

“The Right Race!”
Hebrews 12:1-4

Introduction:

1. Just Finished Looking In-Depth At Hebrews 11 & Learning Much About Faith!
 - Have You Wondered? After Learning & Trying To Grow In Faith:
 - Why, Then, Is My Faith Not Any Stronger?
 - Why, Then, Does My Faith Not Resemble The People We’ve Looked At?
 - Why, Then, Do I Not See Spiritual Victories Or Answers To Prayer?
 - And Instead Of Your Faith Growing Stronger:
 - It Seems Your Faith & Service & Desire Are Actually Growing Weaker!
 - Described In 12:3 - “Wearied And Faint In Your Minds!”
 - “Minds” Can Also Be Translated “Soul!”
 - Talking About Spiritual / Emotional / Mental / & Even Physical Exhaustion!
 - You Feel That You, In Faith, Give & Give & Give Some More, But You Have No More To Give!
 - Some Call It “Spiritual Burnout!”
 - Being “Wearied And Faint In Your Minds”:
 - Can Eventually Affect:
 - Your Heart Toward The Lord!
 - In Worship!
 - Your Service For The Lord!
 - Your Relationships In The Lord!
 - Testy!
2. This Is What These First Four Verses Of Hebrews 12 Were Written For!
 - God Knows That Life In This World Can Be Stressful!
 - Called A “Rat Race” Sometimes! It’s Meant To Be!
 - God Knows That Life As A Christian Can Be Stressful!
 - After All, He Just Finished Describing The **Suffering** That People Of Faith In Him Experience!
 - God Knows That The Life Of Faith Can Be Difficult!
 - Because It Is Not Natural For Us! It Is Something New & Totally Against Our Fallen, Human Nature!
 - So God Shares What Is Necessary For You To Have A Growing Faith!
 - Like Those You Have Just Read About In Hebrews 11!
 - “Wherefore” - They Had To Do What We Have To Do To Keep Themselves From Being Weary & Faint In Their Minds!
 - And Instead Of Running A Spiritual “Rat Race” – You Can Run The “Right Race” With A Growing Faith In God!
 - Ready Hebrews 12:1-4:
1. **Proper Motivation!** (If You Are “Weary & Faint” You Need)
 - 12:1a - “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses!”
 - “Seeing” = Having!
 - You Need To Come To The Realization In Your Mind & Heart That You Are Not The **First** One To Experience Challenges In The Christian Faith & You Are Not The **Only** One To Experience Challenges In The Christian Faith!
 - You Have A Great Fellowship With Everyone That Has Gone On Before You!
 - This Fellowship Is “So Great!”
 - A Large Host! Innumerable! Not Just Those Mentioned!
 - This Fellowship Is Like “A Cloud!”
 - Like A Dense Fog – But In Familiar, Friendly Territory!
 - With Life-Giving Moisture!
 - This Fellowship “Witnesses”
 - Their Lives & Faith Point Us To God & His Greatness / Goodness / Grace!
 - One Of The Greatest Motivations We Have To Live By Faith Are The Lives Of Other Believers!

- Their Successes! Their Strength! Their Hope! Their Sufferings!
- Why It Is Good To Read Biographies & Learn About The Lives Of Christian Men & Women!
 - VBS - Amy Carmichael / David!
- As One Preacher Once Put It: “Fire Begets Fire!”
 - Learn About This “Great Cloud Of Witnesses” You Have! And Strive To Become One To Motivate Others!

2. *Proper Preparation!* (If You Are “Weary & Faint” You Need)

- 12:1b - “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us!”
 - These Verses Use A Race As An Illustration For Living By Faith!
 - To Run A Good Race Requires Preparation!
 - So Does Living By Faith!
 - It Is Not Magical! It Is Hard Work!
 - To Prepare, There Are Some Things You Might Need To ***Shed***:
 - “Weight” - Things That Hold You Back & Down!
 - To Prepare, There Are Some Things You Will Need To ***Shun***:
 - “Sin Which Doth So Easily Beset Us!” - Easily Ensared!
 - To Prepare, They Must Be “Laid Aside!”
 - Don’t Go Back To Pick Them Up!
 - **IE**: Like A Runner Getting Water & Then Throwing The Cup / Bottle Down!
 - “As A Burden, It Should Be Laid On Christ; As A Sin, It Should Be Abstained From, And Put Off!” (John Gill)
 - You Must Take Your Preparation Seriously!
 - Mark 9:43 - “And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off!” / 45 - “And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off!” / 47 - “And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire!”

3. *Proper Application!* (If You Are “Weary & Faint” You Need)

- 12:1c - “And let us run with patience the race that is set before us!”
 - How Did Hebrews 11 Believers Live By Faith?
 - By “Running With Patience The Race That Was Set Before Them!”
 - This Is How We Will Live By Faith As Well!
 - Circumstances May Be Different!
 - Actions May Be Different!
 - Faith & Patience Will Be The Same!
 - “Run” Continually!
 - No Matter What The Hurdles / Obstacles!
 - “Patience” - To Remain Under!
 - “Run” Content!
 - What Ever Is “Set Before” You!
 - God, In His Good Grace & Providence, Has Given / “Set Before” You Your Own Race!
 - 1 Timothy 6:6 - “But godliness with contentment is great gain!”
 - “Run” Committedly!
 - “Race!”
 - 1 Corinthians 9:24 - “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain!”

4. *Proper Attention!* (If You Are “Weary & Faint” You Need)

- 12:2 - “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God!”
 - As Important As The People Mentioned In Hebrews 11 – The One Who Must Hold Your Attention Is Jesus!
 - Why Do You Become Weary & Faint In Your Mind? You Are Not “Looking Unto Jesus!”
- He Alone Can Develop Your Faith!

- “Author & Finisher”
- He Alone Is The Foundation Of Your Faith!
 - Through His Crucifixion / Humiliation / Exaltation!
- He Alone Is The Example For Your Faith!
 - Just Like We Have Our Own “Race That Is Set Before Us!”
 - Jesus Had A Path “Set Before Him!”
 - But Where Did His Path Lead?
 - “Joy!”
 - This Is Where Our Path Will Lead!
- Just Don’t Take Your Eyes Off Of Jesus!

5. *Proper Meditation!* (If You Are “Weary & Faint” You Need)

- 12:3 - “For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds!”
 - What You Think About Is So Important As A Christian!
 - What You Think About Will Often Determine The Outcome Of Your Life Of Faith!
 - **IE:** Much Like A Driver On A Cell Phone!
- Think About Jesus’ Endurance!
 - His Power Is What Your Faith Is In – So You Can Endure Too!
- Think About Jesus’ Opposition!
 - Literally, From Cradle To Grave – With The Devil Himself!
- The Christian Life Of Faith Is A Life Of Thinking!
 - When You Are Weary & Faint In Your Mind, Start Thinking & Meditating On Your God!

6. *Proper Examination!* (If You Are “Weary & Faint” You Need)

- 12:4 - “Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin!”
 - Transition Into Next Paragraph – But Important Step To Living By Faith!
- You Need To Realize That It Is Not Time Yet For You To “Be Wearied And Faint In Your Minds!”
 - There Is Still A Battle Against Self / Sin / Satan – Fierce!
 - It Is Not Yet Time For You To Give Up!
 - Your Time Of Rest Is Not Here! Hebrews 4:9 - “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God!” But It’s Not Here Yet!
- How Have You Resisted?
 - How Hard Have You Striven Against Sin?

Conclusion:

1. Are You “Weary & Faint”? Exercise Your Faith In This Way!

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