

The Bible Barn Unit 5
Chapter 27
Letters about Focus
Hebrews 12:1-3 and Philippians 3:12-16

"Welcome back to the Bible Barn!" Ranger Reggie greeted the campers. "I have good news. Ranger Drosselmeyer stopped by and fixed Safari Sam's jeep! I didn't even know he used to be a mechanic. It just goes to show what can happen when you keep your faith focused on God!"

The campers turned as they heard a commotion coming from the nearby horse stalls. Moments later, Safari Sam ran steadily through the back of the barn and down the middle aisle. "Hut- 2-3-4! Hut-2-3-4!" he called out. Trotted onto the stage next to Ranger Reggie.

"Hi, Safari Sam! What are you doing?" Ranger Reggie asked.

"Can't talk now," Safari Sam jogged around the stage. "Have to stay focused. Hut- 2-3-4! Hut-2-3-4!"

Ranger Reggie just stared. "What are you doing?"

"I'm focusing," Safari Sam called out; barely looking over his shoulder. "I'm getting in shape to beat Ranger Drosselmeyer."

"Why, did your car break down again?" Ranger Reggie asked, laughing.

"No," Safari Sam assured as stretched a bit and then started jumping in place. "He replaced the starter and now Superstar Sally is riding super smooth!"

"Then why do you want to beat him?" Ranger Reggie asked.

Safari Sam ran past him and waved a flyer in his face. "Take a look at this!"

Ranger Reggie caught the fluttering page and read the headline: "The Ranger Runaround Rally Race."

Safari Sam threw his arms into the air. "It's the biggest ranger race of the summer and I'm going to win it!"

"That's great Safari Sam!" Ranger Reggie exclaimed. "It says here the winner gets a thousand dollar prize to give to his favorite charity."

Safari Sam stopped suddenly. "It does?"

Ranger Reggie frowned. "Sure. Isn't that why you're running the race?"

"Well...not exactly..." Safari Sam faltered. "To be honest, I didn't even know about the prize. I just want to beat Drosselmeyer."

Ranger Reggie sighed. "Are you still upset with him? Even after he fixed your jeep?"

Safari Sam looked down sheepishly. "I know...he did. And I'm thankful...it's just...why does he get to be the best at everything?! He's the best at volleyball, he's the best at jeep fixing, he's the best Bible teacher..."

"Excuse me?" Ranger Reggie scowled.

Well, second best, after you," Safari Sam corrected. "My point is that just once I want to see him lose! And with these long legs I know I can outrun him!"

Ranger Reggie just shook his head. "Oh Safari Sam, are focused on the wrong thing."

"Oh, yeah? Now I suppose you are going to tell me there is a letter in the Bible about racing." Safari Sam rolled his eyes.

"As a matter of fact there is! Let me show you because it's Mail Time!" Ranger Reggie found the Bible in the Mailbox and opened it to Hebrews 12:1. He read, "Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross..."

"What does that mean?" Safari Sam interrupted.

"This letter is telling us to have the right focus, to pay close attention to Jesus. Just like Jesus kept His eyes on the finish line," Ranger Reggie exclaimed.

"What finish line?" Safari Sam asked.

"Heaven!" Ranger Reggie explained. "Jesus knew the only way we could be in heaven with Him is if He sacrificed Himself for our sins."

"Oh, so Jesus was willing to die on the cross because it was worth the prize." Safari Sam concluded.

"Yes! And Paul tells us to keep our eyes on the finish line and that being more like Jesus is the prize." Ranger Reggie continued.

Safari Sam punched his fist victoriously in the air. "I've got my eyes on this finish line! And when I cross it, I'm going to laugh while Drosselmeyer cries his little eyes out!"

Ranger Reggie put his hand on Safari Sam's shoulder. "Oh no, Safari Sam, you're still missing the point. There are so many better reasons to win the race."

"Name one," Safari Sam demanded.

"Well, for one thing you get to give the prize money to your favorite charity. You could give the money to help people in need and use your speed and talents to glorify God!" Ranger Reggie suggested.

Safari Sam nodded. "Well, I guess you're right."

"Of course I'm right. It's just like the letter Orville was showing me this morning." Ranger Reggie looked up towards the rafters.

The campers called out, "Hey Orville, come on down!" Orville swooped over their heads and dropped a message egg into Ranger Reggie's hands before crashing into the window.

"Wow, Orville had his eyes on the target!" Safari Sam joked as the bird stood up with a shake and flew back up to his nest.

Ranger Reggie opened the egg and removed the paper inside. "Here is Orville's message. It's from Paul's letter to the Philippians." He read, "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things."

"So you're saying I should be focusing on God instead of focusing on hurting Ranger Drosselmeyer's feelings," Safari Sam said with a sheepish grin.

Ranger Reggie patted him on the back. "It's always the right choice to keep our focus on God!"

"I bet our Creature Feature knows how to focus on the finish line!" Safari Sam guessed.

"Let's find out!" Ranger Reggie decided. "Wild William, who is today's featured creature?"

Wild William mysteriously appeared at the back of the barn and announced, "Swift and mighty by design, he gallops toward the finish line."

"I know an animal that focuses on the finish line and gallops! It's a race horse!" Ranger Reggie proudly announced. Suddenly, he realized why Wild William was standing in the back of the Barn near the horse stalls. He opened a stall and a muscular black horse lunged out, galloping up the aisle towards the stage. Mane and tail streaking behind him, the horse leaped onto the stage; knocking over Ranger Reggie in the process. "Ow! That hurts! Ouch! Ooh! Ah!" He yelled and fell to the ground, clutching his head.

Safari Sam grabbed the horse's reigns and brought him under control. "Ranger Reggie! Are you okay?"

"Oh sure, he only kicked me in the head," Ranger Reggie winced and tried to sit up. "Hey Orville, come on down!"

Safari Sam looked concerned. "Ranger Ranger Reggie, we already read Orville's message."

"Was it good?" Ranger Reggie groaned.

"Oh yes, it was great!" Safari Sam assured and handed the horse's reigns to a nearby counselor. "Wow, that horse kicked you really hard. You'd better lie down."

Ranger Reggie leaned against a chair leg. "I can't I have to lead us in the Camp Venture Code," he murmured.

"You lie down, Ranger Reggie," Safari Sam instructed. "I'll lead the code." He motioned for the campers to stand and raise their right hands.

After everyone except Ranger Reggie was standing, they recited together, "I will love God with all my heart. I will love my neighbor as myself. I will be a light wherever I go!"

"Alright campers, go on out to the flagpole so you can sing the Camp Critter song." He helped Ranger Reggie to his feet. "I'm taking you to see the camp nurse!" Safari Sam led his injured friend out the door as the children began singing the Camp Critter song.