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Run Your Race
Hebrews 12:1-2, August 21, 2016

As I reflected on the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, my heart was arrested a second time as I thought about the accomplishments of the greatest athletes from around the world. Some athletes made and exceeded world records. Some won gold medals for the first time, while others won silver and bronze. Everyone who competed in the various events did their very best to represent their respective country. However, with the world watching the events of the Olympic games, some athletes found a way to disgrace themselves with actions inconsistent with the character of an Olympian.

While all of the events were spectacular, there is something special about the imagery of the race, because in many ways, life is a race. In all competitive races, there are requirements, instructions, and rewards. We all have our own race to run in life chosen by our Sovereign God. We do not get to choose the race we run, although we are allowed to make decisions along the way. None of us can run the race of another person because God places us in specific races for his glory and our benefit.

Today we are going to uncover how God prepares us to run our race using two primary bookends: persistence and perseverance.

1) Run Our Race With Persistence

We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses who are the faithful of God who fulfilled their God given purpose to the glory of God.

Read Romans 11 for a list of those who make up the great cloud of witnesses. These persons lived and died by the faith and for the faith.

What is a witness? One who testifies to what they see, hear, or know.

We should not be persistent in our race because the great cloud of witnesses is watching us, rather we should be persistent because of what they accomplished without receiving the promise.

“Let us run” can be translated as let us keep on running; be persistent. No matter what goes on in your life, just keep on running.

2) Run With Perseverance

Persistence means to keep on running. Perseverance means to run against all odds. It means bearing up under difficult circumstances.

Story: During the 5000 meter race at the 2016 Olympic games, two athletes collide causing both runners to fall to the ground. One athlete was

able to continue running but the other was injured and did not feel she could go on. Going over to the athlete who was unable to finish, the one athlete said, we've got to finish this race because this is the Olympics. While neither runner won a medal, both were victorious as they ran their race and finished their course. This is a great example of persistence and perseverance.

The most important race you will ever run is the race of life whether you ever become an Olympian or not. Don't crumble, stay in the race.

When you feel like giving up, turn to Hebrews 11 and see how the great cloud of witnesses endured until the end.

Stay in the race.