

# INCENTIVES FOR PERSEVERANCE

## (Part Five)

**TEXT:** Hebrews 11:32-12:2

**INTRODUCTION:** We do not know for sure who the human author of this epistle was. But it is quite evident that he was Jewish. He understood not only the Old Testament scriptures, but he readily sympathized with the present plight of the Hebrew believers to whom he was writing. He drew deeply from the well of Old Testament experience to encourage them not to abandon their faith and lose heart right before Jesus comes to reward them.

The New Testament uses several figures to represent the Christian life – warfare, slavery, marriage, farming, construction, and the death-resurrection process. But here the figure of an endurance race is introduced, and abundant encouragement is given from the long list of Old Testament worthies whose faith triumphed so that they successfully completed the race. If they persevered under unbelievably trying circumstances, *so can we!*

**OUTLINE:** What six truths from the epistle to the Hebrews do we need to consider if we would persevere and “finish strong”?

- I. **The Sinless Life of Christ**  
(2:17,18; 4:14-16)
  - A. His **Incarnation**
  - B. His **Impeccability** (John 14:30)
  - C. His **Identification** with us (Acts 9:4)
- II. **The Present Mediation of Christ**  
(7:24,25)
  - A. Praying that we will be **kept** (Jn. 17:11)
  - B. Praying that our **faith** will not **fail** (Lk. 22:32)
- III. **The Sufficient Atonement of Christ**  
(10:12-23)
  - A. Produces **assurance** (v. 22)
  - B. Produces **steadfastness** (v. 23)
- IV. **A View of Heavenly Rewards**  
(10:34-37)
  - A. Minimizes temporal **loss** (v. 34)
  - B. Produces **patience** (v. 36)

C. Focuses on the **Second Coming** of Christ (v. 37).

**V. The Successful Race of Other Christians**

(12:1)

A. Because their **agony** was not in vain (Gk. for “race”)

B. Because their **circumstances** were not different from ours (chap. 11)

C. Because their **perfection** is tied to ours (11:40)

**VI. A View of God’s Purpose in Chastening**

(12:3-8)

A. Cause for **consolation** (v. 6)

B. Reassured by His **restraint** (v. 11, 1 Cor. 10:13)

C. Results in **meekness** (Job 34:31)

**CONCLUSION:** An even greater “cloud of witnesses” surrounds us than surrounded the first century Hebrew Christians. It is a massive cloud, and it says to us in these last days before Christ’s return, “Live the life. Run the race. Value eternal rewards. Keep your eyes on Jesus.” We have all the incentives we need to shed our encumbrances, shake off our besetting sin, and finish the endurance race set before us. We already have faith. All we need is patience, and God will perfect that.