

4 Passages That Mention a Race

(Hebrews 12:1)

Introduction:

1. Lately, racing has received a great amount of attention in our area.
2. This attention has been leading up to "the Great American Race" that is scheduled for this afternoon.
3. Perhaps this is a good time to study "4 passages that mention a race."
4. As we do so, let us concentrate on the spiritual lessons that are taught in these passages.

Discussion:

I. PSALM 19:1-6

- A. In these verses David presented a powerful argument for the existence of God.
- B. By observing the objects in the heavens and the order that exists, we can know that there is a Creator.
- C. In vs.4b-6 David dealt specifically with the sun.
 1. (vs.4b) God has set the sun in a certain place -- it has its own tabernacle.
 2. (vs.5) To illustrate the power of the sun, it is compared to a bridegroom coming out of his chamber and a strong man running a race [athletes who run races are well conditioned and very strong].
 3. (vs.6) The sun is so powerful that it influences everything on the earth.
- D. What lesson do we learn from David's comparison of the sun's power to a strong man running a race?
 1. If the sun is so powerful, what do we know about its Creator?
 2. The lesson is summed up in Psalm 147:5.

II. ECCLESIASTES 9:11-15

- A. In these verses Solomon showed how things do not always work out the way we think they will.
- B. (vs.11) One way that Solomon made this point was by showing how battles are not always won by the strongest [illustrated in vs.14-15].
- C. Before mentioning this he said, "*the race is not to the swift.*"
 1. In the Kentucky Derby, does the horse that leads most of the race always win?
 2. In the Daytona 500, does the car in the pole position always win?
 3. In the Olympics, does the first runner out the starting block always win?
- D. What lesson do we learn from Solomon's statement about the race not being to the swift?
 1. Man's knowledge is limited -- we simply do not know how things will turn out.
 2. Some good advice for us to follow is given in James 4:13-15.

III. 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-27

- A. In these verses Paul was making a point from athletic competition.
 - 1. An athlete competes in a race to win a prize that is described as "*a corruptible crown.*"
 - 2. He practices temperance so he can be successful.
 - 3. Only the athlete who wins the race will receive a prize.
- B. What is the spiritual lesson to learn from these verses?
 - 1. Christians look forward to receiving an incorruptible crown.
 - 2. In order to receive it we must practice temperance while running our race.
 - 3. A home in heaven will be given to all who finish the race (Revelation 2:10).

IV. HEBREWS 12:1-3

- A. These verses provide additional instructions for running the Christian race.
 - 1. First, we must eliminate certain things -- every weight and sin that beset us.
 - 2. Second, we must run our race "*with patience.*"
- B. We have 2 sources of encouragement, including:
 - 1. a great cloud of witnesses [the men and women listed in ch.11 who completed their races]
 - 2. the Lord who completed His race.
- C. We learn from these verses that keeping our eyes focused on the Lord will prevent us from giving up and quitting.
- D. To receive an incorruptible crown we must finish the race that is set before us.

Conclusion:

- 1. We have examined the 4 passages in the Bible that mention a race.
- 2. From the reference to a race in:
 - a. Psalm 19:5, do you believe that God exists? (Hebrews 11:6)
 - b. Ecclesiastes 9:11, do you look to God for wisdom and direction? (Proverbs 3:5-6)
 - c. 1 Corinthians 9:24, have you entered the Christian race so you can receive an incorruptible crown?
 - d. Hebrews 12:1, are you running the Christian race with your eyes focused on Jesus?