

Hebrews Chapter 12

Hebrews 12:1 "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset [us], and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,"

“Wherefore”: This is a very crucial transition word offering an emphatic conclusion (1 Thess. 4:8), to the section which began (in 10:19).

“Witnesses”: The deceased people of (chapter 11), give witness to the value and blessing of living by faith. Motivation for running “the race” is not in the possibility of receiving praise from observing heavenly saints. Rather, the runner is inspired by the godly examples those saints set during their lives. The great crowd is not comprised of spectators but rather is comprised of ones whose past life of faith encourages others to live that way (11:2, 4-5, 33, 39).

“Let us”: The reference is to those Hebrews who had made a profession of Christ, but had not gone all the way to full faith. They had not yet begun the race, which starts with salvation. The writer has invited them to accept salvation in Christ and join the race.

“Every weight”: Different from the “sin” mentioned next. This refers to the main encumbrance weighing down the Hebrews which was the Levitical system with its stifling legalism. The athlete would strip away every piece of unnecessary clothing before competing in the race. The outwards things emphasized by the Levitical system not only impede, they “entangle.”

“Sin”: In this context, focuses first on the particular sin of unbelief, refusing to turn away from the Levitical sacrifices to the perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ (John 16:8-11). As well as other sins cherished by the unbeliever.

“Patience”: Or endurance which is the steady determination to keep going, regardless of the temptation to slow down or give up (1 Cor. 9:24-25).

“Race”: The athletic metaphor presents the faith-filled life as a demanding, grueling effort. The English word “agony”, is derived from the Greek word used here.

The present exhortation to “run” finds its basis in the examples of the champions mentioned (in chapter 11). These heroes of the faith are like a “cloud of witnesses”. As “witnesses” (Greek *marturon*), they are sometimes regarded as spectators (Greek *theatai*), or as martyrs. Yet this Greek word should be understood as referring simply to those who testify or witness.

The emphasis is on the witness provided by their living by faith. This “race”: of faith is described by three modifying statements. First, it is to be run by laying aside “every weight”. This refers to impediments that weigh one down, whether clothing or excessive body weight. These things are not inherently wrong, but for the diligent runner or the faithful Christian they must be removed.

Second, it is to be run by putting off the entangling “sin”. This seems to refer to the one sin above all others that defeats a Christian. This may be a different sin for each individual. Third, it is to be run “with patience” (Greek hypomones).

Since patience is not an attribute commonly associated with running, this word would be better translated as endurance (as it is in the cognate verb forms of verses 2 and 3). Endurance and persistence have been on the author’s mind since the end of chapter 10 (10:32, 36-38; 11:13).

These witnesses that are watching everything you do and say can easily be won over to Jesus, if you live the Christian life before them every day. The best sermon any of us can preach is the one we live. Christianity is a turning away from the old habits, and allowing Jesus to live in you. This next Scripture explains it better.

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: “Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Romans 2:7 "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life:"

When a person truly loves Jesus, it is no longer a chore to do good things. It is the desire of their heart to do good things. These next few verses of Scripture really tell us what the difference is. We are not part of the dark side of life, if we are a Christian; we are of the Light (Jesus Christ).

Romans 13:12-14 "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying." "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to [fulfil] the lusts [thereof]."

The flesh is opposed to God. The battle going on in every person is between listening to the sinful flesh or listening to the spirit. If we belong to Jesus, then we have put our flesh under the control of the spirit.

1 Corinthians 9:27 " But I keep under my body, and bring [it] into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

These 3 Scriptures tell us what it is necessary to do to be able to walk the Christian life every day. Notice in these verses that the Christian has a free will in this, and must will, to do this.

Ephesians 4:22-24 "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;" "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;" "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Have we become a Christian to the extent this is speaking of?

Hebrews 12:2 "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of [our] faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

“Looking unto Jesus”: They were to look to Jesus as the object of faith and salvation (11:26-27; Acts 7:55-56; Phil. 3:8).

“Author” (see the note on 2:10). The term means originator or preeminent example.

“Finisher” (see note on 5:14). The term expresses the idea of carrying through to perfect completion (John 19:30).

“The joy”: Jesus persevered so that He might receive the joy of accomplishment of the Father’s will and exaltation. (1:9; Psalm 16:9-11; Luke 10:21-24).

“Right hand” (see note on 1:3).

Just as (verse 1), establishes some qualities for the entrance into and the actual running of life’s race, so (verse 2), directs one’s eyes to the finish line. Jesus is the “author and finisher” in that He has already blazed the trail and finished the course.

This very thing is what disturbs me about the casual attitude most believers have about Jesus Christ. We must first realize who Jesus is. He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. He is the Word of God which created the entire world, and everything in it. He created you and me. He is not only the Author of our salvation, but he is the Author of our life as well.

He was Creator God.

John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "The same was in the beginning with God." "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

He loved us enough to suffer on the cross for us, because we were His creation. He bought us back with His precious blood. We belong to Him. If we have accepted Him as our Savior and Lord, we are not our own, we are His. The contract says paid in full.

He is seated at the right hand of the Father because His work is finished; it was finished on the cross, and at His resurrection. He defeated sin, when He took sin on His body on the cross. Sin died for the believer on the cross, when Jesus said it is finished. Death was defeated when Jesus rose from the grave. IT IS FINISHED.

Verses 3-4: Though (chapter 11), provides many champions for believers to emulate, the supreme example of endurance is Jesus Himself.

