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# [Faith and Endurance](https://public-api.wordpress.com/bar/?stat=groovemails-events&bin=wpcom_email_click&redirect_to=http%3A%2F%2Ffaithencounters.impart.org%2F2024%2F09%2F12%2Ffaith-and-endurance%2F&sr=0&signature=7458d5948f48280186d03e315a29ede3&blog_id=127938330&user=d4772d34747c29138d6356de987fff13&_e=eyJlcnJvciI6bnVsbCwiYmxvZ19pZCI6MTI3OTM4MzMwLCJibG9nX2xhbmciOiJlbiIsInNpdGVfaWRfbGFiZWwiOiJ3cGNvbSIsImhhc19mZWF0dXJlZF9pbWFnZSI6IjAiLCJzdWJzY3JpYmVyX2lkIjoiNTY2NTEwODc0IiwiX3VpIjoiZDQ3NzJkMzQ3NDdjMjkxMzhkNjM1NmRlOTg3ZmZmMTMiLCJfdXQiOiJhbm9uIiwiZW1haWxfZG9tYWluIjoieWFob28uY29tIiwicG9zdF9pZCI6MzU5NCwidXNlcl9lbWFpbCI6InJpY2tfYmxhaXNkZWxsQHlhaG9vLmNvbSIsImRhdGVfc2VudCI6IjIwMjQtMDktMTIiLCJlbWFpbF9pZCI6IjdiYTAxOTZiNzg5MWZlN2FlZGU3NzY2MTA3YWQ1MmRjIiwiZW1haWxfbmFtZSI6Im5ldy1wb3N0IiwidGVtcGxhdGUiOiJuZXctcG9zdCIsImxpbmtfZGVzYyI6InBvc3QtdXJsIiwiYW5jaG9yX3RleHQiOiJGYWl0aCBhbmRcdTAwYTBFbmR1cmFuY2UiLCJfZHIiOm51bGwsIl9kbCI6Ilwvd3BcL3YyXC9zaXRlc1wvMTI3OTM4MzMwXC9wb3N0c1wvMzU5ND9fZW52ZWxvcGU9MSZlbnZpcm9ubWVudC1pZD1wcm9kdWN0aW9uJl9ndXRlbmJlcmdfbm9uY2U9OTU4MGFjYTM2MCZfbG9jYWxlPXVzZXIiLCJfZW4iOiJ3cGNvbV9lbWFpbF9jbGljayIsIl90cyI6MTcyNjE2NzU0MjA1MywiYnJvd3Nlcl90eXBlIjoicGhwLWFnZW50IiwiX2F1YSI6IndwY29tLXRyYWNrcy1jbGllbnQtdjAuMyIsIl91bCI6bnVsbCwiYmxvZ190eiI6IjAiLCJ1c2VyX2xhbmciOm51bGx9&_z=z)

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Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. Hebrews 12:1 NLT.For the past several weeks, the pastors at Life Church have been focusing on the above scripture. Some thoughts have surfaced as I have meditated on this life-changing verse. 1. We are not alone. We are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses. They are with us. Heaven is full of people who know we can run our race. They are urging us on—they did it, and so can we. In 2014, my son-in-law, Timothy Haslet, and his twin brother, David, ran the Boston Marathon for his sister, one of the bombing victims. My daughter, their children and myself all traveled to Boston to cheer them on. Because of the length of the race and the young ages of their children, we watched from our rooms, getting updates along the way. Even though they couldn't hear us from the roadside, they knew we were there. We prayed, encouraged and celebrated their finish. For various reasons, Tim wasn't as prepared as he should have been and needed some health support after. It cost him something to run, but they ran this race out of love and support for their sister Adrienne. My friends, when cheer others on, it is good for us as well.,

2. The Stripping Part. Let us strip off every weight that slow us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. What comes to mind when you think about excess baggage? I think about mental weights. Discouragement (both in myself and others), disappointments in ourselves and others, false assumptions (it's too hard, I'll never make it) and false or wrong expectations. These are some of the mind weights that have either slowed me down, or try to cause me to veer off track. I have to deal with them, or else I can't run my race as God intends...and neither can you.After my daughter-in-law's cancer diagnosis in May, my life got even busier. I was already running tired, enough, so I actually had gone to my doctor to see if there was a problem. Part of my mind said, "you can't do this", the other part said, "you have no choice". After a long talk with the Lord, asking for His strength and help, we began helping with the chemo journey by helping with childcare. I was determined to serve them cheerfully, not begrudgingly. I marvel at how much stronger I feel today than I did back in June. Instead of it wearing me down and out, I have more stamina! It wasn't always easy, but we made it. The memories we made were so worth it. I had to strip off the thought that I couldn't do it and replace it with "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me". As I did, joy came, which of course strengthened me!Another thing I had to strip off was the "what ifs". What if I can't do it? What if one of my grandchildren gets hurt etc... I had to strip those thoughts off as well. I decided, as I trusted God and His strength, I could/would also trust Him to keep everyone safe and give me ideas to keep them happy and engaged. It worked! Getting rid of bad thoughts leaves room for God's creativity and faith to flow. It is amazing how helpful the Holy Spirit is when we allow Him to be!Is there