

## **The Besetting Sin**

### Part 1

#### **Introduction.**

1. The Hebrew writer penned these words that should be taken seriously by all Christians in every age. (Heb. 12:1-2).

Heb 12:1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

Heb 12:2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

2. Here the Christian life is viewed as a marathon race -not a sprint that is over in a matter of seconds.
  - a. **This race differs from other marathon races because every Christian can be victorious.**
  - b. Christians are not competing against one another, but they are running because they love the Lord and want the crown of life and the blessing of spending eternal life with God.
  - c. In order to finish this marathon race one must do two things - lay aside every encumbrance [weight] that hinders the race and keep one's eyes on Jesus.
3. The Hebrew writer assures his Christian readers that it is possible to complete this marathon race and be victorious.
  - a. Many people, through faith, have already completed the race and are cheering and encouraging us to complete the race.
  - b. They completed the race and are enjoying God's blessings and they want all to share in their blessings.
  - c. There is no certainty about the meaning of the words "so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us."
    - 1) Some or many take them literally to mean that departed saints are observing us run the marathon and are cheering us on to complete the race.
    - 2) Others believe this has a figurative meaning and denotes it is the desire of all those who have completed the race and are now in bliss that we finish the marathon and enjoy the same blessings.
    - 3) This second view seems better than the first view since Christians are in a state of comfort and bliss.
    - 4) It would be difficult, if not impossible, to be happy if one is constantly viewing the marathon that Christians are running.

5) There would seem to be great sadness observing family, friends and others not complete the race leading to eternal life with God.

6) Though we cannot be certain about this, we can be certain that God wants all of us to finish the marathon. (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).

1 Tim 2:4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Pet 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

4. The word “endurance” comes from the Greek “hupomone” [hoop ah mah **na**y] that means “patience, endurance.”

a. The word could have either meaning in this context and in this lesson we will study it with both the meaning of “patience” and “endurance.”

b. Certainly Christians must run the Christian race with both “patience” and “endurance.”

c. The Christian life is not easy, and it requires much patience and endurance on the part of the Christian day after day, year after year

5. The Hebrew writer uses the word “weight” coming from the Greek “ogkos” [**o**n kos] meaning “bulk” or “size” or “mass.”

1) In connection with a runner or athlete it is often used to refer to any excess weight of the body or any extra weight on the body that might hinder running the race to completion.

2) Nothing is more important than finishing the race leading to life with God.

3) Running the Christian marathon is more difficult and challenging than a literal marathon race that is over in a few hours.

4) Running a marathon involved laying aside excess weight, strenuous daily training, learning the course, running even when it hurts, etc.

5) The Christian life involves all of this and more.

6) Yes, it involves laying aside excess weight, strenuous daily service, learning the course, but it also involves helping others, enduring ridicule, persecution and having a great enemy [the devil] constantly seeking to destroy us as we run the race leading to heaven.

7) This race is for a life-time.

6. The Hebrew writer here warns against “the sin which so easily entangles us.” NASB

a. The Greek has the adjective “**e**uperistatos” [you peh **ree** sta tos] that occurs only here in the New Testament.

- b. Some translations render this “the sin which so easily besets us.” KJV
- c. Some believe that all Christians have **a single besetting sin** that must be laid aside, but this is not supported by the Scriptures.
- d. The devil has more than one device to defeat us and we all have more than one besetting sin.

8. Some are strongly tempted by some of these things.

Drugs and alcohol	Love of money	Being first
Theft	Lust	Love of power
Indifference	Laziness	Following their own thinking
Hate	Fear	Envy
Conceit	Own wisdom - Prov. 14:12	Doubt
Vengeance	No tolerance or forgiveness for others	Self-righteousness

- a. Satan uses these temptations and others on mankind and Christians.
- b. He knows men are not all tempted by the same temptations, but all men have their weaknesses.
- c. There are some temptations that are especially hard to resist and some temptations that are not tempting for some.
- d. He seeks to use temptations on us that are hard to resist.
- e. In fact, none of us can live above sin. (1 Jn. 1:8, 10).

### Race

1. As we briefly studied earlier, the Christian life is described as a race.(1 Cor. 9:24, 26; Heb. 12:1).

1 Cor 9:24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but {only} one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.

- In normal races only one person “receives the prize,” but this is not true of the Christian race.

1 Cor 9:26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;

Heb 12:1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2. The Christian race is not usually a short race, but it is a life long race [a marathon].

- a. A runner can be hindered by many things.

Lack of interest	Injuries	Not avoiding or seeing obstacles
Lack of dedication	Being tripped	Too much weight
Lack of training	Getting off course	Wrong Shoes
Thorns	Distractions	Diet, Heat, Cold, etc.

b. There are many things that can hinder us in the Christian race.

Friends	Lack of dedication	Job
Bad habits	Evil companions	Family
Lack of interest	Ignorance	Drifting off course
Not accepting Forgiveness	Not counting the cost	Not depending on Jesus
Not accepting help	Not assembling for instruction and encouragement. (Heb. 10:24, 25).	Not getting involved in the Lord's work
Self-righteousness	Being unmerciful	Thinking morality alone will save
Not forgiving others	Being hurt	Envy

### **Impatience**

1. The Hebrew writer exhorts Christians to “run with patience [endurance].”
2. Though any sin can be a besetting sin, it appears impatience is universal or almost universal among Christians either past or present.
3. Though we cannot be sure impatience is the only hindrance he had in mind, it has always been a big problem in completing the Christian marathon.
4. He instructs his readers to put away “every weight” and one of the greatest weights is impatience.

#### **Conclusion.**

1. In part 2 of this lesson we will study many ways Christians exercise impatience toward God, others, themselves and the circumstances of life.
2. This is a vital lesson for all who wish to finish the Christian marathon and have the abundant life now and eternal life with God in heaven.

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