

# The Race That Is Set Before Us

## *2008 Youth Lectureship*



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**Laurel Canyon church of Christ**  
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# Session #1 – Qualifying For Life’s Race

## “Let Us Lay Aside Every Weight”

Presented by Jason Hardin

### Introduction:

- A. No matter who you are, the race is still in front of you!
- B. Our goal for today is to make sure that we are a part of the race and that we are avoiding those things which would lead to “disqualification” (1 Corinthians 9:27).



*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”*

- Hebrews 12:1

»» “Therefore” is there for a reason.

»» “since” – because, inasmuch as...

»» “witnesses” – those who can give a firsthand account of something seen, heard, or experienced.

We often reflect on the fact that these “witnesses” refer back to the heroes of faith in *Hebrews 11*, and rightfully so. But they are more than idle “watchers,” simply sitting in the stands and observing us run. They are witnesses of God! They continue to inspire us to run the race that is before us.

»» **Abel** bears witness that God will receive me if I humbly offer Him what He wants.

»» **Enoch** bears witness to the power of God to grant eternal life.

»» **Noah** bears witness that even when God determines to exercise vengeance on the wicked, He will save me if I have faith in Him.

»» **Abraham** bears witness that things will work out if I trust God and follow Him.

»» **Sarah** bears witness that God keeps His promises, even if I think it’s impossible.

...and on and on and on. The same God who was their God is our God.  
**The God of yesterday is the God of today and tomorrow!**

Imagine the King of kings making His entrance into the awe-inspiring heavenly colosseum.

*“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing! To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever” (Revelation 5:12-13).*

He sees your **potential**, but He has two questions.

### **“Do you believe that this is necessary?”**

*“Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation” (Hebrews 11:1-2, NLT).*

*“The fundamental fact of existence is that this trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It’s our handle on what we can’t see. The act of faith is what distinguished our ancestors, set them above the crowd” (Hebrews 11:1-2, The Message).*

*“Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6, NKJV).*

### **“Are you willing to lay aside every weight and sin?”**

#### **»» The “weights”**

- May not necessarily be bad in and of themselves. Weights can be something perfectly innocent and harmless.
- A winning runner doesn’t always choose between the good and the bad, but sometimes between the better and the best. The problem may not be in what the weight is, but what the weight is doing – keeping you from running well.
- **Bottom line** – if it weighs you down, diverts your attention, saps your energy or dampens your enthusiasm for the things of God, it must be laid aside.

»» The “sin which clings so closely”

There are some who are **unwilling** or “**unable**” to enter the arena.

- ▶ The “*unrighteous*” party-goers (*1 Corinthians 6:9-10*).
- ▶ The “too-many-hypocrites” vender.
- ▶ The “it’s-just-as-good-outside” tailgaters.
- ▶ The “make-up-my-own-rules” innovator (*2 Timothy 2:5; Romans 10:3*).
- ▶ The “I’ve-got-enough-time-to-make-it” procrastinator.
- ▶ The “I’ll-sneak-in-without-a-ticket” guy (*John 10:1*).
- ▶ The “I’m-afraid-to-wear-the-colors” coward (*John 12:42*).
- ▶ The “fair-weather” follower (*Matthew 7:21*).
- ▶ The “I-can’t-bear-to-leave-my-junk-behind” packrat (*Matthew 7:13-14*).

»» When the going gets tough...

- ★ Lock eyes with Moses (*Exodus 3:6-10*).
- ★ Hear the shouts of Gideon (*Judges 6:12-16*).
- ★ Be refreshed by young David (*1 Samuel 16:7,12*).
- ★ Recognize the confident smile of Elijah (*1 Kings 18-19*).

## Session #2 – On Your Mark

### *“Every athlete exercises self-control in all things”*

Presented by Aaron Kemple

#### **1 Corinthians 9:24-27**

*“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”*



**Self-control: “The virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites” (Thayer’s)**

#### ***Learning about self-control:***

- It was part of the preaching of the gospel (*Acts 24:25*).
- It is a result of walking in and living by the Spirit (*Galatians 5:23*).
- We must first have faith, virtue and knowledge (*2 Peter 1:5-8*).

#### ***Five areas of our lives where we must practice self-control:***

- **Mental Discipline (Emotions / Thoughts)** – *Genesis 4:6-7; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Proverbs 4:23; 16:32; 25:28*
- **The Tongue** – *Psalms 19:14; Proverbs 10:19; 18:21; 21:23; Matthew 12:36-37; Colossians 4:5-6; James 3*
- **Sexual Purity** – *Proverbs 5-7; Romans 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; 2 Timothy 2:19-22; Hebrews 13:4*
- **Making the Most of the Time God Gave Us** – *Psalms 90:12; Proverbs 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:16; James 4:13-17*
- **Financial Discipline** – *Proverbs 21:17; 22:7; 27:23; 1 Timothy 6:9-10*

## *Developing self-control in our daily lives:*

- **We must have a reason.**

- ✓ Our reason must be strong enough to help us overcome any obstacle that comes in our path.
- ✓ “Faith” was Moses’ reason (*Hebrews 11:6,24-27*).

