

Hebrews 12

Intro.

- I. **Heb. 11** – In spite of their circumstances/obstacles, they obeyed, worshiped & served God.
- II. **Heb. 12 – The purpose of our race**
 - A. V.1-4 – to fulfill God’s purpose.
 - B. V.5-11 – to align ourselves with God’s standards.
 - C. V.12-15 – to pursue peace & holiness with all people – Heb. 7:1-2.
- III. **Heb. 12:1-2 – “Therefore...” = how we should live**
 - A. *We also* = Christians today
 - B. *Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud (heavy fog) of witnesses*
 - C. *Let us* = our choice
 - D. *Lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us.*
 - 1) Lay aside = put away
 - 2) Every weight = not just some or what we choose
 - a) Weight & sin separate = some things aren’t necessarily sinful that keep us from accomplishing our God given purpose.
 - 3) And the sin which so easily ensnares (traps/entangles) us = we make the enemy’s job way too easy!
 - E. *“And let us run with endurance the race that is set before us”*
 - 1) **Endurance** = the ability to keep going. Anyone can start a race but not everyone finishes – Luke 9:62; Heb. 10:38. If you’re tired of starting over then stop quitting.
 - 2) The race that is set before us = our race; not necessarily the race that we choose or desire.

a) Race (Gr.) = ag-one; root of agony.

b) *Sometimes the race God sets before us is pretty agonizing!*

F. *“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith”*

1) How we finish our race = Jesus Christ is the Alpha & Omega; the beginning & the end; the first & the last; who was and is and is to come = He’s our only chance of victory – John 15:5.

G. *“Who for the joy that was set before Him (fulfilling the Father’s will), endured the cross, despising (thinking little of) the shame and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* = the work of salvation is *finished/completed* – John 19:30.

IV. **Hebrews 12:3-11**

A. Man will disappoint you, betray you, hurt you, offend you, attack you, lie about you, slander you & ultimately abandon you.

1) This impacts us more than it should b/c we don’t heed God’s warning – Ps. 20:7; 27:10; 40:4; 118:8-9; 146:3; Is. 49:15-16 = don’t put your trust in man!

B. **Rather**, we need to:

1) Consider Him (Jesus) – *to contemplate = to look at or view with continued attention; to observe or study thoughtfully; to consider thoroughly; to think about fully or deeply.*

2) Who endured = *to willfully remain under*

3) Hostility = contradiction = speaking against for the purpose of gaining advantage for one’s self.

4) From sinners = people deserving of death Jesus came to save.

5) Against Himself = He who wasn’t deserving of death!

6) Lest you become weary = faint; tired; sickened

7) And discouraged = *enfeebled = weak*

- 8) In your souls = your inner most being
- a) *When we are discouraged in this race of life, we have an example to look to: Jesus. What He went through & the level of betrayal He knew was coming (John 6:64; 13:11) & yet He didn't quit.*
 - b) *In comparison, we will never experience the same level of adversity & betrayal as Jesus – v.4.*
 - c) *If we don't contemplate Jesus' example, we'll become weak & weary from the inside out. And when we reach that point, we quit:*
 - i) Our family – marriage; children
 - ii) Our job – the mission field God has given us
 - iii) Our lives – God's purpose He has crafted
 - iv) Our ministry – sheep need a shepherd
 - v) Our Lord – The Savior Who gave Himself for us, **esp. when He disciplines us – v.5-11.**

Body

V. Heb. 12:12-15 – strengthen yourself in the Lord

- A. V.12 -13 – strengthen **ourselves** in Christ in order to properly impact others...
- B. V.14 – *pursue* **peace and holiness** with **all** people.
 - 1) Pursue = to chase after; to strive to gain.
 - a) **Why?** They don't come naturally – Ps. 34:14.
 - 2) Peace = harmonious & quiet relationships with man – 1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:10-13.
 - 3) Holiness = pure separation to God – 1 Pet. 1:16; 2 Cor. 6:17

4) With ALL = even/especially those who aren't peaceful & holy themselves – Rom. 12:18-19.

a) *If we don't pursue peace & holiness, no one will see God...*

b) **Which means everyone will see our flesh – James 1:19-20.**

C. V.15 – Looking carefully = watching diligently. **Why?**

1) So that *no one*, esp. **ourselves**, falls short (lacks) God's grace = unmerited favor; what we don't deserve.

a) *We all have a tendency to fall short of God's grace: in understanding it; remembering it has been given to us & in giving it to other people – 2 Pet. 1:9.*

2) So that no root of bitterness takes hold & begins to grow causing trouble for & defiling (*staining & contaminating*) many = **bitterness is contagious!**

a) It's contagious b/c it's never kept to ourselves:

i) We want others to know how we've been hurt.

ii) Bitterness demands vengeance rather than justice.

iii) Bitterness always divides; it never unifies.

VI. **Causes of bitterness vs. pursuing peace & holiness**

A. V.1 – Ignoring Christian examples vs. heeding Christian examples.

B. V.1 – Rejecting our race vs. accepting God's purpose.

C. V.2-4 – Ignoring our Savior vs. learning from our Savior.

D. V.7-11 – Resisting God's correction vs. learning from His correction.

E. V.15 – Forgetting God's grace vs. living in God's grace.