



## **Sermon Discussion Guide for Groups**

# **“Run the Race”**

**Preached by Dr. Michelle Anthony**

**July 6<sup>th</sup> 2025**

### **Summary**

*Have someone in your group read the following summary aloud.*

Pastor Michelle delivers a powerful sermon about fixing our eyes on Jesus, based on Hebrews 12:1-2. She emphasizes that as Christians, we are called to run the race of faith while being surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. The message explores how we need to throw off everything that hinders us and the sin that entangles us, while keeping our focus solely on Jesus rather than the distractions of life.

### **Key Passage | Hebrews 12:1-2**

“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, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”

## **Opening Prayer**

*Open your session in prayer, using the words below or your own*

### **Heavenly Father,**

As we gather together today to reflect on Your Word, we come with humble and expectant hearts. We ask that You would quiet our minds and still our spirits so that we can be fully present with You and with one another. Open our hearts to receive what You want to speak into our lives today. May Your Spirit guide us into deeper understanding, not just for knowledge, but for transformation.

Help us to recognize and lay down the things that distract us—worries, doubts, or the busyness of life—that keep us from fixing our eyes fully on You. Show us what needs to change in our thoughts, habits, or priorities so that we can walk more closely with You. As we discuss Your Word together, may our conversation be filled with grace, encouragement, and truth. Strengthen our faith, deepen our community, and use this time to draw us nearer to You. We pray all of this in the name of Jesus, **Amen.**

## Getting Going

*Allow time for each member to answer the following questions before moving on.*

What is the most difficult athletic experience you have been a part of? What helped you get through it?

## Discussion Questions

*Answer as many of the following questions as time and interest permit.*

1. What does it mean to have a “cloud of witnesses” in our faith journey?  
Who are some people that have encouraged your faith?
2. How do you think the ancient witnesses mentioned in Hebrews 11 can encourage us today?
3. What are some things that commonly hinder Christians from fully following Jesus?
4. What does it practically look like to 'fix our eyes on Jesus' in daily life?
5. How can we help each other stay focused on Jesus within our community?

## Making It Personal

*Take the opportunity noted below to apply this week's sermon to your everyday life*

This week, take time to prayerfully reflect on anything in your life that may be pulling your attention away from Jesus. It could be a habit, a relationship, a

distraction, or even a mindset—anything that keeps your heart divided or clouds your ability to fully trust and follow Him. Be honest with yourself and with God about what's occupying space in your life that belongs to Him.

Once you've identified that one thing, don't stop there—take intentional steps to address it. That might mean removing or limiting a specific influence, setting healthy boundaries, or creating new rhythms such as daily prayer, time in Scripture, or unplugging from social media. The goal isn't just behavior modification, but spiritual transformation. Ask the Lord for wisdom, strength, and accountability as you make these changes. Remember, small steps in the right direction can lead to lasting change. Fix your eyes on Jesus, and let everything else fall into its proper place.

## **Key Takeaways**

*Commit to memory one point from the message before you dismiss.*

Which of these points will you carry with you this week?

- We are all runners in the race of faith, not spectators
- We need both the biblical cloud of witnesses and present community to encourage us
- Everything that hinders and sin that entangles must be removed to run  
Jesus alone should be our focus - not Jesus plus other things
- We need to focus on God's faithfulness in both big and small ways
- Fixing our eyes on Jesus is not just glancing occasionally but  
maintaining steady focus

## **Closing Prayer**

*Have someone from your group close you time in prayer, using the words below or your own.*

**Lord**, As we gather together today to reflect on Your Word, we come with humble and expectant hearts. We ask that You would quiet our minds and still our spirits so that we can be fully present with You and with one another. Open our hearts to receive what You want to speak into our lives today. May Your Spirit guide us into deeper understanding, not just for knowledge, but for transformation.

Help us to recognize and lay down the things that distract us—worries, doubts, or the busyness of life—that keep us from fixing our eyes fully on You. Show us what needs to change in our thoughts, habits, or priorities so that we can walk more closely with You. As we discuss Your Word together, may our conversation be filled with grace, encouragement, and truth. Strengthen our faith, deepen our community, and use this time to draw us nearer to You.

Lord, we don't want to leave this time the same way we came. Soften our hearts to Your leading, and give us the courage to respond to whatever You're asking of us. Whether it's surrendering control, extending forgiveness, or stepping out in faith, help us to obey with trust and joy. Let this moment plant seeds of lasting change in our lives. In Jesus' name we pray, **Amen**.

## Verses for Further Study

- **Genesis 50:20 (ESV)** | *"As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."*
- **James 1:2–4 (NIV)** | *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."*
- **2 Corinthians 4:17 (NIV)** | *"For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."*