

WHAT GETS IN THE WAY OF FINISHING WHAT YOU START?

DAY 4

In the 1992 Olympics, a man named, Derek Redmond, was the runner everyone thought would win the Gold Medal in the 400-meter semi-finals. Derek thought so too. He'd trained all of his life and was among the best runners in the world.

When the race kicked off, Derek had a strong start. Many in the crowd cheered him on, waiting for him to take the lead and go home with the gold. Suddenly, about midway through the race, Derek felt something snap. A few steps later he fell to the ground in pain. He had torn his hamstring—the main muscle in the back of his leg. He knew that the race was over for him. The gold medal would never be his.

When Derek's father saw his son fall, he pushed his way through the crowd and onto the field. He grabbed his son around the shoulders. In great pain and disappointment, Derek limped to the finish line with the help of his father. It's an amazing story of perseverance.

(Ask permission to look up and watch a video of this story. Search "Derek Redmond" on YouTube®.)

Like the huge cloud of witnesses in the Bible, stories of athletes are encouraging and inspiring. You might not be an Olympic runner, but you have a race to finish. Don't let anything hold you back in trusting and following God. Like Redmond's dad, our heavenly Father helps His children persevere and finish.

LIVE
FOR GOD



DAY 1

Hebrews 12:1 starts out like this: *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses . . . (NirV).*

"Witnesses" are people in the past who have lived out their faith with perseverance. Can you name some of those Bible heroes you've learned about? (If you need help, flip back to Hebrews 11 for a cheat sheet.)

Write 3 of your favorite Bible characters here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The next part of the verse says, *let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. (NirV).* Picture yourself running a race while carrying a box of rocks. Sin is about as helpful as those rocks.

Inside the trashcan, write things a follower of Jesus should not hold on to if he or she wants to live for God.



The last sentence in Hebrews 12:1 says this: *And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, (NirV).* As you go through your week, ask God to help you keep sin out of your life and in the trash can where it belongs. Remind yourself that God can help you let go of what is holding you back. He did it for the heroes of the Bible—regular people living a life of faith, and He will do it for you.

PRETEEN

HEAR
FROM GOD

WEEK 3



DAY 2

Did you know that eagles are born with big, heavy wings? A young eagle can literally die from exhaustion if it exerts too much energy flapping its huge wings trying to fly. It learns to soar. Eagles wait for a big gust of wind then launch into the air with a combination of flying and soaring to get them where they want to go. Sometimes eagles will remain perched for days before they can catch a good, strong wind.

We don't have heavy wings that weigh us down but when we carry around a bad attitude, selfish motives, or other kinds of sin, we can't live for God the way we should. We can't soar in our faith; we can barely move! Sin has a way of tangling us up and holding us back from what God wants for us.

WRITE DOWN SOME THINGS THAT KEEP YOU FROM FOLLOWING GOD.

Crumple up the paper and hold it tightly in your hand as you ask God's help to let go of those things. Drop the paper to the floor to remind yourself that God will help you let go of the things that hold you back in your faith.



PRAY
TO GOD



DAY 3

Grab a friend or family member and tape their thumb to the side of their hand so that it can't move. Challenge them to do the following activities without the use of their thumbs.

- o Tie a shoe.
- o Write their name on a sheet of paper.
- o Eat a meal
- o Use scissors to cut the shape of a heart.
- o Look up Hebrews 12:1 in a Bible

Who would've thought that thumbs were such a big deal! We don't realize what a difference they make until we don't have them anymore.

Free your friend's thumbs then talk together about the ways sin holds us back and makes it hard to follow God. How do we get untangled from sin?

The next time you're tempted to let a sin wrap itself around you, look at your thumbs and think twice.



TALK
ABOUT GOD

