

Running in our community

For 275 years Zion has been the “Beacon in the Valley,” and the saints before us, within their power did not cover this light but let it shine. Community was important from the very beginning in that although there was no church, no pastor, worship was a fundamental part of their life. Neighbor helped neighbor; those who could read lead worship and read Scripture. There were mission churches around us, Jefferson, Burkittsville, Boonsboro, Myersville and Lovettsville, while they could not be self sufficient in their early years, we helped them in becoming so. Zion’s pastors served many churches while here in Middletown and it has only been in recent years that the Middletown Pastorate is only one church. The concern for the spiritual needs of the community has been at the heart of Zion since it was formed and they were willing to share the blessings that God has provided.

John Piper writes, “The book of Hebrews was written to a church that was getting old and was settling into the world and losing its wartime mentality and starting to drift through life without focus, without vigilance, and without energy; weak hands and their knees were feeble. It was easy to meander in the crowd of life than to run the marathon. **They assume all will be well. Hebrews is written to teach them otherwise.**”

He continues, “In Hebrews 5:12 the writer says, ‘Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.’ They made a profession of faith and went into a passive, coasting mode. God means every saint to be moving forward to new gains of strength and wisdom and holiness and courage and joy...from getters to givers; from being taught to teaching.” Weak hands and feeble knees = crooked path.

"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." This command does not come out of the blue. The point of the whole book of Hebrews: endure. persevere. run.

don't neglect, don't be sluggish, don't take your eternal security for granted. Fight the fight of faith on the basis of Christ's spectacular death and resurrection. And show your faith the way the saints of Hebrews 11 did - not by coasting through life, but by counting reproach for Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. So, the main point is RUN! Run as in a race with a finish line and with everything hanging on it.

Hebrews 12 is instructing us to look at our lives, think hard about what we are doing and ask “Does this help me run or is it in the way of my running? For our children, in setting boundaries we should teach them to ask “Does it help me run the race; instead of what’s wrong with my music or why can’t I go to see this movie, or that party. The right question is “Does it help me Run for Jesus?”



Sometimes this feels like an impossible challenge before us. But Hebrews continues with motivation...a cloud of witnesses. Our witnesses are the saints that have run the good race before us and they have gathered, as it were, along the marathon route to say, through the testimonies of their lives, “By faith I finished, you can too!” Faith is not lived out in our strength but through Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. Not just to strengthen us but He is the author of our faith and He will perfect it. So when the little voice says, “I’ve tried it and it won’t work,” don’t listen to it, fix your eyes on the Him.

Faith matters, we know that...because for many of us, we have been raised in the church and we have seen God at work in our lives. But for many they have not experienced this and therefore they need to see us run our race as we fight the good fight through all the trials and tribulations of life.

So the race is not over, get out and run, hear the saints of old Zion cheering you on...for they know with certainty that the suffering of the present age are not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed to the children of God.

