

# Shedding Our Excess Baggage

Heb. 12:1b

## INTRODUCTION

According to Warren Wiersbe, the Hebrew letter presents three reasons that make unadulterated Christianity more effective than Judaism:

- Christianity has a superior Person – Christ (chs. 1-6)
- Christianity has a superior Priesthood – Melchizedek (chs 7-10)
- Christianity has a superior Principle – Faith (chs 11-13)

Narrowing the scope of our discussion to Faith, the letter focuses on:

- Great examples of Faith (ch 11)
- The endurance of Faith (ch 12)
- Practical manifestations of Faith (ch 13)

Tonight's lesson begins to answer the following question:  
How can we prepare to win the "footrace of faith?"

## LESSON

As an athlete prepares themselves physically to run a footrace, so must we prepare ourselves for the spiritual footrace. This preparation begins by discarding any unnecessary weight that might slow or stop us from reaching our goal.

"onkos" – Bulk or mass (Vines)

What particular weight did the Hebrew writer have in mind? Since he specified none, he must have meant any and every weight that would hinder us. To the runner this might include: clothing, food, body weight or training weights.

When do they lay these things down? Before the race. (Barnes)

We then must jettison whatever hinders our spiritual progress.

Throw out the unnecessary cargo.

Shed the excess baggage.

These might include (but not be limited to):

Pride

Vanity

Worldliness

Bad temper

Lewd thoughts

Hard heart

Unscriptural marriage/relationship

Money

Anything to which we have become unreasonably attached, including all sin (hear next week's lesson) (Barnes)

As Vincent put it: "This passage exhorts us to lay aside every worldly hindrance or embarrassment to our Christian career."

Athletes often wear training weights before they run. Even these "good" weights must be set aside prior to the race.

- The Law served as our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. Its job is done, it must be put aside. (yes, yes)
- The teachings of John the Baptist (of course)
- Note what could not be taken by the disciples on the limited commission (Mk. 6:7-13; Mt. 10; Lk 9:1-6)  
"Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece." (They were allowed a pair of sandals.)
- The diet of first principles. (Heb. 5:11-14) (uh-oh, the kicker!)

### **CONCLUSION: WHAT'S IN OUR EXCESS BAGGAGE?**

- Too much stuff? (possessions)
- Too many obligations?
- Our jobs?
- Our family ties?
- Our denominational/church baggage?
- Our peers relations and friendships?
- Our refusal to look to God, the word, our brethren for aid. [Lucado, *Traveling Light*]
- Our concern with dying. [Lucado, *Traveling Light*]
- Our worry, arrogance, grief, loneliness, and doubt. [Lucado, *Traveling Light*]

### **PREVIEW**

The witnesses of Hebrews 11 stand as our examples, supporters, cheerleaders and coaches. But the Head Coach will be examined in verse 2: The Author and Finisher of our Faith.