Hebrews 12:3 "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

“Consider him”: Jesus is the supreme example of willingness to suffer in obedience to God. He faced “hostility” (the same word as “opposed” in Luke 2:34), and endured even the cruel cross. The same opposition is faced by all who follow Him (Acts 28:22; Gal. 6:17; Col. 1:24; 2 Tim. 3:12).

“Wearied and faint”: Believer’s pressures, exhaustion and persecutions (Gal. 6:9), are as nothing compared to Christ’s.

At one point, the non-believers even said that Jesus was of the devil. What a terrible accusation to make to the Son of God. Even those who were astonished at the miracles Jesus did, thought He was someone else. Even today, people speak of Jesus as a man. The real problem then, and now, is in realizing who this Jesus Christ really is.

Jesus Christ was Immanuel, God with us. God Manifest (made real), in the flesh.

Matthew 16:13-17 "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" "And they said, Some [say that thou art] John the Baptist: some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." "He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?" "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed [it] unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

I have a question for you, who do you say, this Jesus Christ is?

Hebrews 12:4 "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

“Unto blood”: None of the Hebrews had experienced such intense exhaustion or persecution that it brought them to death or martyrdom. Since Stephen (Acts 7:60), James (Acts 12:1), and others (Acts 9:1; 22:4; 26:10), had faced martyrdom in Jerusalem, it would appear to rule out that city as the residence of this epistle’s recipients.

One of the greatest consolations that I have, when I am told, it is not the will of God for me to teach, is the fact that my Leader (Jesus Christ), was rejected also. The church people of Jesus’ day gave Him no encouragement at all. I cannot say that to be true with me, many of them have encouraged me. Just a few rejected these teachings.

I believe this Scripture above is for people like me and for the disciples of all ages. I certainly have not resisted to the point of shed blood. I have not been nailed to the cross. In our society today, just the fact that you are a Christian, labels you as being weird. The majority of people today, are living to please the flesh. The only consideration of whether they will do something is, will it be a pleasure to me?

James 4:7 "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Stand up for what you believe, don't follow the crowd. Know in your heart what is right and then do it.

1 Corinthians 10:13 "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God [is] faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear [it]."

A Christian should never say (I can't do it). God will help you, and you can do what He has called you to do. The desire of my life is to be able to say with Paul, at my departing;

2 Timothy 4:7 "I have fought a good fight, I have finished [my] course, I have kept the faith:"

Verses 5-6: Here the writer recalls and expounds (Prov. 3:11-12). Trials and sufferings in the Christian's life come from God who uses them to educate and discipline believers by such experiences. Such dealings are evidence of God's love for His own children (2 Cor. 12:7-10).

Hebrews 12:5-6 "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:" "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth": God's principle of disciplining His own people is completely congruous with human practices. This quotation from (Proverbs 3:12), stating God's practice, corresponds to the commands God gave to fathers: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes [promptly]" (Prov. 13:24; 22:15; 23:13).

"Scourgeth": This refers to flogging with a whip, a severe and painful form of beating that was a common Jewish practice (Matt. 10:17; 23:34).

Love and corporal punishment are not incongruous; they are two complementary and necessary aspects of training.

The way we grow in the Lord, is to face problems, and overcome them with the help of the Lord.

Romans 5:3-5 "And not only [so], but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;" "And patience, experience; and experience, hope:" "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

The lessons that we learned the best when we were a child were the ones we were spanked for. If God did not chasten us, it would mean that we are not His. We are a pretty rough stone when God first accepts us as His. He has to smooth us down to make us into the beautiful stone fit to be placed next to the chief Cornerstone (Jesus Christ).

Proverbs 3:11-12 "My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:" "For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son [in whom] he delighteth."

I am thoroughly convinced that the reason children feel so unloved by their parents today is because they do not punish them for wrong doing. Children need a standard set. When they break the rules, they should be punished. If they are not properly punished for their misdeeds, they are never able to release the guilt they bear for that misdeed.

If you love your child, show him you do, by punishing him for wrong doing. Guilt is a terrible thing to carry around. If you sin, pray and ask for forgiveness. God will forgive. Let us see what Jesus said about this (in Revelation 3:19).

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

The best thing to do is not sin in the first place then there will be no punishment.

James 1:12 "Blessed [is] the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

Hebrews Chapter 12 Questions

1. Why is it so important for us to lay aside every weight and sin?
2. How are we to run the race that is set before us?
3. How can we win these witnesses to Christ?
4. What is the best sermon you can preach?
5. When does it cease to be a chore to do good?
6. Are we Christians, of the night, or of the day, explain?
7. What is the battle that goes on in every person?
8. What is necessary to do to walk the Christian life every day?
9. Who is the Author and Finisher of our faith?
10. Where is He now?
11. What is the very first thing we must do before we can live for God?
12. Who created the world?

13. He is not just the Author of our salvation, but the Author of what as well?
14. In what Scripture is Jesus called the Word of God?
15. Why did He love us enough to suffer on the cross for us?
16. When did Jesus defeat sin?
17. When did He defeat death?
18. What was the worst thing the nonbelievers, said about Jesus?
19. Who did many of Jesus' followers think He was?
20. Who did Peter say He was?
21. Who do you believe Jesus to be?
22. Ye have not yet resisted unto _____, striving against sin.
23. In our society today, to be a Christian is to be labeled as what?
24. How do the majority of people decide whether they will do something or not?
25. If you resist the devil, what will happen?
26. With every temptation, God will make you a way of _____.
27. What should a Christian never say?
28. What does the author desire to be able to say, that Paul said?
29. Whom the Lord loveth He _____.
30. Why should we glory in tribulation?
31. Blessed is the man who endureth _____.