

For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.

Hebrews 10:36

Store In My Heart

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 Hebrew writer urges his readers to make every effort to finish the spiritual race. The "witnesses" stand as proof that it can be done. The writer also reminds us to keep our 'eye on the prize.' Our desire is to reach Jesus for an eternal reward. Jesus stands as an example of one who stayed the course to the end despite great odds. He now awaits each of us at the throne of God. Will you keep running?



Finish

Jimmy Mickells

(With all the talk about starting sports again I thought a sports analogy might catch everyone's eye. Especially since this was written near the end of the season and we are just beginning whatever kind of season we will have this year. The message is valid even if the timing is a little off. DLH)

College football season has just ended, professional football season is almost over, and basketball season is under way. As I have watched several games, of both football and basketball, I have been made keenly aware of the fact that it not always how good you start the game but how you finish that often matters the most. One of the teams that I was rooting for the other day started off really well, and even led at half time. Yet they lost the game by a good number of points. Starting good is important, but finishing is very significant as well.

I believe this to be true in our spiritual relationship with God. Some, after obeying the gospel, are extremely faithful it seems. Yet when difficulties arise, which they will, they drift away from the Lord and become unfaithful. They had a good beginning, but they did not finish what they had started. Jesus spoke about this problem in **Luke 8:13**, in the parable of the Sower. *"But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away."* That which caused their departure was not the temptation; it was the lack of spiritual growth on their part.

Growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord is vital to the relationship that we have with Him. One of the problems addressed by the writer of the book of Hebrews is their failure to become mature in Christ. He said, *"For though by this time you ought to be*

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For Our Information

Ruben Keisler is recovering from knee surgery. He is still in some pain, but doing well. He has begun physical therapy.

John Ragsdale is in the local hospital being treated for cellulitis. He is still running some fever and slow in recovery. Betty has been staying with him.

Joyce Venable has been feeling much better lately.

Pray for those in storm paths also.

Pray for safety, courage & healing.

teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:12-14). Oh that we all had that incredibly intense desire for the *“pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby” (1Peter 2:2).* Instead of running the risk of not finishing our race, by our failure to grow, our maturity can help insure that we finish our earthly pilgrimage faithful to the Lord.

Some times the team leading at half time, may think they have the game won, lose their focus in the second half and also the game. This happens far too often to the people of God. Instead of setting their *“mind on things above” (Colossians 3:2),* they are consumed with the things of the world **(1John 2:15-17).** Look once again at the words of Jesus, *“Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity” (Luke 8:14).* It is not that the cares, riches, and pleasures of life are sinful things within themselves; they become sinful when we put them ahead of serving God. We must have our priorities in order (Matthew 6:33). If not, our finish will not be successful.

When Paul wrote the young evangelist Timothy, he said, *“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 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” (2Timothy 4:6-8).* A good start is important, but the way that we finish life's race is vital! If your life ended today, could it be said of you that I have finished the race, I have keep the faith, and now there is that victor's crown awaiting me? Obey the gospel, grow, keep your priorities right, and press on to the finish line and by the grace of Almighty God eternal life is awaiting.

(We used to watch racing years ago and reading this article brought to mind some of those images. Cars that no longer resembled what they had been at the beginning still trying to finish the race. They knew that their standing depended upon racing to the end. The same is true of us in our spiritual race. No matter how many difficulties we encounter, we must keep striving till the end of life. There is no place in God's Kingdom for one who no longer reaches for Heaven. Keep working as long as you have life. Your standing before the eternal Judge depends upon it. DLH)

Pray, Study, Meditate, Apply, Pray, Repeat!

We seek only to serve God according to His Will!

