

Lay Aside Every Weight

Hebrews 12:1-2 - The Race of Faith - 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, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author (originator) and finisher (perfecter) of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

But this week's message just could be a continuation of last week.

I want to talk to us today about **trying to run a race with excess baggage.**

The Bible Likens Our Walk with God to A Race.

The difference is this race is not a sprint but run with endurance to the end.

- We're **not** racing each other; ***we're racing against the enemy of our souls!***
- ***Who is doing everything he can to knock us down, knock us out, knock us off course, to keep us from crossing that finish line!***

I understand there are some rules for runners:

- ***Remove all excess weight, anything that would slow you down.***
- ***Always, always, keep your eyes on the finish line.***
- ***Never, ever, look back!***

In our text this morning, **Paul reminds us that we have a race to run.**

To ensure our victory, he gives us some tips for running this race.

The Bible Distinguishes Between Weights and Sins

We all know that sin will destroy us.

And, while the focus of my message today is not sin, let me tell you that Satan knows what sin we are most susceptible to.

While Satan can't read our minds, he has a good idea of what we struggle with.

- He sees the places we go
- He hears what we talk about
- He sees what we read
- And he knows what we struggle with.

The Works of the flesh:

Galatians 5:19-21 - 19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

- These behaviors are detrimental to spiritual growth!
- Incompatible with inheriting the Kingdom of God!
- These behaviors demonstrate a lack of spiritual maturity.
- Carnal nature rather than being led by the Holy Spirit!
- Paul warns us against serving ourselves, we have freedom IN Christ!

We know that sin will destroy us but let me talk about weights today.

- We're still trying to run the race with weights on our backs.
- Going in the right direction, but we're carrying a heavy load.



Many of us are going through life just like this car. The owner of this car decided to get all the materials he needed for his home remodeling project.

Unfortunately, he didn't understand weight limits and distribution, and this particular load destroyed his rear tires and pushed the shock absorbers up through the floorboard.

He attempted to drive home, but the weight was just too much, and his car collapsed in this parking lot.

Many of us have been to Satan's store, and we're carrying the weight of:

- Guilt – Anger – Fear – Lust - Desire for Carnal pleasure – Greed – Bitterness – Complacency – Ect.....

Whatever it is, **we're trying to** go through life, run our race, make it to heaven, but **we're just carrying too much weight**.

Paul says, ***"Realize something, there are other things besides sin that will slow you down! Lay aside the weight!"***

You say, **"Pastor, I'm not sinning**. I'm not stealing, or fornicating, or lying, or anything else that the Bible says is sin!

- It may not be sin, but if it's a weight, lay it aside!

1 Corinthians 6:12 NKJV - Glorify God in Body and Spirit

All things are lawful for me, but **all things are not helpful**. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

Paul says:

1 Corinthians 6:12 CEV - Honor God with Your Body

Some of you say, "We can do anything we want to." But I tell you **not everything is good for us**. So, I refuse to let anything have power over me.

- **Freedom in Christ should not be used to justify detrimental actions!!!**

There are some things that are not sins, they are allowed, but they are not good for me, **Paul says. They hinder me, instead of helping me. Lay them down!**

I Want to Spend the Majority Of My Time Today Dealing with Weights.

There are three things about weights that I want to bring to your attention.

1. Weights Slow You Down

If you've ever run in a marathon, or walked a Walkathon, you will know that there are places along the way that you can get a glass of cold water. **(checkpoints)**

There are checkpoints, if you will, ***that have been established for us in our spiritual race.***

Places of rest and refreshing:

Psalm 110:7 - He shall drink of the brook by the wayside; Therefore, He shall lift up the head.

- **Powerful statement** about the Messiah's suffering and subsequent triumph.
- His willingness to endure hardship (drink from a brook)
- Will lead to his exaltation and victory
- Represented by lifting his head

As Christians in a race there are places of strength and refreshing along the way.

When we're slowed down by weights, it takes longer to get to the place of rest!

- It takes us longer to see the will of God accomplished in our lives.
- It takes us longer to fulfill our ministries.
- It takes us longer to find the peace and joy of the Holy Spirit.

We're slowed down carrying things by things that we can't seem to put down.

- I know there are people in this place who have a calling on their lives.
- It's not happening quickly enough for you, and you're frustrated.
- **But have you taken an honest look at your life?**
- If you will, you'll find weights that are keeping you from running your race.

If you put those weights down, you will arrive at your destiny much more quickly.

2. Weights Drain Your Energy - Our strength is just drained when we try to run with a lot of weight on our backs.

When the Lord was speaking to Ezekiel concerning the priests, he said,
"When they come in to minister to me, they shall not wear anything that will make them sweat."

The word sweat is only used 3 times in the NKJV:

Genesis 3:19 - In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return."

Ezekiel 44:18 - They shall have linen turbans on their heads and linen trousers on their bodies; they shall not clothe themselves with anything that causes sweat.

Luke 22:44 - And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

In the first instance, it's used as *a description of man's punishment for eating of the forbidden tree*, and *part of that punishment* was that *he would have to work for his sustenance*.

