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Sermon Notes

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## **The Deadly Danger of False Teaching**

### **Galatians 5:6-12**

One of the greatest physical tragedies that has ever struck our sin-tormented planet was so tiny it could not be seen by the naked eye... or even by a normal microscope. It is the variola virus that causes one of the most dreaded diseases in human history—smallpox. The earliest evidence of smallpox is found in the scarred face of the mummified Egyptian Pharaoh Rameses V who died in 1157 B.C. There have been countless epidemics over history; one smallpox epidemic ravaged Rome for fifteen years beginning in A.D. 165, killing as many as 5 million people and greatly weakening the Roman Empire. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century alone, the disease has claimed anywhere from 300-500 million people, one of the single greatest killers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The disease spreads by the virus going airborne... that's why epidemics happened. Medical science has not developed a cure. However, the one silver lining in this dread scourge was the observation made early on that, if a person survived a bout with smallpox, he or she never got the disease again. This led to the development of a powerfully effective VACCINATION program which has totally eradicated smallpox from the world. Amazingly, the World Health Organization has declared smallpox to be effectively extinct from the face of the earth. The last known death from smallpox was on September 11, 1978... a medical photographer named Janet Parker. She worked in medical school at the University of Birmingham in England... she was on the floor above a lab where research was going on on the smallpox virus... the lab did not have the proper safety measures, and the virus must have travelled through the air ducts to her office. Since that time, no one has died from this wicked virus.

The history of the smallpox virus is an illustration of the deadly danger of false teaching... its ability to spread and bring spiritual death wherever it goes. In Galatians 5:6-12, the Apostle Paul cried out in his rage and frustration against the effects of a spiritual virus that had spread to the churches in Galatia... the virus of a false gospel.

Background: Paul planted good healthy churches in Galatia with good, sound preaching of the true gospel; after he left, false teachers came in, preaching a deadly mixture of Christ and Law... faith and works...

Here in this passage, Paul pleads with the Galatians to repent and return to their healthy grasp of the gospel

But he does more than that... he seeks to CUT OFF the false teachers from their influence over the Galatians... he exposes them as the deadly threat they were

## I. Faith Working Through Love

A. The Great Change: In Christ, Circumcision is Meaningless

***ESV Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.***

1. Paul continues to unfold the themes of this letter
2. Verse 6 clearly continues the argument of verses 1-5
  - a. There Paul was making a direct appeal to the Galatians to PROTECT THE PRECIOUS, BLOOD-BOUGHT FREEDOM Christ had won for them
  - b. Christ died to set them free... free from the Law's meticulous commands, free from the Law's power to condemn
  - c. But that freedom is a fragile thing... it needs to be guarded... they need to STAND FIRM and defend it... against whom? Against the Judaizers! Against the false teachers... that is the very theme Paul draws out here
  - d. Paul reminds them that submitting to the ritual of circumcision would put them under obligation to keep the WHOLE LAW
  - e. Even worse, to accept such a redefinition of the "gospel" would mean that Christ was of no value at all... they had been severed from Christ. They had "fallen from grace"... they were now acting like branches that were no longer connected to the vine... they were trying to finish on their own what Christ started in them by sovereign grace
  - f. Paul ended by reminding them again of the blessings of the gospel:

***Galatians 5:5 But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.***

There IS INDEED a journey left to travel... there is a righteousness for which they must yearn... there is a righteousness in the future for which we HOPE... but we hope BY THE SPIRIT, and we wait for that righteousness BY THE SPIRIT... and we run a daily race of holiness BY THE SPIRIT

That brings us to the passage we're looking at today

***ESV Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.***

3. Paul asserts that, now they are Christians (they are “in Christ Jesus”)... now that that great change has happened, legalistic requirements like circumcision become meaningless... it is IRRELEVANT to one’s spiritual status in Christ
  - a. Paul was circumcised and was also seen by God to be perfectly righteous... how? BY FAITH IN CHRIST ALONE
  - b. The Galatian Christians were uncircumcised and were also seen by God to be perfectly righteous in God’s sight... how? BY FAITH IN CHRIST ALONE
  - c. The issue of circumcision is meaningless spiritually
4. So... What DOES matter? A genuine living vital connection to Christ by the Holy Spirit... a NEW CREATION

***Galatians 6:15 Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.***

5. This “new creation” life is an amazingly powerful and active thing!! It produces a whole new way of living... a “life of love”

<sup>ESV</sup> ***Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.***

#### B. The Vital Relationship Between Faith and Works

1. Paul uses an amazing expression here... FAITH WORKING THROUGH LOVE

The NIV unhelpfully tries to smooth over this phrase so that we can harmonize...

