

OUR RACE OF LIFE

By: Dr. Hal Webb, Evangelist

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin, which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb.12:1&2.

I would think all of us have stood on the sidelines and watched a race. Perhaps horses trying to show who has the most horse power. Or autos trying for the most rpm's. Perhaps human runners, panting and gasping for air as they run for the finish line. In today's scripture Paul likens our lifetime activities to an important foot race. I would like to point out 8 important considerations for us to consider in our daily spiritual race. **(1). Same Starting Point:** "Jesus answered and said unto him, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" John 3:3. Our whole human race must come to the same starting line to run the race of eternity. The new birth is that line to queue up to. Without having Christ as your Saviour you are but an unbelieving bystander. By accepting Christ as your Saviour you put your toes on the starting line of your race of life. You qualify to begin as one who trusts in Him. Don't be a spectator but a runner in the race of life. Line up and get started today. Then notice **(2) The Course Is Laid Out:** *"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.* Heb. 12:1c. Above every believer is the greatest coach in eternity, who is planning a life that is best for us. He has laid out the course of life before us desiring our run to be one of victory,

run within the limits of His will. Sometimes we feel very alone and out of breath, but if we stay in the center of His will all will be well. In a race all runners have a certain amount of track to follow with designated lines to stay within. We need to Biblically and prayerfully run within the lines of His direction for us. He has already plotted the course and knows what is best for us. He will fit our job and home within the lines of His will. We need never fear, but run before God as His course stretches ahead. Stay the course and all will be well. Stay on track. **(3). Avoid Extra Weight:** *"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin, which doth so easily beset us."* Heb. 12:1b. Runners do not wear unnecessary clothing. The more they wear the slower will be the pace. You could run a race in a dress suit and sweater, wearing long johns and hip boots, and carrying a back pack. You won't win the race. It seems to me many Christians clutter up their lives with so many unnecessary things. Oh, you may deem them necessary to the flesh, but they do nothing but hinder your spiritual race. My pastor pointed out that the church should, in these last days, be getting stronger. However, it is not! In doctrine, standards, and faithfulness, churches are getting weaker every day. The latest Barna Poll indicates 35 % of believers don't believe Satan is a real person. 25% believe the Holy Spirit is only a living force and not a person. Satan and the Holy Spirit are just symbols of evil and God's power. Along with Bible haters, it is no wonder the church is losing ground. Somehow we need to reverse the trend, and start putting all of the things of the Lord first. It takes so little to keep us from being in all the services of our church. Spiritually, the dear Lord Jesus expects us to strip down and stop lugging the world on our shoulders We are urged to *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."* I John 2:15a. Oh, throw off the extra baggage and get back in the race running with the best athletes in the race of life. **(4.) Running Takes**

Sacrifice: *"I Beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service."* Rom. 12:1. Great track runners exercise, eat right and endlessly run to build up their strength. Many sinners do not become Christians because they don't want to put aside their worldly life. Believers in God's race need to sweat, shed tears, labor in spiritual training and service pressing forward to the goal. It cost Christ His life to save us. How can we do less than run our very best. Sacrifice will result in more speed and will be pleasing to our coach, Jesus Christ. **(5). We Are Eagerly Watched:** *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses."* Heb. 12:1a. In every race the track is lined with spectators. Some cheer and others jeer as the runners run past. Some even offer a cup of cool water in encouragement. The running believer cannot have the race and do like the crowd. Many Christians are trying to please the world and yet try weakly to run in the Christian race. The responsibility is so great. Surely if you fail to run your best you discourage other runners who should respect your stand, and wayward believers always hinder other believers. Never forget you are being watched by all humanity around you. Will your drive and pace hinder or help others in the race of life? **(6). Endurance Is Required:** *"Run with patience the race which is set before us."* Heb. 12:1c. Listen carefully and you will hear the cheers of the saints that have gone on before us. The Christian race of life is not just a ticket to stay out of hell, but a life to be lived. It is no good to be a coward or a weakling. Every great runner has behind him a life of Godly accomplishment, and a dedication to press on to victory. It is not enough to be just on the team and wear the uniform. Many times you will not feel like doing the Godly thing you know is right. Perhaps others around you won't be much help and encouragement. In fact they

may cause you to hang back in the race. Don't deviate from the course because other may fail. God and you are a majority and you can make it to the finish line and the awards awaiting in glory. **(7). Persistence Wins:** *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."* Phil. 4:13. I chose this verse as a teen when I first began preaching many years ago. I have claimed it countless times and can testify to its truth. God does not want you stranded or detoured from your race. Just keep on keeping on and never give up . Keep your eye on the goal and He will strengthen you to reach it. Keep in training. Study the rule book, our Bible, and follow it faithfully. I love the cartoon of the crane swallowing the frog. The frog's head is in the crane's mouth but his front legs are outside around the birds neck, in a strangle hold. The crane cannot win as long as the frog hangs on. You've all had someone tell you to "hang in there." Whether in prayer or any service for God, never give up. Persistence wins! **(8). Prizes For Winners:** *"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"*. Phil. 3:14. It will be a wonderful day when our race is over and we rest at Jesus feet. The rewards will be many to those who faithfully ran their race for the Lord. You may be nearer the finish of your race than you think. We older ones must keep using the strength God gives us to serve Him. Don't be discouraged, and sit on the sidelines and do little. Encourage and cheer those who in their youth are just beginning their race. If you are sidelined by some sickness or age, just keep moving at your best pace. And you youngsters, pour it on, giving God the best years of your life now and to come. Time is short, rewards are waiting, Christ is watching, and victory is ours. Lets show the world that Christians are on the right track. I say again, time is running out, opportunities are slipping away. Your efforts are vital to the will and work of God. Run your very best, stay on the track,