

Hebrews: Lesson #71 – Let’s Run With Endurance

Notes for Parents to Study With Their Children

For Sunday, Feb. 1st

Read Heb. 12:1 – 15 (a simplified explanation of the text will be supplied at the end of these notes).

Memory Verse: Heb. 12:1 (the last part) “..Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

Let’s Finish Our Race

- Living the Christian life is kind of like running a long race.
- Over there on the side, all the great people of faith are cheering for us. There examples say that we can finish our race like they did.
- To run well we can’t have anything that weights us down, like sin.
- As we go on we may get tired and discouraged, but we have to keep running all the way to the end.
- When we get weary, let’s look at Jesus. He is waiting for us at the finish line. He has already run His race. His race took Him through the cross, but He kept right on running and made it to God.

Sometimes When the Race is Hard, We Feel Like Giving Up

- Sometimes our Christian race gets hard.
- If you follow Jesus, some people won’t like you just because you follow Him. Jesus told His disciples, “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.” (John 15:18). And if you follow the Lord’s word, some will also not like you because of that: Jesus also prayed to God, “I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.” (John 17:14)
- The Christians that Hebrews is being written to had suffered through many persecutions, but none of them had ever had to die.
- Anytime we do something, if it gets real hard to do, we may feel like giving up. If your parents give you some work to do around the house or in the yard and it gets hot outside and you be tired, don’t you feel like giving up? Being a Christian is that way, it gets hard sometimes and we may feel like we want to give up.

The Discipline of the Lord

- Do your parents discipline you? Do you know what discipline is? Discipline is really four things:
 1. If you parents teach you something, they are trying to discipline you. If they warn you not to do something or they just tell you what you should do, that is discipline.
 2. Discipline also involves making us do things that can be hard. That’s why parents make you do your homework, even if it gets hard. They want you to learn to do things. They want to teach you how important it is to keep trying.

3. Discipline is also correction. Sometimes when our parents are telling us to do something, but we don't do it very well. Let's say they tell you to feed the dog, and you do, but you spill dog food all over the place. Your parents may fuss at you because you need to learn to do it better.
 4. Discipline also includes punishment. If you disobey your parents and don't do what they said to do, they will punish you for it. They don't just punish you because they are mad, but they do it hoping you will learn to obey them.
- The Lord looks on Christians as His children. He is our Heavenly Father. Because He thinks of us as His children, He does to us what a parent would do – He disciplines us. Now the Lord does the same things:
 1. He tells us what we should do and warns us about what we shouldn't do.
 2. He allows us to go through difficult times so we can learn to keep trying.
 3. He corrects us when we have done what we should.
 4. He punishes us if we disobey.
 - We may not like to be disciplined by our parents. We don't always want them to tell us what to do. We don't like them to make us do hard things. We don't like for them to fuss at us if we mess up. And we sure don't like for them to punish us when we do wrong. But even, though we don't like those things, we still love our parents. We know they love us and want what's best for us.
 - The same thing is true about God's discipline. We know that God disciplines us because He loves us.
 - We were talking about a race a few minutes ago. Think about this – a coach on a sports team disciplines His players. So if your running coach disciplines you, he wants you to win.

When You Run a Long Race

- If you were running a long race, you would start to get really tired. Your legs and feet may start to hurt. But to finish the race you have to keep going. You have to tell yourself to keep trying. You have to push yourself.
- Christians have to keep running their race. We should never give up. We have to push ourselves when it gets hard.
- We should also encourage other Christians to keep running their race. We want everyone of us to make it to the finish line.

Simplified Explanation of the Text

Keep Running Your Race

12:1 So all these whose faith has led them to endure through difficulties and make great sacrifices and trust God through it all, become like a huge cloud surrounding us that witnesses to a faith that endures. With their example always before us, let's run with endurance the race that lies ahead of us.

Keep Your Eyes on Jesus

2 And let's also be motivated to keep running our race by fixing our eyes on Jesus, who took the lead in and completed the race of faith. Because He looked at the joy set before Him, Jesus endured the cross and treated the shame He had to go through like it was nothing, and then sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 We should think about Him who endured sinners who were so hostile in their opposition toward him, so that we will not get tired and weak in spirit.

4 You may have suffered many things, but so far your struggle against sin has never caused you to shed any blood.

The Lord Disciplines His Children

12:4 You may have suffered many things, but so far your struggle against sin has never caused you to shed any blood.

5 You let these trials you are going through make you feel like giving up. You seem to have forgotten the Scriptures' advice that cautions us, "My son, don't despise the discipline of the Lord or feel discouraged when He corrects us." (Prov. 3:11).

6 For "those who the Lord loves, He disciplines (including whipping) ever son that He accepts." (Prov. 3:12)

7 If your enduring discipline from the Lord, just realize that God is dealing with you like a son. After all, what kind of son would you be if your father didn't love you enough to discipline you?

8 Now if God disciplines all His children, but you hadn't been disciplined, then it would mean that God doesn't really think of you as His children at all.

9 Add to that the fact that our earthly fathers disciplined us, and in time we recognized the value of it and respected them for it. Shouldn't we be that way even more towards the Father of our spirits? Shouldn't we put ourselves under His authority, and live?

10 We give such honor to how our earthly father's disciplined us, but really they were just doing the best they knew how to do for a short time. Our Heavenly Father disciplines us for our good so that we can share His holiness.

11 Of course, anytime a child is being disciplined they aren't ever happy about it, but think of it as painful and a reason to cry. But to those who will respond to discipline the right way and let it train them, those painful moments of discipline will, later on, produce the right kind of conduct in their lives. It will also make everything more harmonious and peaceful.

Strengthen Your Hands and Feet to Finish the Race

12 Now you now why you go through these struggles, now you understand that you are one of the Lord's children and that He disciplines you out of love. So if you've hands have started feeling weak and your knees a little shaky (kind of like you've been running a long race and don't think you can finish), then push yourself to get them back into action.

13 If your foot is hurting and your limping, you better make sure that you are staying on the straight path, so that it won't get injured even more. If you run off the track to the unlevel ground, you will turn your foot and sprain it.

14 Run hard to achieve peace with everyone.

Run hard after a holy life, a life that separates itself from sin and lives for God, because without that kind of life, no one will see the Lord.

15 As you are running, watch out for each other making sure that none of you is falling behind and not making it to the goal of pleasing God.