***NIV Galatians 5:6 ... The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.***

But that is NOT HELPFUL... let’s keep the original: ***“faith working through love”***

- a. In this expression, he combines two elements that are constantly discussed in the issue of the Christian life... faith and works
  - b. It is an issue that theologians have struggled over and many have failed to harmonize biblically
2. In Justification: It’s Faith OR Works
    - a. In other passages, these two are set as opposites

***Galatians 2:16 we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be***

*justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.*

***Galatians 3:2 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?***

***Galatians 3:10-12 For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." <sup>11</sup> Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." <sup>12</sup> But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them."***

***Romans 4:2 If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about-- but not before God.***

***Romans 4:5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.***

***Romans 9:32 [the Jews] did not pursue [righteousness] by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone***

- b. When it comes to justification, Paul DOES set faith and works as opposites... it's EITHER/OR... one or the other
  - c. Either a sinner will try to make himself right in God's sight by his own works, or he will trust in Christ and in the free gift of forgiveness by grace through faith
  - d. Faith and works are truly OPPOSITES when it comes to justification
3. But now, in Galatians, Paul has turned a corner and it talking about the Christian life that follows justification

***Ephesians 2:8-10 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- <sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.***

- a. Justification always leads to sanctification... a life of good works that requires hard effort on the part of the Christian

Martin Luther: "We are justified by faith alone, but the faith that justifies is never alone"... it always produces works.

***James 2:26 As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.***

In his Introduction to Romans, Luther stated that saving faith is,

a living, creative, active and powerful thing, this faith. Faith cannot help doing good works constantly. It doesn't stop to ask if good works ought to be done, but before anyone asks, it already has done them and continues to do them without ceasing. Anyone who does not do good works in this manner is an unbeliever... Thus, it is just as impossible to separate faith and works as it is to separate heat and light from fire!

4. In Sanctification: It's Faith AND Works... or Better, Faith Producing Works

a. Here Paul is saying that genuine faith produces good works

b. A genuine connection with Christ will produce a harvest of good fruit

***John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.***

c. This fruit is achieved by actual WORKING on the part of the Christian... it takes LABOR to produce them... energy

***Philippians 2:12-13 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed-- not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence-- continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.***

***1 Thessalonians 1:3 We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.***

C. Faith Working Through Love

1. Paul adds this idea... "faith working THROUGH LOVE..."
2. I understand this to mean that faith is the conduit by which the Holy Spirit transforms the human heart
3. This "heart of flesh" is now one that is soft, supple, yielded... and characterized by LOVE
4. The heart's affections have been transformed... where the unregenerate sinner's mind HATED GOD and was HOSTILE TO GOD, now the regenerate child of God LOVES GOD and LOVES THE THINGS OF GOD
5. This brings us again to the LAW OF GOD... especially to the summary of the Law given both by Jesus and by Paul

***Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest***

*commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' <sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

***Romans 13:8-10*** *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup> The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>10</sup> Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*

6. In other words, faith WORKS THROUGH LOVE... producing all manner of good works both toward God and toward neighbor
7. It thus FULFILLS THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE LAW
8. This is what some theologians call the “third use of the Law”... the role of the Law after justification in defining a good life in God’s sight
9. This is the powerful impact of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer... enabling us to do WORKS OF LOVE, thus fulfilling the Law

***Romans 8:4*** *in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.*

D. Running a Good Race... of Faith Producing Works

***Galatians 5:7*** *You were running a good race.*

1. Paul likens this good, Christian life to a distance race
2. He says the Galatians were running a good race... understanding their status as adopted children of God... totally forgiven... but MAKING PROGRESS toward Christlikeness by the Spirit... seeking to be perfected day by day by the Spirit
3. The “race” analogy is one of Paul’s favorites... he used it a lot... it refers to the intense nature of the Christian life... requiring concentrated effort by the Spirit... but the whole time, secure in God’s love

***2 Timothy 4:7*** *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*

***Acts 20:24*** *I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me*

***1 Corinthians 9:24-27*** *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. <sup>25</sup> Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that*

*will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.* <sup>26</sup> *Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air.*  
<sup>27</sup> *No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.*

BUT... perhaps for our purposes, Hebrews 12:1 is the clearest parallel text:

***Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.***

In Hebrews 12, the obstacles and hindrances seem to be INTERNAL... the besetting sins that entangle our feet and weights of sin that drag behind us

Tragically... in Galatians 5, the false teachers seem to be the hindrances

## II. False Doctrine: A Persuasive, Spreading Hindrance

### A. False Doctrine a Hindrance

***Galatians 5:7 You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?***

1. The image is a powerful one...
2. The false teachers had in effect jumped into their beautiful race and were tackling them, stopping them in their tracks, by preaching this false doctrine of legalism

Illus. 1954 Cotton Bowl; Rice was leading Alabama 7-6 when Rice running back Dicky Maegle broke free and was running down the sidelines in front of the Alabama bench, with a clear path to the end zone. Suddenly, an Alabama player named Tommy Lewis, without putting on his helmet, dove out from the sidelines and tackled Maegle, then jumped up, sprinted back to the bench and tried to hide! The officials awarded Maegle a touchdown!

