**The Focus of Genuine Faith – Hebrews 12:1-2**

After giving us a tour through the hall of faith, the writer of Hebrews now points us to the object of their faith. Each of these men and women conquered, endured, persevered, and overcame because their faith was anchored to the all-sufficient Savior. Faith is only as good as the object it is fixed upon.

“Fixing our eyes upon Jesus” (NASB) or “looking unto Jesus” (KJV) or “Looking away from all that will distract us and focusing our eyes upon Jesus” (Amplified)

* **Remember those that have run the race of faith before us. (1a)** Chapter 12, begins with the word, “therefore” (wherefore in the KJV). It serves to remind us to consider all that has just been shared and seek to apply it.

**Note: Those listed in 11, were not given as a history lesson, but rather as an exhortation!**

Our context for living the Christian life is just like theirs. Just as those before us, we live by faith in a broken, sin-cursed world; just like those before us, we will have difficulties, challenges and even possible persecution.

* **Refuse those things which hinder or impede your spiritual progress. (1b)** In verse one, the Christian life is compared to a running race. Two imperatives are given with the words, “let us”. The first imperative has two parts; lay aside encumbrances and the sin that besets us.
  + **Lay aside every encumbrance.** What is an encumbrance? Anything that distracts, hinders or slows you in the race. It may not necessarily be sinful, but it may a distraction.

**Note: A good thing can become a bad thing when it hinders our obedience to Christ!**

* + **Lay aside the sin, which so easily entangles us.** Often this is referred to as our “besetting sin”. Every one of us struggles with sin. But every one of us may struggle with a different form of sin. For one it may be lust, for another it may be greed and for another, it may be pride. We must recognize our proclivity toward sin and make war against it!

**Note:** **Make war on sin! Be killing it or it will be killing you.**

* **Run the race with endurance, it is a marathon, not a sprint. (1c)** The race will not be easy, nor will it be without difficulties; but we must persevere! The command is to run! We must get in the arena, find our lane, and then run.

**Note: Our race is uniquely designed for us, we cannot run another person’s race.**

* **Run the race with our eyes fixed upon Jesus. (2) T**he great object of our faith, the great hero of all heroes is Jesus. All those listed, known and unknown, were looking forward to the Lord, we have the glorious privilege to look backward to Christ.

**Note: Others may inspire us, but only Jesus can enable us! Look to Jesus:**

**Consider Jesus (3)** How could we ever consider turning back or quitting, when our Lord endured such agony for us! Do not grow weary or lose heart! Keep your eyes upon Jesus.

**Application points: Have you trusted Christ for your salvation? Are you running the race of faith?**

**If you are running the race, have you identified potential hindrances? Your besetting sins?**

**When the race becomes difficult, have you learned to look to Jesus? Preach the gospel to yourself.**