- And the work that he would have to perform would drain his energy.

The third instance is describing Jesus' intercession for us, and *the agony of bearing the sins* of the world drained his energy.

The second instance is describing our worship, and Our worship is not to drain our energy, but to replenish it!

This, being the Holy Spirit, is the rest wherein the weary shall rest.

Why would anyone be weary in worship?

Because the weights we carry all week long drain our energy!

By the time we get into the sanctuary, we're tired, weary, sweating, all our energy drained!

IF it's drudgery instead of a pleasure to worship God! The answer is this:

- *Let go of the weight, and you'll have energy to worship God!*
- *Let go of the thing that's replaced your pure, undivided worship!*
- *Let go of the thing that's sapping your strength.*

3. Weights Make You Lose Your Focus -

If you've ever loaded up a truck, or car, during your moving process, and had your load tied down, you'll know what I'm talking about when I say ***that your undivided attention is not on the road ahead of you.***

You're continually looking in your rear-view mirror, or turning around to make sure your load is securely fastened.

Unfortunately, **there are several risks involved**.

- Number one, **you might run into someone ahead of you**.
- Number two, **you might miss your turn**.
- Number three, **you might miss a stop sign or red light**.

This can affect your journey, because you're not focused on the road ahead.

You've violated a sacred rule of racing, and that is: Never look back!

Paul said it like this: Philippians 3:13-14 - 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: **Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead**, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

- **Focus on the future**, press forward toward our ultimate goal.
- **Don't be burdened by the past!!!! *Don't dwell on our mistakes!!!***

Stop watching your weight, keep your eyes on the prize ahead of you!

- Lay it aside, **put it down, *stop worrying* about it, just focus on the prize!**

When our focus is divided, the enemy can get into our hearts and lives, and cause confusion, division, frustration.

I was watching the football game the other day, and one of the offensive linemen jumped before the snap and was called for an offsides penalty.

The announcer made a statement that I just knew I was going to have to work into a sermon, he said,

"That young man wasn't listening to his quarterback, he was watching his enemy!"

We need to get our eyes off of the enemy and focus on our quarterback!

If we listen to the voice of the signal caller, we won't jump too soon, we won't be persuaded by our enemy and caught off guard!

Keep your focus on Jesus! Lay aside **every weight, every habit, every thought** that would steal your attention from Jesus Christ!

Single minded Faith and trust in God:

James 1:8 NKJV - he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

James 1:8 CEV - If you are that kind of person, you can't make up your mind, and you surely can't be trusted. So don't expect the Lord to give you anything at all.

- **Unstable** in all their ways..
- **This describes someone who is uncertain and wavering in their faith**
- They are **NOT fully committed** to God
- And therefore, **NOT able to receive anything** from Him.
- God promises wisdom to all who ask Him for it
- He promises to **give it generously** and **not** based on merit
The caveat is that we MUST believe and NOT doubt.
- Too often, we just get sidetracked, our focus divided, our attention split.

CLOSE: What weight do you need to let go of today?

What besetting sin keeps coming back to plague you?

- ***This is your time to be delivered from that sin!***
- ***This is your time to be delivered from that weight!***

Get serious about the one thing in your life **that never gets dealt with.**

- **What keeps coming up?**
- **You love God**, but **something keeps hounding you.**
- You know **it stands in the way of your walk with the Lord.**

We need to take a lesson from Gideon today.

This verse is God's direct instruction to Gideon, demanding a tangible act of defiance against Baal worship.

Judges 6:25 - Now it came to pass the same night that the Lord said to him, "Take your father's young bull, the second bull of seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image that is beside it;

Gideon's father, Joash, had erected great **statues of Baal and the goddess Asherah**, made from huge stones.

His reasoning was, "***Baal has given Midian power over us, maybe if we worship their god, he'll give us power.***"

People came from miles around to worship there, including **Midianites and Moabites**, it was a **powerful, demonic stronghold in Israel!**

- **Baal worship was a form of idolatry and a deviation from the covenant between God and the Israelites.**
- **Israelites were forbidden from worshipping Baal and other false gods.**
- **This practice was condemned as a form of spiritual adultery.**

God told Gideon, "***I'm not going to deliver Israel until you get rid of this idol that stands between us.***"

The act of destruction is a powerful symbolic act of **rejecting false gods (weights)** and **returning to the worship of Yahweh**. (Hebrew: "I Am" or "He that is")

Gideon's obedience would lead to conflict with his community, but ultimately, ***it would demonstrate his faith*** and lead to the deliverance of Israel from the Midianites.

Lay it aside cut it down!"

Judges 6:27 - So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the Lord told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the townspeople, he did it at night rather than in the daytime.

- **He took an ox and used ropes to pull-down Baal and Asherah!**

God is giving His church today **the same message** He gave Gideon:

"I want to help you - but I can't until you lay aside every weight and the sin that keeps defeating you!"

It's time, let's lay aside every weight, and the sin which overtakes and dominates us!