

STAY IN THE RACE!**Hebrews 12**

Introduction: These Christians were going through a time of testing and were tempted to give up. They had not yet been asked to die for Christ (12:4), but the situation was not getting easier. To fortify their trust in Christ, 3 encouragements are given:

I. The Example of the SON of God (12:1-4)

In ch. 11, the saints of the OT won the race of life through faith. Now we are to look unto Jesus to strengthen our faith. The picture here is of an arena; the spectators are the heroes of faith seen in the last chapter; the runners are believers going through trials. To win the race, we must get rid of the weights and sins that make it hard for us to run. Christ is the Author and Finisher of our faith; *What He starts, He finishes.*

II. The Assurance of the LOVE of God (12:5-13)

Verse 5 tells us these folks had forgotten what God says about chastening. The quotation is from Prov. 3:11-12 and speaks of chastening, not punishment. *Chastening* means “child-training, discipline.” Chastening is given out as a proof of love, for the bettering of the child. When sufferings and trials come...

***We can resist and fight the will of God**, growing *bitter* instead of *better*.

***We can give up and quit**. This is the wrong attitude (vs. 3, 12-13).

***We can endure by faith**. The right attitude is in vs. 7, and it is the “afterward” of vs. 11 that keeps us going! Chastening is for our profit. Submission brings glory to His name.

→ **3 Levels of Chastening.... 1) Rebuke 2) Chastening 3) Scourging**

III. The Power of the GRACE of God (12:14-29)

Here we are told to depend on the grace of God by looking by faith in **3 directions**:

Look Back—The Bad Example Of Esau (vv. 15–17). Esau failed to act on God’s grace. The story is given in Gen. 25:27–34; 27:30–45.

Look Up—The Glory Of The Heavenly City (vv. 18–24). When days are difficult and we have a hard time enduring, we should look up and think on the glories of Heaven.

Look Ahead—The Unshakable Kingdom (vv. 25–29). God is speaking to us today through His Word and His providential workings in the world. We had better listen! If God shook things at Sinai and those who refused to hear were judged, how much more responsible are we today who have experienced the blessings of the new covenant! God today is shaking things and too many people are building their lives on things that can shake. The “shaking” quotation is from Haggai 2:6 and refers to when the Lord shall return and fill His house with glory. As events draw nearer to that time, we shall see more shaking in this world. But we can be confident, for we shall receive an Unshakable kingdom. What shall we do as we live in a shaking world? Listen to God speak and obey Him. Receive grace day by day to serve Him “with reverence and godly fear.”

Do not be distracted or scared by the changes going on around you. Keep running the race with patience. Keep looking unto Jesus. Remember that your Father loves you. And draw on God’s enabling grace. While others are frightened, you can **Stay In The Race!**

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