

A GREAT CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Hebrews 12:1 says, “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.” We are running a long distance race in the arena of life. It is not a hundred meter sprint. This is why we need endurance.

We also need to remove anything that would hinder us (slow us down spiritually). This includes not only sin (specifically mentioned in addition to *every weight*) but those things in the world that are not inherently evil but occupy too much of our attention (TV comes to mind here).

Being with Jesus is the goal. We must keep our eyes on the prize (“keep looking unto Jesus”—**verse 2**). He is also our example. We follow in His footsteps to join Him where He is.

His example is also an encouragement, so we are told to consider what He has done and what He received (**verse 3**).

We have more examples to give us even more encouragement. In the arena of life, we are surrounded by a “great cloud of witnesses.” These are the ones mentioned in **chapter 11**. They have lived their life, finished their course, and kept their faith. Now they are in the stands and watch us run. However, “witness” is also intended to convey the idea that their life is a testimony to the fact that we can be faithful, too!

The example of Noah tells us that we can be faithful and obedient even if everyone around us thinks only of evil continually (**Heb. 11:7, Genesis 6:5**).

The example of Abraham tells us that we can obey any command of God, no matter how difficult it may seem (**Heb. 11:17-19, Gen. 22:1**). What is more difficult than offering your only child to God, especially when it seems to contradict God’s promise and not make any sense?

They prove **we can** do it!