

**THE BIG IDEA: To live unhindered, we've got to kill the unnecessary.**

### The Take-Off

Sometimes I read verses in the Bible that really grab my attention because they say what I want to be true of me  
When the verse contains my name, it REALLY grabs my attention!!

(Possibly one of the drawbacks to having a Bible name!!)

Anyway, Acts 28:30-31 is one of those sections

What really challenges me is that the last word of the book of Acts - in the Greek - is "akolutos"

It means unhindered, and that's our UN word for the day, and before we get into it, I need you to look at another verse  
that is going to guide us today - Romans 8:1

Here's why that's important: none of us - even the most saintly among us - will feel like we've done this well.

It will be easy to feel condemned, but that's not how God rolls.

So, everybody do me a favor and say, "No condemnation!"

Now, I've already shared with you the verse about Paul that grabbed me this week. Now let me share a quick story  
that God used to solidify what He was saying.

It comes from "Undaunted" by Christine Caine (which our women are going through in Summer School)

[Read story from pages 154-155]

When Wendy read me that, my heart ached and burned in me.

I WANT TO HEAR GOD LIKE THAT! I WANT TO EXPERIENCE THE UNHINDERED GOSPEL LIKE THAT!

And there's one simple reason we don't.

It's called... [play the static] ...that's right. Static. Distractions. Hindrances.

Things that clog up the pipe between us and God, that jam the frequency in our souls.

**And if we want to live unhindered, we've got to kill the unnecessary.**

### 1. Here's a list of potential unnecessary hindrances

- a. I'm sure I could throw a lot of things in here that can hinder us, but I'm just going to list 4.
- b. And yes, this is where you've got to remember Romans 8:1 - beating ourselves up (or letting Satan do it) won't help us.
- c. Here we go. 4 potential unnecessary hindrances:
- d. ONE, sin
  - Hebrews 12:1
  - Probably smart to get the obvious one out of the way right up front
  - Surely most everything could be seen as sin, but let's talk specifics
  - All of us have sins that "easily entangle" us
  - Getting smashed with friends at a bar isn't one for me, but it may be for you
  - Sinning in anger pegs me every time, but you might be totally chill
  - The point here is to stop wondering why we can't make progress with Jesus when there's obvious sin that God's putting His finger on
  - Throw it off!
- e. TWO, material things; money
  - Luke 12:17-21
  - All the stuff he'd accumulated actually kept him from seeing his need for redemption
  - Ultimately, he played the fool
  - 1 Timothy 6:10
  - What love is guiding us? Matthew 6:21 - we give our treasure to what we love
- f. THREE, the cares of life
  - Mark 4:19
  - Don't miss the fact that this person really loves Jesus
  - But notice the progression: cares, cash, covet, choke
  - It all starts with the cares - genuine cares! - that hinder us from fully trusting God's ability to care for us
- g. FOUR, the things we do for God
  - This one just sounds weird, doesn't it?
  - Aren't we supposed to do stuff for God?

- Yes, but we aren't supposed to let it hinder - or distract - us from God.
- Luke 10:40
- Martha got distracted FROM Jesus by all the things she was doing FOR Jesus
- Does that mean we stop doing stuff? Stop greeting? Stop serving in the nursery or at the sound booth?
- Probably, at least until we find ourselves full of Jesus again.

## 2. Here's a reason to remove them

- a. So there you go. 4 things that can potentially hinder us.
- b. But i can only think of one reason to get rid of them.
- c. Because Jesus is worth it.
- d. This is what Paul said - the same Paul who lived an unhindered life and preached the gospel with power
- e. He wrote in Philippians 3:8 that everything - the bad stuff and the good stuff - was a loss COMPARED to the value of gaining Jesus
- f. When we kill what's unnecessary, we'll find the strength and focus to live unhindered.

### The Landing

How do we deterring what's necessary and what isn't?

Will it be the same for everyone?

No. All of us are in different places, but all of us can use one simple question to help us determine what is unnecessary in our own lives.

"Will this move me closer or further from Jesus?"

Some answers will be obvious. Sin, for example, will never move you closer to Jesus.

