

## A DECISIVE RENUNCIATION OF BESETTING SINS

In Titus 2:11-14 Paul writes:

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

And in Hebrews 12:1-2 we read:

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. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Paul says that the grace of God instructs us to renounce ungodliness and worldly desires, and the author of Hebrews exhorts us to lay aside the sin that so easily besets us. If we combine the thrust of these two texts, we arrive at a theme something like the following:

Once and for all, let us say "No" to the besetting sins that so easily hinder our progress and effectiveness in the Christian life.

Accordingly, I would like to entitle this message "A decisive renunciation of besetting sins!"

When I think of things that easily hinder and entangle us, I think of Mary Decker-Slaney, who set a world record of four minutes in the 1,500 meter run in 1980, and later ran in the Olympic Games, only to be tripped by a runner in front of her. Mary was running a good race, and the woman in front of her oddly swung her leg out to the side, and Mary went down. It was only a small thing, but it brought years of grueling preparation and high hopes crashing to the ground! I can still remember the look of agonizing pain and frustration on Mary's face!