

Week 5: The Perfector of Faith

Message Overview: This week challenges students to **persevere in faith**. The Christian life is a **marathon, not a sprint**. Hebrews 11-12 encourages us to **lay aside distractions, keep our eyes on Jesus, and endure to the end**. Students will be called to remove anything that hinders them and to stay faithful to Jesus even when life is hard.

Key Scripture: Hebrews 11:1-12:1-3

Key points:

- Introduction
 - Illus: talk about a marathon runner who pushes through exhaustion to finish the race, or something similar
 - The Christian life isn't a sprint – it's a marathon.
 - Hebrews 11 and 12 encourage us to run with perseverance/endurance toward Jesus
- What is faith? (Hebrews 11:1-6)
 - Faith is confidence in what we hope for (v. 1)
 - Describe examples of people we see who lived by faith (vv 2-6)
 - Describe Abraham's, Noah's, and Moses' faith
 - Imagine walking across a bridge in the fog – you can't see the other side, but you trust that the bridge will hold. This is faith without seeing.
 - Faith is trusting in what we can't always see but what we know to be true.
- Faith requires endurance (Hebrews 12:1-2)
 - Lay aside distractions and sin that slow us down (v. 1)
 - Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before Him (v. 2)
 - Illus: imagine running a race while carrying heavy weights – that's what sin does to us
 - What distractions keep you from running after Jesus?
 - What sins do you need to lay aside?
- Keeping our eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:3)
 - Jesus endured opposition but remained faithful
 - When life is hard, look to Jesus – He went through suffering and stayed faithful.
 - Keep moving forward, even when it's tough
- How can we stay focused on Jesus?
 - Remove distractions – what is keeping you from focusing on Christ?
 - Social media, bad influences, fear of others' opinions
 - Surround yourself with believers – run the race together
 - Keep your eyes on Jesus – HE is the finish line
 - He is THE GOAL, not just a part of life.
- Wrap up: Jesus is our example AND our strength: He started our faith and He will finish it.
- **Gospel Proclamation:** Are you running this race alone? Or are you relying on Jesus. If you haven't started running after Jesus yet, now is the time.

Key question/application: Are you staying faithful to Jesus, even when it's hard? What is one way you can stay focused on Christ this week?

Community Group questions:

- Read Hebrews 12:1-2. What does it mean to "run the race" of faith?

- What are some distractions that keep you focusing on Jesus?
- How can surrounding yourself with other believers help you to “run the race” well?
- What is one practical step you can take this week to stay focused on Jesus?