



The Mystery of Jesus

Part 4 – Example Study Guide

Anyone who's ever run any kind of race knows that it takes a lot of training and preparation. It's not easy and it takes a lot of endurance. There are moments when you even want to give up and quit. Pushing past those feelings and enduring through the pain is what makes a stronger runner, but the best motivator for runners is the end goal. Keeping the end in mind helps a runner push through the pain during the middle of the race. Much in the same way, our lives are in a race. Knowing how to run, and where we are running towards, will help us run well and finish strong.

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,” Hebrews 12:1 (ESV)

1. Have you ever trained for a race or competition? Share your experience. How disciplined were you in preparing and what was the outcome? Was there someone helping you prepare?
2. **Read Hebrews 12:1-4.** Running the race of life isn't always easy, but our struggles can make us stronger. It also helps to know how to run, and who to look to as an example of running the race well. How does looking to Jesus as our perfect example help us run the race? What are some things that are weighing you down and keeping you from running well? How can you cast aside those things?
3. **Read Hebrews 12:5-12.** You can either have discipline or *be* disciplined. Like a parent that disciplines out of love, we can be assured that God disciplines us not out of hate, but because of His love. What areas of your life do you need to have more discipline? Have you ever had a time in your life when God disciplined you? What did you learn and how did it help you grow?

“Looking to Jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Hebrews 12:2 (ESV)

4. **Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.** Plan to run your race with Jesus in mind and as motivation. Our joy set before us is Him. Someday, we will cross over the finish line and He will be there to welcome us. In the meantime let's run the race like Paul—disciplined and running with the end in mind. Do you live your life with eternity in mind? Why or why not? What areas of your life have you become lazy and lost sight of the importance of spiritual discipline?

5. It's a proven fact that runners run better and faster in a pack. We need each other to help us run the race well. How can we help each other run the race well?

6. Pray together as a group that God would help you run the race well. That you would endure through your struggles and get rid of anything that is slowing you down and holding you back.