Authentic Faith **Authentic faith finishes the race**
September 16, 2012 **Hebrews 12:1-3**

There is no subject of greater importance to living as a follower of Jesus Christ than faith. That's why the teaching contained in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews is among the greatest in the Bible. Here we find explained and illustrated some of the most pressing questions: What is faith? How do we get faith? What are faith's benefits? What are faith's trials and obligations? Particularly in our present day, when counterfeit faiths abound, a study of authentic faith is essential if we are going to stand on solid ground.[i]

Discussion Questions: (Leaders please review each question and pick those that will be most beneficial for your group.)

1. Read **Hebrews 12:1-3.** This passage teaches us that **authentic faith finishes the race.** The main command in this passage is found at end of verse 1. *"Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."* Perseverance means to stand up under. Have you ever wished you had someone else's course to run because your course seems too hard? Based on the command of this verse which course are you to run? How will you stand up under the course the Lord has marked out for you?

2. In order for us to run the race of faith to the end there are four faith fundamentals we must exercise. First, **remember you're surrounded**. Hebrews 11:1paints the picture of a stadium with athletes on the playing field and spectators in the stands. Who are these spectators and what does v. 1 call them? What do they give witness to? How will remembering these witnesses help when you grow weary?

3. The second fundamental necessary to run the race to the end is to **eliminate excess weight** (v.1b). What things (even good things) in your life are hindering you from following Jesus Christ by faith? What changes do you need to make to eliminate these?

4. V.1 goes on to say *throw off . . . the sin that so easily entangles.* What "besetting" sins keep tripping you up? Will you choose today to do whatever it takes to throw off anything that is hindering you or tripping you up? Take time now to confess and repent of these idols and sins.

5. The third fundamental necessary to run the race to the end is to **focus on Jesus** (v.2). What does it mean that Jesus is "the author and perfecter of our faith"? How will focusing on his sacrificial death, burial and resurrection help you when your circumstances seem overwhelming? Since Jesus is now seated next to God the Father as our great high priest, how does he empower those who trust in him to run the race of faith?

6. The last essential fundamental is to **consider Jesus** (v.3). Do you ever find yourself growing weary and losing heart as you follow Jesus? What lesson do we learn from Luke 24:27 that, if implemented, will help us when we get discouraged?

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[i] Richard D. Phillips, Faith Victorious: finding strength and hope from Hebrews 11 (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P & R Publishing Co. 2002) ix.