

What Keeps Us Going?

by K.P. Yohannan

The secret to our survival in the Christian life is fixing our eyes on Jesus and making Him our focus and motivation.

Scripture: Hebrews 12:1

Topics: "Perseverance", "Focus on Jesus"

Description

K.P. Yohannan reflects on the marathon as a metaphor for the Christian life, emphasizing that starting well is not enough; perseverance is key. He highlights the various adversities that can lead believers to drop out of their spiritual race, such as relationship issues, financial struggles, and spiritual dryness. The only way to endure and finish strong is by fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Yohannan encourages believers to focus solely on Christ, as this will provide the stability needed to navigate life's challenges and fulfill their calling. Ultimately, he calls for a commitment to worship and meditate on Jesus to sustain our journey.

Transcript

I am always intrigued when I watch the start of the marathon during the summer Olympics. All the runners appear to be in top physical shape, excited to represent their countries and determined to win the gold medal.

However, it's a whole different story when I watch them 15 or 20 miles later. They look exhausted from the hot sun that beats down on them or miserable because of rain that makes their trail slippery. Some have trouble breathing when the race takes them over a mountain, and others struggle to keep up with the fast pace.

Although everyone, no matter how long it takes them to cross the finish line, is celebrated with cheers and applause, some runners will never get there. Somewhere along the route they drop out of the race due to exhaustion, injury or discouragement.

In the marathon race and in our Christian life, persevering until the end is what it's all about, not just starting well.

What am I talking about? Not giving up in our walk with Jesus and enduring in the call He gave us to win this lost world and build His kingdom. Both have to do with our inner life and with our commitment to serve

Him.

Like the marathon runners, we, too, will encounter adversities along the way that have the potential to cause us to quit the race. Some of these trials include:

Relationship problems with other Christians that severely threaten our treasured self-life and call us to humility

Physical and financial setbacks that cause us to lose hope

Lack of fruit and fulfillment in our service to the Lord when we forget that the sowing season must come before we can reap a harvest

Facing our latent failures and sins when circumstances expose unbrokenness, pride, a selfish attitude, stubborn will or critical spirit

Frustration and a desire to escape when serving the Lord becomes hard work and the feelings are gone

Feeling inadequate and overwhelmed by the expectations our leaders and other Christians have for us

Spiritual dryness that comes when God tests us to see if we will still walk with Him by faith, even when there is nothing within or without to support us

Losing sight of our priorities--shifting from serving the Lord to protecting our self-interests

With such a frightening list of adversities, what chance do we have to run our race and victoriously cross the finish line as the Apostle Paul did?

I have served the Lord full-time for the past 40 years. From my own life and experience I can tell you this: The godliest Christian leaders I have met, the most challenging sermons I have heard and the best books I have read on evangelism and discipleship have not been enough to help me survive in the race!

Only one thing has kept me in the ministry and following Christ--and that is learning and practicing what the apostle Paul wrote in Hebrews 12:1-2:

"Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

The secret of our survival is fixing our eyes on Jesus and making Him alone our focus. Then our walk with God and our commitment to serve Him will no longer depend on whether or not people treat us right or circumstances are in our favor. We will no longer rely on our emotions to support us or on our successes to keep us going. Jesus alone will become our goal and motivation--our prize--and we will live for Him, run our race for Him and cross the finish line for Him.

My dear friend, unless you learn to fix your eyes on Jesus alone, you will have no stability in your walk with God or in your service to Him.

Jesus Himself said, "Follow Me."

Therefore, meditate on Him, consider Him and think about Him so that you may not grow weary in your heart. The answer to enduring until the end is not self-effort or a rational attempt to figure out the answers,

but to stop and look into His eyes.

If we do this, we will experience what this song says: "When I look into Your holiness / When I gaze into Your loveliness / When all things that surround become shadows in the light of You / . . . I worship You."* After all his struggles, Job found the answer he was searching for when he fell on his face and worshiped the Lord.

Today let us decide to fix our eyes on Jesus throughout the race set before us.

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