

The Best is Yet to come (3)

"A Journey to Abundant Life"

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

John 10:10b (ESV)

Overcoming Barriers to God's Best

(Hebrews 12:1-2; Romans 12:2)

Introduction: Many Christians today, are carrying weights we don't need, and they're holding us back from God's best.

The weight of sin, fear, and distractions hinder us from having the abundant life God promises. Overcoming these barriers requires putting off these weights, focusing on Christ and the renewing of the mind. *How does this work?*

I. Identify and lay aside the weights: (Heb. 12:1)

A. A look at past illustrations – "Therefore..."

1. This always indicates that what he is about to say is based on what he has just said.
2. This "Therefore" – a crucial transition word offering and emphatic conclusion which began back in chapter 10:35-36 where he encouraged these believers to not cave in to their current persecution – but instead to endure with faith and run their race!
3. Chapter 11 gives us a look at the past – a review of the history of God's people who had exemplified so strikingly and so blessedly, the nature, the trials, and triumphs of the spiritual life.

What he is saying is, we are to look at their witness, as models demonstrating that as they did – we can make it through our race. (Rom 15:4)

B. A look at present instructions –

1. Athletes used to wear training weights to help them prepare for the events.
2. No athlete would actually run in a race wearing the weights because they would slow him down.
3. What are the "weights" that we should remove so that we might win the race?
 - a. Everything that hinders our progress. They might even be "good things" in the eyes of others.
 - b. A winning athlete does not choose between the good and the bad; he chooses between the better and the best.

Sin: Sin entangles. The author of Hebrews tells us to "throw off" sin, not manage or justify it.

To "throw off" sin means to acknowledge it, confess it to God, and turn away from it. (1 Jn. 1:9)

Fear: Fear paralyzes. Fear of failure, rejection, or uncertainty can keep us stuck. Confronting our fears can help us overcome them by exposing their powerlessness in light of God's truth and presence.

David confronted Goliath not by denying the giant's power but by focusing on God's greater might (1 Samuel 17). (Isa 41:10)

Distractions: Not everything that hinders is sinful. Some things are simply distractions. Social media, overcommitment, or even good things can take our focus off God's best.

II. Focus on Christ :(Hebrews 12:2)

A. What it means to focus on Christ:

1. To "Look" to Christ. (While we have the witness of the many who have gone before us, we look to Jesus who is the supreme model of faith. (Num 21:4-9; John 3:14-16).
2. Also, to focus on Christ means to direct your attention and devotion entirely toward Him. (Mt.14:29-30)

B. How do I focus on Christ?

- a. Consider His example:
- b. Trust in His power: Heb 13:8
- c. Seek His presence daily:
- d. Surrender your worries: Phil 4:6-7

III. Renew your mind (Romans 12:2)

A. The reminder – (vv. 1-2)

1. Paul began this section reminding believer's we are to present our life to God as a living sacrifice.
2. Such an offering represents a complete change in lifestyle, involving both a negative and a positive aspect.
 - a. *First, Paul commanded, "Do not conform" (1 Peter 1:14) (Gal 1:4; cf. Eph 1:21) We must put these things aside.*
 - b. *Then Paul commanded, But be transformed (I.e.) "keep on being transformed") by the renewing of your mind.*
 1. The Greek verb translated "transformed" (where we get our English word "metamorphosis,"
 2. This represents a total change from inside out (cf. 2 Cor 3:18) (cf. Eph 4:22-23).
This drastic change is not possible without the Holy Spirit changing our way of thinking...

B. The renewing - what it means to renew your mind: Renewing our mind is an ongoing process of exchanging worldly thinking for God's truth.

1. The "pattern of this world" often promotes selfishness, fear, and lies.
2. Renewal means replacing those influences with the transformative power of Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

C. Steps we need to take for this renewal to take place in us:

1. **Immerse yourself in scripture:** Ps. 119:105; Phil. 4:6-7.
2. **Identify and challenge negative thoughts:** (2 Cor. 10:5)
3. **Replace lies with truth: lie:** "I can never change." **truth** (2 Cor. 5:17).
4. **Feed your mind with Godly input:** Prov. 13:20
5. **Pray for transformation:** Ezk. 36:26

Conclusion: *Overcoming barriers to God's best isn't a one-time event; it's a daily choice.* Identifying a weight to put off, focusing on Christ, and renew your mind. In doing so, experience the fullness of Your best in our lives.