

How You Can Win
International Bible Lesson
Hebrews 12:1-11
Sunday, September 16, 2012
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“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1—KJV).

“As for us, we have this large crowd of witnesses around us. So then, let us rid ourselves of everything that gets in the way, and of the sin which holds on to us so tightly, and let us run with determination the race that lies before us” (Hebrews 12:1—GNB).

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1—NRSV).

To enter the Olympics, runners must qualify according to the Olympic rules. To qualify for “the race that is set before us,” the rules require that runners “please God” and “believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). As though running in an Olympic stadium, a great “cloud of witnesses” including God the Father, Jesus Christ, the angels, the Old Testament saints, and all who worship God in heaven cheer for believers to “win the crown of glory that never fades away” (1 Peter 5:4).

To win “the crown of righteousness,” those who follow Jesus Christ must “lay aside every weight” that may be good but hinders their ability to serve God and others in better ways (2 Timothy 4:8). In addition, believers must lay aside “the sin that clings so closely” and not “willfully persist in sin” (Hebrews 10:26). They must persevere throughout the race and “endure trials for the sake of discipline” (Hebrews 12:7). Jesus Christ, “the pioneer and perfecter of our faith,” ran the race, and He knows how to coach and discipline us “for our good, in order that we may share his holiness” (Hebrews 12:2, 10).

As with any competition, some want Christians to fail; so, the Bible says you must consider Christ, “who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart” (Hebrews 12:3). Jesus promised, “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).

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