I picture that... the Galatian Christians were running beautifully, running in the clear... when suddenly these Judaizers, these false teachers, jumped in and tackled them with the false gospel of legalism

### B. False Doctrine Promotes Disobedience

***Galatians 5:7 You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?***

1. Notice that by believing the false message, the Galatians were at fault... they had STOPPED OBEYING THE TRUTH
2. The false gospel makes people DISOBEY the true gospel!

3. The gospel is something that must be obeyed...

***Romans 1:5 Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.***

- a. It is a call to all sinners everywhere to “repent and believe the good news”
- b. It is not a call to all sinners everywhere to keep the Laws of Moses

C. False Doctrine a Persuasion

***Galatians 5:8 That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you.***

- 1. Paul speaks of the process by which the Judaizers had won the minds and hearts of the Galatians...
- 2. It was a WICKED PERSUASION... they had reasoned with them based on the Old Testament Laws
- 3. They had laid out arguments and had been persuasive
- 4. But Paul says that persuasion certainly didn't originate in the “one who called” them... that's God the Father

***1 Corinthians 1:23-24 we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.***

***1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.***

***Romans 1:7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints***

- 5. God never sent these false teachers... the “persuasion” they were giving was NOT FROM GOD... but from the devil... the “father of lies”
- 6. False doctrine is always persuasive... it has a certain “reasonableness”
- 7. But the truth from God is able to demolish false arguments

***2 Corinthians 10:3-5 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup> The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.***

D. False Doctrine Spreads Poison

***NIV Galatians 5:9 "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough."***

***ESV Galatians 5:9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.***

1. I opened this sermon talking about SMALLPOX... why? Because of this verse
2. The idea here is of the spreading power of a contagious virus like false doctrine
3. The "little yeast" could be the seemingly small concession of getting circumcised... a little tip of the hat to a legalistic fear; Paul pleaded with them not to give in for an instant

***Galatians 2:5 We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.***

***Galatians 5:2 ¶ Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all.***

4. The "little yeast" could also be the false teachers themselves... just a few men come to town and in a very short time, they have changed everything
5. We can't give in for a moment to false doctrine; once it gets it, it will quickly begin to poison your whole outlook... a little legalism will destroy your confidence and begin turning you completely into a slave to the Law

### III. False Teachers Will Pay the Penalty

#### A. Who Are these People?

1. Paul turns his attention directly to the specific people who were causing all this to happen... these false teachers

***Galatians 5:7 You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?***

- a. Who ARE these people?
- b. Who is responsible for all your confusion?

***Galatians 5:10 The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be.***

- c. Who is turning your world upsidedown?

2. Paul wants the Galatians to see them as they really are; he wants to SEVER the connection between them and the Galatian church

#### B. False Teachers Drive a Wedge Between Christ and His People

1. These false teachers had “cut in on” them in the midst of their race
2. These false teachers were trying to get rid of the offense of the cross (more in a moment)
3. These false teachers were responsible for this horrible state of affairs:

***Galatians 5:4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.***

And this:

***Galatians 5:2 Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all.***

4. They were threatening the very connection that was keeping the Galatians alive spiritually... if Jesus was the vine and they were the branches, the false teachers were the shears that were poised to sever them entirely from Jesus

#### C. False Teachers Try to Avoid the Cross

***Galatians 5:11 Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished.***

1. The offense of the cross = the simple teaching that salvation is by faith in Christ alone... not by works, so that no one can boast
2. It is HUMBLING to human pride
  - a. The cross teaches that we deserved to be cursed for our transgressions to the Law
  - b. The cross teaches that the Jewish Messiah came not to defeat the Romans and set up a nationalistic Jewish Kingdom, but to die at the hands of the Romans under the wrath of God... very offensive to Jews
  - c. The cross taught Gentiles that salvation comes from the Jews alone... if you don't believe in a Jewish Savior, you cannot be saved
  - d. But most of all, the cross was offensive because it totally denied all efforts at self-salvation! YOU CAN'T SAVE YOURSELF... no matter how hard you try
3. Paul says that the false teachers were arrogant, prideful, promoting their own righteousness and seeking to make converts of Gentiles by the same prideful message

4. Paul says “At one time, I asserted the need for circumcision... but then I was humbled on the Road to Damascus... and now I will never preach circumcision again.”
5. A commitment to preach the cross and not Moses has resulted in a life of massive persecution for Paul
6. But Paul has made his choice between pleasing people and pleasing God:

***Galatians 1:10 Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.***

D. Paul is Angry... Very Angry

1. This paragraph is written in a very choppy style in the Greek
2. Not as many logical connectors as usual... not as smooth a flow
3. It's like Paul is out of breath
4. He seems very angry at these false teachers... and somewhat at the Galatians for allowing them such an inroad into their minds and hearts

E. Paul's Curse and Warning on the False Teachers

***Galatians 5:10 The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be.***

***1 Corinthians 3:17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.***

False teachers have a terrible future:

***2 Peter 2:17 ¶ These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them.***

Amazingly... Peter is speaking of false teachers who were preaching a message of FREEDOM from all moral restraint... license people

Paul is speaking of false teachers who were preaching a message of LEGALISM... salvation by extreme moral effort!

