

Hebrews Study #7: Hebrews 12

Exhortation to Endure

Intro: Have you ever given up at something in life? Did it have a positive or negative affect in your life?

The book of Hebrews was written in a climate of persecution. The Jewish Christians were harassed mostly by their Jewish friends for turning their backs on the religious traditions in which they had been raised. The persecution was largely in the form of social and economic pressure, though some of them had been imprisoned. Surely many of these believers were wondering why they were suffering so much. They needed to hear a call to persevere.

Read Hebrews 12:1-3

Question #1: What hindrances and entanglements get in the way of your Christ faith race (v. 1)?

Question #2: What tempts you to grow weary and lose heart (v. 3)? How can fixing your eyes on Jesus help you to resist this temptation (vv. 2-3)?

Just as Christ is God's Son, so are believers (12:5). Hence, God will deal with them as a Father does His own children (12:5-11). Amid the severe warnings comes this note of encouragement: even though the readers are suffering, since they are sons they are saved.

Read Hebrews 12:4-13

Question #3: Has God's discipline produced a harvest of righteousness and peace in your life? If not, is there something in your life that is causing you to be stubborn or hardhearted in your relationship to God?

This discipline from God is a proof that they are indeed sons (12:8) — unless they are disciplined they will not grow in grace (12:12-17). Such growth is essential evidence that they will obtain heaven as their eternal home (12:14).

Read Hebrews 12:14-17

Question #4: In a situation where some of the believers were lapsing away from active faith, others were struggling to hold on, and all were under pressure from neighbors and coworkers, why would an exhortation to "live in peace with everyone" (12:14) be appropriate?

The fifth warning of the book comes on the heels of this note on chastening. The author implores the readers not to deny God by refusing to heed His voice (12:18-29). He contrasts Mount Sinai with Mount Zion (12:18-

24), showing that the awesome power of God shakes mountains, but it cannot shake the kingdom in which true believers dwell (12:28).

Read Hebrews 12:18-29

Question #5: We've all been tempted to give up. Why would the warning of verses 25-29 cause us to reconsider?

Reflection:

What circumstances feel like a spiritual marathon in your life? What can you do this week to regain your strength and resolve to keep running your faith race?