- **We must make up our minds.**

- ✓ Not being double-minded (*James 1:8*).
- ✓ Daniel purposed in his heart (*Daniel 1:8*).

- **We must train our consciences.**

- ✓ Our goal is to have a clear conscience before God and men (*Acts 24:16; Hebrews 9:14; 1 Timothy 1:5*).
- ✓ The “heart of the righteous ponders how to answer” (*Proverbs 15:28*).
- ✓ “Try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord” (*Ephesians 5:10*).
- ✓ “If our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God” (*1 John 3:21*).

- 2 Corinthians 3:18 -  
And we all, with  
unveiled face, beholding  
the glory of the Lord,  
are being transformed  
into the same image  
from one degree of glory  
to another. For this comes  
from the Lord who is  
the Spirit.

- **We must examine our weaknesses.**

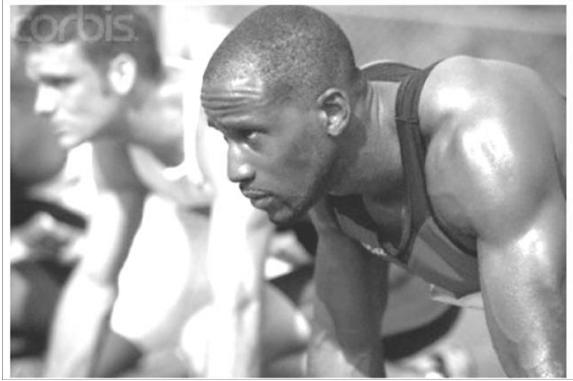
- ✓ Know where you are the most vulnerable (*Psalms 19:13-14; 2 Corinthians 2:11; Romans 13:14; Ephesians 4:27*).

- **We must develop a course of action.**

- ✓ “Idle hands are the devil’s workshop,” wise parents used to say.
- ✓ Get good advice – ask those who are godly and well-experienced when you have difficulty deciding whether a thing is good or bad.
- ✓ Avoid the evil, but also *plan* to do what is good (*Ephesians 4:17-24*).
  - Plan wholesome, fun activities.
  - Plan to be around godly, spiritually-minded people, like those who are here today.

## Session #3 – Get Set *“Fixing our eyes on Jesus”*

Presented by Aaron Kemple



### **Hebrews 12:1-2**

*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*”

### ***The importance of focus!***

- ◆ The lamp of the body is the eye (*Matthew 6:22-24*).
  
- ◆ *“But when he saw the wind”* (*Matthew 14:30*).
  
- ◆ *“Open his eyes, Lord”* (*2 Kings 6:17*).
  
- ◆ Vision correction! We must strive to see things through the Lord’s eyes.

### ***See the Lord***

- ◆ *“Lift up your eyes and see”* (*Isaiah 40:26*).
  
- ◆ Looking unto Jesus (*Hebrews 12:1*).



## *See the great cloud of witnesses*

- ◆ Love the brotherhood (*1 Peter 2:17*).
  - It is easy to criticize your fellow Christians for things they do that bother you, but why not try looking for things in fellow Christians that you like?
  - We are following some “giants” in the faith ... follow their lead!
  
- ◆ Think of who has gone on before you:
  - The people of faith in *Hebrews 11*.
  - Those who brought you to Christ.
  - “Imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (*Hebrews 6:12*).
  - You have us for a pattern (*Philippians 3:17; 4:9*).

*- Philippians 3:12-14 -  
Not that I have already  
obtained this or am already  
perfect, but I press on to make  
it my own, because Christ  
Jesus has made me his own.  
Brothers, I do not consider  
that I have made it my own.  
But one thing I do: forgetting  
what lies behind and straining  
forward to what lies ahead, I  
press on toward the goal for  
the prize of the upward call of  
God in Christ Jesus.*

## *See the finish line*

- ◆ God is faithful: He cannot lie, and He promised us eternal life (*Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:16-20*).
  
- ◆ That you may “know” you have eternal life (*1 John 5:11-13*).

# Small Groups Study

## *Obstacles To Faith*

Presented by Jason Budd, Adam McCollough, Devin Roush & Eric Tustin

### I. Hurdles

What “hurdles” do young people of today face on a daily basis?



*Ephesians 6:16* – “In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one...”

### II. The Difficulty in Facing Hurdles

What makes these hurdles so difficult?

A. They take work, effort, and discipline.

*Hebrews 12:8* – “If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.”

B. We haven’t made up our minds beforehand.

*Proverbs 22:17-18* – “Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart to my knowledge, for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, if all of them are ready on your lips.”

*Proverbs 2:2* – “...making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding.”

*Proverbs 2:10-12* – “...for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; discretion will watch over you, understanding will guard you, delivering you from the way of evil, from men of perverted speech.”

C. We overestimate ourselves.

D. We underestimate the challenges.

E. We haven't truly laid aside the weights.

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

### III. Overcoming The Hurdles

A. Think about the toughest hurdle you've ever faced. What did it take to overcome it?

1. **Understanding** – *Romans 10*

2. **Commitment** – *Matthew 19:16-22; Luke 12:13-21*

B. What resources are available to aid the Christian in overcoming the challenges he/she faces?

1. **Each other** – Achan (*Joshua 7, 22*).