They both get severely warned of their coming judgment!!

Paul's final word on them:

***Galatians 5:12 As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!***

He calls them “agitators”... like rebels or insurrectionists who are fomenting revolution and trying to topple the king; they are rabble-rousers

Paul says a very shocking thing... if they are arguing for circumcision, I wish they would just emasculate themselves... some commentators speak in terms of their ability to reproduce spiritually... or that emasculated men were forbidden from entering the assembly of God’s people

Or it could just be that the false teachers would be cut off from the Galatians... having NO ACCESS AT ALL!!

In any case, it is clear that Paul is filled with RIGHTEOUS RAGE against them!

#### IV. False Doctrine Will Ultimately Fail

##### A. Paul’s Clear Assertion

***Galatians 5:10 I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view.***

##### B. Christ’s Sheep Will Not Listen to False Teachers

***John 10:14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me***

***John 10:27-29 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.***

***John 10:4-5 When [the good shepherd] has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice."***

##### C. Sovereign Grace Uses Clear Warnings to Protect the Elect

1. God's elect will never fall ultimately for false doctrine
2. BUT it is specifically because God warns the elect ahead of time in terms of what to look for

***Matthew 24:24-25 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect-- if that were possible. <sup>25</sup> See, I have told you ahead of time.***

3. The Bible is sufficient to protect all of God’s elect from every form of false teaching Satan could ever devise

4. BUT elders must be skilled doctrinally to prepare the sheep to fight

***Titus 1:9 [An elder] must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.***

## V. Applications

### A. Welcome the True Gospel... Not the Counterfeit

1. The false gospel of human works and achievements will never save our souls
2. The genuine gospel of Christ's accomplishments at the cross will never fail
3. God is calling on you to repent and believe

***Acts 17:30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.***

***Mark 1:15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"***

4. Understand the "stumbling block" of the cross

***1 Corinthians 1:23-25 we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup> For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.***

### B. Delight in the True Relationship Between Faith and Works

1. Faith alone justifies... we must rest in Christ's finished work on the cross
2. But genuine faith transforms the heart and conforms it to Christ
3. Genuine faith warms the heart with affections toward God and then toward others

John Wesley, Journal Entry, May 24, 1738: "In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

4. When Christ enters the heart by faith, purifies it from sin... then energizes it to do good works by the power of the Spirit

5. FAITH WORKING IN LOVE...

6. Ask the Lord to move powerfully in your heart to fulfill the two Great Commandments
  - a. Ask Him to move in you to love God with all your heart, mind, soul, strength
  - b. Ask Him to knit your heart together with others... with other Christians, with neighbors, with the lost, with the suffering...
  - c. Ask Christ by His Spirit to do mighty works of love in and through you
  - d. FAITH WORKING IN LOVE... not to earn forgiveness, but because you are already forgiven; not to earn your way into the family of God, but because you are already in it!

C. Understand Paul's Passionate Hatred for False Doctrine... Hate it Worse Than the Smallpox Virus!!!

1. Study the gospel to protect your own heart from false teachers
2. Take everything you hear from this pulpit and align it with the Word of God
3. Understand the danger of both legalism and license...
4. If you are one of Christ's sheep, you will never follow a heretical teacher... but the way you will be protected is by good teaching that you feed on for years
5. Saturate your mind with the word of God... have your daily quiet times in the Word; memorize the Scriptures
6. Pray for the protection of FBC doctrinally for years to come
7. Teach your children deep and rich theology to protect their hearts from future false teaching...
8. Celebrate the fact that the 66 books of the Bible are SUFFICIENT to protect your hearts from every possible false doctrine Satan could ever craft

D. Run Your Race with Endurance

1. After justification, the Christian race is a marathon... again, not to earn forgiveness but to glorify God by doing the good works He has ordained for you to do
2. Listen again to the race verses:

***1 Corinthians 9:24-27 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. <sup>25</sup> Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. <sup>26</sup> Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. <sup>27</sup> No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.***

***Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.***

3. Run with endurance!! Guard your heart against legalism... know that you are totally loved, totally forgiven, secure as an adopted child of God; but still you must run, run hard to finish your race