). We need others to help us endure. They need us. When we see others struggling, we need to help them in their run. Finally, He talks about showing others how to run the race by the way we live. The Lord says, *“Make straight paths for your feet”* (v. 12). The Greek literally says, “make your wheel tracks straight.” Remember that others are following us in the race, so leave distinct ruts and tracks clearly defined so they can follow in our steps.

God help us all to *“finish the race”* (2 Tim. 4:7).

The Instruction of the Scriptures

By Jon Mitchell

“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

Romans 15:4

A lot of us misunderstand the Old Testament. Some of us think it records the story of a vengeful, unmerciful, wrathful God, whereas the New Testament talks about a God of love and grace...even though the Psalms sing repeatedly of God's everlasting love and

mercy and Acts 5 informs us of Him killing a husband and wife on what we would perceive to be a minor offense.

Some of us think that some of the Old Testament commandments and practices are still binding today...some of them, but not all of them, in spite of what the apostle said (Gal. 5:3).

Some of us recognize the truth that the Old Testament foretold of its replacement with a New Testament (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:7-13) which took place at the cross (Eph. 2:14-15; Col. 2:13-17)...but as a result hardly study the Old Testament and resent it when sermons are preached from it, thinking a study of Genesis through Malachi to be irrelevant.

Yet, even though the Old Law was taken out of the way at the cross, the Holy Spirit still inspired Paul both in today's scripture passage and also in 1 Corinthians 10:1-11 to declare to Christians that they need to study it. The Old Testament (*“whatever was written in former days”*) was written *“for OUR instruction.”* Ours. Christians. The Old Testament instructs us. To see how, read the book of Proverbs alone. In addition, take note of how God reacted when men disobeyed the laws He had for them in that covenant (e.g., Nadab and Abihu, Uzzah, Adam and Eve, Saul, Moses, David). See how patient He was with them while they sinned and how quick He was to forgive them when they repented (David comes to mind when he repented of the sin with Bathsheba.) See these great men and women of faith shine as examples of faithful obedience (Noah building the ark, Eli's charitable taking in of Samuel)...and yet still sin in terrible ways at times (Noah getting drunk, Eli being a terrible parent). The Psalms teach us not only about God's mercy and blessings, but also how to praise Him and pray to Him in good times and bad. Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible, has 176 verses, all of which extol the virtues and blessings that surround studying and obeying the Word of God.

All of these examples and more are found in the Old Testament, and when we read them and commit them to our hearts and minds...what happens? We learn more about God and His will for us. We learn how to endure through difficult times, and we are encouraged to keep on keeping on. In short, we get hope.