

Reading Tracks

TRACK ONE

Follow along with basics of the story in a short selection of readings this week..

Monday: Hebrews 11:1-7

Tuesday: Hebrews 11:8-22

Wednesday: Hebrews 11:23-40

Thursday: Hebrews 12:1-3

Friday: Philippians 2:1-11

Saturday: Philippians 3:7-15

TRACK TWO

Get a little bigger perspective by reading assigned sections from *The Story* © 2011 by Zondervan.

Read pages 423-436 this week.

TRACK THREE

Get the whole story by reading through most of the Bible in longer sections.

In your Bible, read Hebrews 1-13, James 1-5 this week.

This Week's Scripture Memory Verse

"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, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith." Hebrews 12:1-2 (NIV)

Next Week in Worship

Next Weeks' Message: *Paradise Won*

Next Week's Readings: Revelation 22:1-5; John 20:30-31

We learned this week about persevering in faith even in hard times. When *The Big God Story* continues next week, we will read the book of Revelation, the final book of the Bible, and learn what God's plan for the future means for us now.



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Group Discussion

Connect

What is the most important thing you have ever trained for? What did you have to say “no” to in order to say “yes” to the training? How did your training bond you more deeply to others in the process?

Learn

Read Philippians 3:7-15: Running for the Prize

- What was the prize that Paul calls the church to run after?
- What did Paul give up or say “no” to in order to pursue the prize of Christ? Why was the prize of Christ so valuable in Paul’s mind?
- As a group, discuss in what ways the prize of Christ is different than other prizes that can be won in the world?

Read I Corinthians 9:24-27: Training as a Disciple

- What is striking about the image Paul contrasts of running “aimlessly” and running to win the prize? What do you think he means by “running aimlessly” or “boxing the air?”
- In what ways have you felt like you have been “boxing the air” in your relationship with God? [aka: trying really hard without getting anywhere]
- What are some things you need to “say no” to in your life in order to “say yes” to pursue Christ and His Kingdom? How easy is it for you to say no?

Read Hebrews 10:23-25 and Hebrews 12:1-4:

- How does Jesus’ example give us strength to persevere through the challenges we face in our life? How does He reorient our understanding of joy?
 - What is the role of Christian community in helping each other to persevere? Who have been some of the most significant “growth” people in your life? What was it about them that helped you to grow in Christ-likeness?
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Apply

As a group, discuss how God is leading you to grow in pursuing the prize of Christ. What is one thing God is leading you to say “no” to in order to “say yes” to Jesus more in your life? What is a “weight” or “sin” you need to let Christ and Christian community help you carry in order to run more freely in your life?

Pray

Spend some time praying for each other to grow in the ways God is leading you to. Pray for the desire to pursue Christ as the prize of our lives and for divine opportunities to share about why He is so valuable with others.