

Discussion Guide: Hall of Fame of Faith, Part 17

“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, 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. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.”

~ Hebrews 12:1-3 (ESV)

November 23, 2003: Kimber Kauffman, Senior Pastor College Park Church. Like Christ, we should not focus on the hurts, trials, or shortcomings of this life but, rather, force ourselves to remember and look forward to the joy promised after this life, if we continue in faith to the end. Kimber says “The Christian life is like a long-distance faith marathon.”

Question 1: What are some differences between a marathon (26 miles) and shorter races?
Note to Facilitator: Some of the things discussed were that marathon runners don’t warm-up (first few miles are the warm-up)...they go through “phases”... they need to be “even on their splits” (run at a steady pace).

There are three ways for runners to “deal with” that physical challenge of running a marathon:

1. Escape Method: Force your mind to be consumed with thoughts other than the race and your pain by using mantra-like repetition of some phrase. Also, one might “go to a happy place” by imagining oneself to be on the beach or some ideal place.
2. Shaw’s Hope Method: Rationally talk yourself into knowing that the future benefits outweigh the current temporary suffering and pain.
3. Haley’s Method: Rather than shifting the mind’s focus, pay careful attention to one’s performance, analyze your situation frequently, and deal with the reality of your pain.

Some Scriptures that may help to illustrate how the methods above relate to our life in Christ are: Phil. 4:8, Luke 10:40-42, and Rom. 6:11-14; Heb. 12:2-3; 2nd Tim. 4:6-8, and Phil. 3:11-14.

Question 2: In what ways do you use an Escape Method in dealing with the trials and temptations of your walk with Christ?

Note to Facilitator: Of course, few of us actually use a mantra, but how many of us do choose to allow pointless things to consume our minds and time... or have habits of thought that we entertain all day that run contrary to the Word of God?

Kimber shared how he is currently in an “uphill, blazing sun” phase of his marathon of faith, and that he, like [Ben Comen](#)¹, bears the bloody badges of one who stumbles frequently, but who is unwilling to give up.

Question 3: If you are not currently in a Gethsemane² experience, how can/should you prepare now for when it comes?

Note to Facilitator: Christ made it through, in part, because He was resigned to do God’s will, no matter the cost to Him personally. We must be in the practice of laying aside our will whenever it is clear that it is in conflict with His plans. In order to do so, we must (repeatedly) ask Him to reveal His will, and to enable us.

Kimber went on to say that sometimes God promises you something (or calls you to something) but does not provide it years and years. During these times, we must continue in faith.

Our pastor also talked about how, if you are in a “hard phase” of the race you might be tempted to want to go back to the way it was at the beginning of your walk with Christ, when things were easier, more exciting, or when you were more “on fire.” But probably you were very immature then and you weren’t as much like Christ as you are today. If you were in the last 6 miles of a marathon, you might want to go back to that first mile, but it would be foolish.

Kimber asked several questions, he himself was asked by a mentor, which shed light on the difference (for most of us) between what we say we do or will do, and what we actually do:

Question 4: What do you talk about when you feel free to talk about anything you want?

Question 5: What do you think about when you have time to think about anything you want?

Question 6: What do you spend money on when you have extra disposable income?

Question 7: What does it take to make you quit or not follow-through on a commitment?

Final Question: Consider your answers to questions 4-7 above. Why are you doing the things you are doing, if not for Jesus?

Tools for Application:

- Get with Joel or Dale Shaw and run a marathon before our next meeting. Then report to the group what it taught you.³
- Take one day and **chronicle everything you do** and how much time each item took.
- Take one day and **chronicle everything you think** during idle moments.
- Given **some decision you have to make**, start praying as Christ did in Gethsemane. Keep praying this way (repeatedly and intent to do His will) until your heart is truly committed to do whichever option He burdens you to do.
- **Take a look at your last month’s checking or credit account statement.** Make everything fit into one of two columns: For Jesus and God’s Will for My Life, or Other.
- Look for Scriptures that promise the things Kimber needs (renewed mind, encouragement from God, not men, insights into God’s word, etc.) and **pray for Kimber** while glancing at those passages.
- If you are doing the work of ministry for reasons mainly other than in gratitude to Christ and for God’s glory, then go home tonight and prostrate yourself before God and ask Him to help you truly repent... **ask Him to purify your motives and make it more about Him, and less about you.**

Notes:

1. <http://hanna.anderson5.net/athletics/xcountry/benindex.htm>
2. See Matthew 26:36-43.
3. Just kidding!