## 2. Christ's example

*Hebrews 12:3 – “Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.”*

## 3. Prayer

a. *Matthew 26:36-46*

b. *James 1:5 – “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.”*

## IV. The Benefits

### A. Identify the value in overcoming.

*Ephesians 4:12-16 – “...to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”*

*Hebrews 13:21 – “...equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”*

*James 1:2-4 – “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”*

*Hebrews 12:11-13* – “For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.”

## **V. The End Reward**

*Romans 8:31* – “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

*Ephesians 4:13* – “...until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

# Study For Parents

## *Clearing The Hurdles Of Modern Parenting*

Presented by David Pike

- ▶ The family is falling into a serious state of decay.
- ▶ Consider some recent facts about modern families.

### *What are some of the root causes?*

- ▶ Lack of Bible knowledge and commitment to God.
- ▶ False philosophies.
- ▶ Rebellion and disrespect for authority.
- ▶ Lack of discipline.
- ▶ Liberal media.



### *Qualities of Godly Families*

- ▶ Faithful to the Lord.
- ▶ Solid marriage.
- ▶ Raises children well.
- ▶ Examples for others to follow.
- ▶ Devoted and pleasing to God.
- ▶ *A godly family adheres to God's model.*

### **Hurdle #1: Fearing God**

- ▶ Parents fear God and teach children.
- ▶ Emphasize spiritual things (*1 Peter 3*).
- ▶ **Action Item:** *Create an atmosphere of fearing God (i.e. God's design).*

## Hurdle #2: Love & Respect

- ▶ Each deny self.
- ▶ Treat others way he/she wants to be treated.
- ▶ Kind/gentle.
- ▶ Love.
- ▶ **Action item:** *Create an atmosphere of love and respect.*

## Hurdle #3: Communicate

- ▶ The risks and the reasons
- ▶ Communication requirements
  - Talk
  - Listen
  - Calm
  - Reasonable
- ▶ **Action item:** *Communicate effectively.*

#### **Hurdle #4: Fulfill Roles**

- ▶ The husband
  
- ▶ The wife
  
- ▶ Children
  
- ▶ **Action item:** *Become willing to accept and perform prescribed roles.*

#### **Hurdle #5: Discipline**

- ▶ *Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15*
  
- ▶ Train in the way of the Lord
  
- ▶ Strict/watchful/careful - where things could lead?
  
- ▶ **Action item:** *Discipline and train children in the ways of the Lord.*



## Session #4 – Go!

*“Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us”*

Presented by Jason Hardin

### Introduction:

*Hebrews 11:32-40*

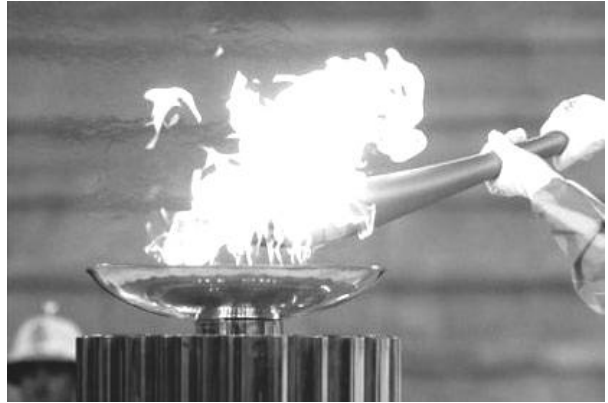
My greatest encouragement  
for you today...

**Claim your role**

**RIGHT NOW**

**in the**

**Relay of Redemption!**



### From

The Father...

...to the Son...

...to the Spirit...

...to Abel...

...to Enoch...

...to Noah...

...to Abraham...

...to Sarah...

...to Isaac...

...to Jacob...

...to Joseph...

...to Moses' parents...

...to Moses...

...to the people of Israel...

...to the walls of Jericho...

...to Rahab...

...to Gideon...

...to Barak...

...to Samson...

...to Jephthah...

...to David...

...to Samuel...

...to the prophets...

...to the apostles...

...to Paul...

...to Timothy...

...to the one who taught you...

...to **YOU**.

✓ **What will you do with the Torch of Truth?**

- ▶ Hide it under a basket? (*Matthew 5:14-16*)
  
- ▶ Drop it for something more appealing? (*Luke 8:14*)
  
- ▶ Seek to draw more attention to yourself than the flame? (*Luke 18:11-12*)
  
- ▶ Let the flame go out? (*Matthew 24:12; Revelation 2:4*)
  
- ▶ Listen to Satan as he tells you to blow it out? (*1 Corinthians 10:13*)
  
- ▶ Hold it high to the glory of God (*1 Peter 4:11*)

✓ **What about our situation could possibly be described as “better”?**

- ▶ *Hebrews 11:8, 13, 39-40*
  
- ▶ *1 Peter 1:6-12*
  
- ▶ *Hebrews 12:1-2*
  
- ▶ *Romans 8:37-39*