Other's will require more thought and prayer. How you interact with media may change as you grow closer to Jesus.

But the goal is always the same, and Hebrews 12:1 paints the picture perfectly: when we are unhindered, we can run the race faithfully and know the joy of finishing well.

Can I tell you a hard truth?

It's not hard because we don't agree, it's hard because we don't want to apply it.

You'll never persevere with hindrances.

You'll only persevere when you have removed every unnecessary distraction and can move unhindered to the finish.

\*\* Close with the story of Bill Broadhurst \*\*

**To live unhindered, we've got to kill the unnecessary.**

## THE STORY OF A MARATHON MAN (by Dr. D. James Kennedy)

Bill Broadhurst wanted to be a runner in the worst way, but he had a problem. When he was young, surgery for a brain aneurysm had left him partially paralyzed. He struggled first to walk, then to jog, and finally to run – if you could call it running.

Now, Bill Broadhurst had a hero named Bill Rogers, the famous marathon runner. One day Broadhurst heard that Bill Rogers was coming to Omaha to run a 10K charity race. All his life, Bill Broadhurst had dreamed about running a race with his hero. Now his pain had a purpose – this race gave him an opportunity to accomplish his ambition, to fulfill his fantasy, to define his destiny.

The day finally came – a misty July morning in 1981. Positioned at the starting line were twelve hundred runners. The swift were stationed at the front, the feeble to the rear, but Broadhurst held to his dream. Soon he would stand face-to-face with his hero, if not at the starting line, then 6.2 miles later at the finish line. The gun went off. It was 9:04 A.M. Rogers ran like a deer. Broadhurst ran more like a duck. He would throw his stiff left leg forward and pivot as his right leg hit the ground. Soon it became obvious that the pack would leave him in the dust. It didn't take long. The pack was out of sight, but Broadhurst was not out of spirit.

As expected, Rogers finished the race first, in 29.5 minutes. Seasoned marathoners finished in about 35 to 40 minutes. The moderate took about 50 minutes. The maimed were still marching on. A full 90 minutes had passed since the starter fired his pistol, but Broadhurst pressed on. He had never run this far before, and it showed. His left side was numb. He endured pain with every step, but there was purpose to his suffering. Hope remained at the center of his will. Bill Broadhurst was not about to give up, give in, or go home.

By 10:55 A.M. the police had removed the barriers along the road. The spectators had scattered. The event was already history to most – but not to Broadhurst. In his mind he saw only the finish line. On the street he heard only sarcasm. Running the race one step at a time, he couldn't help but hear the comments from kids who stood on the street corner.

"Hey, mister, they went thataway!"

"What's wrong, mister? Did you get lost?"

"Give it up, Gimp. Call it a day, Cripple."

Broadhurst focused on the prize, not on the pain. Say what they would, Broadhurst had a mission. By this time, the streets were jammed with cars, but Broadhurst wasn't deterred. He took to the sidewalk and pressed on toward his mark. The pain was unbearable. His body said to quit, but his will said, "Never."

Suddenly, the tide began to turn. Some of the onlookers were still milling around on the sidewalk where the finish line had once stood. Somehow they began to recognize Broadhurst's situation. As more and more of them realized what was happening, they began to applaud this courageous warrior. It was as though Broadhurst's determination represented a part of each of them that had always wanted to stay the course when the wind blew hard but didn't. Jeers became cheers. Applause was heard from their hands, and praise was heard from their lips: "You can do it! Keep going! Don't give up now!"

Surrounded by his new supporters, Broadhurst was now within sight of the end. The finish line had been removed, but the image remained in his mind. His body was numb, but his resolve remained strong. Then, almost magically, Broadhurst's spirit began to soar as he caught sight of his hero. From an alley, a group of people emerged. At the center of this circle was Bill Rogers, who was returning from the celebration activities and was wearing a gold medal. The two men's paths converged. Pupil and professor came face-to-face.

Broadhurst collapsed at the finish line into the arms of Bill Rogers, and Rogers was quick to see the significance of the situation. He removed the gold medal from his own neck and placed it around the neck of this weary warrior. Rogers whispered into Broadhurst's ear, "You're the hero of this race. You deserve the medal."