

Recap of 12/29/19 (Hebrews 12:1-3):

1. “The Book of Hebrews was written for people who were experiencing great difficulties because of their Christian commitment, and they needed endurance—the ability to bear up patiently under difficult circumstances. Life is not easy under the best of circumstances, and commitment to Christ in a hostile world brings its own share of suffering.” (One Year Study Bible NLT)
2. Hebrews 11 teaches the possibility of the life of faith, as seen in numerous Old Testament characters. Chapter 12 is a series of exhortations, a challenge to believers to complete the race of faith. A common metaphor for the spiritual life in the New Testament is that of the athlete, particularly the runner. Athletic metaphors are apt because they illustrate the need for discipline, for training, to follow the rules, to strive for consistency, and to avoid hindrances and pitfalls that disqualify the runner, and include the hope of a reward at the end of the race.
3. “Many believers start the Christian life with enthusiasm and devotion. They train carefully for a while but soon tire of the effort and begin to ‘break training.’ The flesh, the world, everyday affairs, personal interests, and often simple laziness hinder spiritual growth and preparation for service.” (MacArthur)
4. Some obstacles to running the race well are: wrong doctrine, the good that is the enemy of the best, wrong associations, compromise, discouragement, fear, lukewarmness, and sin (such as unbelief (not taking God at His word), pride, etc.
5. We must fix our eyes, our minds and hearts upon Jesus; not our circumstances or our trials. “When we are frightened, seeing Jesus will encourage us to keep on trusting. When we are tired, seeing Jesus will give us strength to go on. When we want to turn back, focusing on Jesus will reassure us that the glory ahead is well worth the present pain.” (Richards)