an area that you need to change your perspective? The word "strip" means to "leave bare of all accessories or fittings". There is a definite, deliberate action required and implied in the meaning. What do you need to "strip" from your life? Take action, today.3. The Holy Spirit's job is to convict us of sin. This is one area we usually run away from, or try to cover up. When we strip off the weights, what is left will be revealed. The sins of pride, envy, jealousy or gossip show up. Unbelief, fear or immaturity are uncovered, and need to be dealt with. He does this because He loves us, not to shame or discredit us. There is so much freedom that comes when we repent and start afresh.4. Then we must run.... with endurance. This means we hold our ground when we battle headwinds. The enemy of our soul will fight against our running. He does not want us to run, much less win. Making sure once we strip off the weights, we add on His armor. This armor, instead of weighing us down, will actually cause us to run with more purpose and win. It will help us bear up against any adversity we encounter.5. Our associate pastor, Josh Hubbard, shared about "drafting" that running or cycling racers have learned about. Drafting, or "slipstreaming" is a technique that runners can use to save energy by running directly behind the lead runner. As I listened to his message, I thought about Jesus being our front runner. When we stay close to Him, we save energy. He knows the speed we need to run and has already mapped out our race. Besides Him, we follow those that are following Him and we can actually have the energy to run with endurance. Running alone is tiring, boring and leaves you more susceptible to wanting to quit. My dear friends, run with Jesus and His people. They will help you cross your finish line, and you can help them. Christians who burn out or quit their race often choose to "do it alone". It is not the way God intended us to run. Find your team.6. Keep your eye on the prize. I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. Philippians 3:14. NLT. Press on is another action word. It implies endurance, but also intention. It is a decision we must make. My brother-in-law has run many races. In order for him to run in a particular race, he decides and then registers, pays any fee involved and then shows up on race day at the appointed time and runs. If we want to run our race, we must also register by surrendering to Him. The cost is obedience to His will. It can seem high, but it is always worth it, if we keep our eye on the prize. Mike, my brother-in-law, has a wall full of awards and ribbons. Each representing the hard work he put in for training. There are some races that require certain qualifications, like the Boston Marathon. His number, his certificate and his ribbon have a special place on his wall, but compared to the prize we are running for, it is worth far less.6. The Holy Spirit and God's Word are both our trainer and our coach. Listen and apply their instruction and you will win your race as well. Please do not get discouraged. Keep running your race. Drink fully of His living water. Come to me, all you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28. Please remember in this race, we have quiet resting places and opportunities to get replenished. If you are growing discouraged, take time to talk with Him. Share your concerns and then take HIS yoke upon you. Let HIM teach you, because HE is humble and gently at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For HIS yoke is easy to bear, and the burden HE gives you is light. (I capitalized the changes I made in substituting His for the scriptural I/my).My friends, I know I have not always run with my eye on the prize, or with the thought of winning. I look back and see my running was more like a slug, crawling along on my belly. But, by God's grace, He has always helped me come back from distractions and get rid of any added weights because I asked for His help. Don't let our enemy rob you of the joy of running in this race. There is nothing like being a part of His team. He will show you how to fit your "life" into His race. You have the time and ability to run the race He has laid out for you, and do it well.Father, please help us keep our eyes fixed on You and the prize set before us. Forgive us for trying to run with extra weights and even the sin that so easily trips us up. I thank you for teaching us how to run our particular race, in Jesus' Name, amen.  |