

Small Group Discussion Guide – Read Hebrews 11:39-12:3

-In what ways is the Christian life likened to running a race? How does the author of Hebrews want to use this vivid metaphor in order to describe the life of faith? What does this metaphor communicate about the qualities needed to run?

-How have we seen 'perseverance' or 'endurance' as central themes in this letter? What would the rest of the Bible, as well as what we've seen throughout Hebrews, teach us about those who seem to 'start' this race, but who never actually finish this race? What does it mean to be 'disqualified' as Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 9:24, or of "keeping the faith" in 2 Timothy 4:7-8?

-How is the Christian life *both* one of rest in Jesus from our labors and weariness (Matthew 11:28-30), yet, at the same time, also a strenuous exertion and straining to reach the finish line? How have you experienced this in your own Christian life?

-Why should we be reminded that we must run the race "set before us?" Why is it critical to understand that not everyone's 'race' will look identical, but that God has sovereignly planned the 'course' He has appointed for you? How can that help us as we run?

Who is this "great cloud of witnesses" in vs. 1? How is the author's mention of them here meant to motivate and encourage us in our race? What are these great saints who have gone before us "witnessing to" that might help and strengthen us?

-The author gives two instructions for *how* we are to run this race in vs. 1. What were those two instructions? How are they different? How are they similar?

-What might be the 'weights' in your life that would impede your ability to run well? What things might there be that aren't necessarily 'sinful' in and of themselves, but they are hindering your progress and are distractions weighing you down that you need to "lay aside" so that you can run? Can you list those in your life and what do you plan to do about them?

-Are there "sins" that are tripping you up that you also need to cast off, repent of, and get help in fighting? How do you need accountability to help you root those out of your life and lay them aside so that you might run without being continually ensnared?