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Faith and Discipline
12: 1-11

The writer has just told us: **Now this faith is what the righteous of the TaNaKh were commended for (Hebrews 11:2** quoting **Habakkuk 2:4),** and now he says: **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 endurance the race set before us (12:1).**

Modern advertisers work hard to sell the public on the benefits of their product. But why in the world would the writer of **Hebrews**, speaking to an already discouraged Messianic community, picture them in the company of those whose **faith** brought suffering? Wouldn't it be wiser to highlight eternal benefits and stay away from any pain they might experience here and now? Or to paint an even rosier picture of what might lie just around the corner?

The problem is, of course, that a life of **faith** is no bed of roses. Those who promote health and wealth ignore the fact that believers are heirs to the same troubles that plague all mankind. They also ignore Scripture's warning that **everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (Second Timothy 3:12).** Sooner or later the reality of this truth sets in. In fact, the first readers of this letter were already suffering hardships. What they needed wasn't lip service, but help. What they needed, and what we need today, as hard to understand as this might seem, is the ability to put our pain and suffering in perspective and recognize that our tribulations are gifts of a loving **God**.[360]