

Our Dedication Requires Our Perseverance

Hebrews 12:1-2

Spiritual maturity requires us to separate our e_____ and
f_____

From our c_____ and d_____.

What part do our feelings and emotions have in our dedication to Christ?

Hebrews 11: 32-35a And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again.

Hebrews 11:35b-40 Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mocking and scourging, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

What do these scriptures tell us about the great times and the tough times in the Christian life?

Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Why do we compare the Christian life to a marathon rather than a 100 yard dash?

Running a successful race:

According to this scripture, what do we need to lay aside?

What are some examples of acceptable things that might weigh us down in the race of life?

Galatians 5:1-2 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

What kind of bondage might entangle someone who has been set free by Christ?

Hebrews 12:1 ...let us run with endurance this race that God has set before us.

Matthew 10:22 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

2 Timothy 3:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Running a successful race requires d_____ to the race until we cross the

f_____ l_____. Don't give up!

The H_____ S_____ gives us the ability to persevere and overcome obstacles, but we must keep our focus on J_____.

What are some things we need to do to keep our focus on Jesus?

Dedication to the Lord

Our Dedication Requires Our Perseverance

Hebrews 12:1-2

Spiritual maturity requires us to separate our emotions and feelings from our commitment and dedication.

We cannot let our feelings dictate to our dedication.

The Christian life is not a 100 yard dash it is a marathon.

Hebrews 12:1-2, *Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 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 has set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Hebrews 11:32-40

Well, how much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, David, Samuel, and all the prophets. By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They shut the mouths of lions, quenched the flames of fire, and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight. Women received their loved ones back again from death.

But others trusted God and were tortured, preferring to die rather than turn from God and be free. They placed their hope in the resurrection to a better life. Some were mocked, and their backs were cut open with whips. Others were chained in dungeons. Some died by stoning, and some were sawed in half; others were killed with the sword. Some went about in skins of sheep and goats, hungry and oppressed and mistreated.

They were too good for this world. They wandered over deserts and mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground. All of these people we have mentioned received God's approval because of their faith, yet none of them received all that God had promised. For God had far better things in mind for us that would also benefit them, for they can't receive the prize at the end of the race until we finish the race.

If we are to stay dedicated to the Lord then we need to *put off anything that can trip us up.*

Let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress.

Galatians 5:1-2 *Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.*

We have freedom from slavery to our sinful desires but our freedom came at great price. In order for us to enjoy ultimate freedom, someone had to set us free, and that someone was Christ Jesus (John 8:32-36).

We need to help and support one another to remain free and unburdened:

Galatians 6:2 *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

Let go of the unnecessary

2 Timothy 2:3 *Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs - he wants to please his commanding officer.*

Let go of the ungodly

Running a good race requires dedication to the race until we cross the finish line.

Hebrews 12:1 ...*let us run with endurance this race that God has set before us.*

The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to persevere and overcome obstacles.

God is far more interested in seeing us finish the race than how we began the race:

2 Corinthians 11:25-29 *I've been in prison. I've been flogged. I've been exposed to death time and again. Five times I was beaten with 39 lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I've been shipwrecked. I've had to constantly stay on the move because of being in danger in every city I went to. I've been deprived of sleep. I've gone without food. I've been cold and naked.*

Mature dedication is the ability to separate your emotions from your will and make the decision that you are going to keep showing up, serving, and proclaiming the gospel as long as the Lord gives you breath.

We live with a hurry up sickness that will hinder our ability to stay focused. We are impatient! We are busy!

Here's a truth I don't want you to miss:

If we are going to keep our focus on Jesus then we will have to make time to be in His presence, to slow down to see and hear Him!

Paul says that nothing is more important than pursuing a relationship with Christ:

Philippians 3:12-14 *But I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ Jesus saved me for and wants me to be. No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven.*

John 6: Jesus feeding the Multitudes

John 6:67 *...from this time, many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him*

Peter looks at Jesus and says, *Where else would we go? You alone have the words to eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God...*

Jesus calls us to follow Him and dedicate ourselves to His mission.

Hebrew 12:30 *Keep your mind on Jesus...then you won't get discouraged and give up.*