

# Hebrews

## Lesson 8 Chapter 12

### Participant Guide

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**Lesson 8**  
**Hebrews 12**  
**Fix your eyes on Jesus**

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.  
Hebrews 12:2

**Prayers**

**Introduction**

Chapter 12 follows the groundwork the author laid in chapter 11. The theme of chapter 11 was the great faith of the patriarchs. By faith, they left all they had to pursue God's promises and gained an eternal inheritance. By faith, they endured all manner of hardship but gained salvation. In chapter 12, the author turns his attention back to the Hebrews and poses the question – what about your faith in the face of the hardship you are suffering? He encourages them to look at their suffering as the Lord's discipline. They should be joyful to suffer for Christ. This is a topic that requires great discernment.

**Read Hebrews 12:1-6**

<sup>Heb 12:1</sup> 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.

<sup>Heb 12:2</sup> 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. <sup>Heb 12:3</sup> Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. <sup>Heb 12:4</sup> In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. <sup>Heb 12:5</sup> And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons:

“My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, <sup>Heb 12:6</sup> because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.” [Proverbs 3:11-12,

**Discuss**

1. Verse 1 uses the allegory of the race for life in Christ. Sport was a major part of Greco-Roman life. Olympics games began in 776 BC, and the largest Roman sports arenas were 437 yards long (think Ben Hur) – 138 yards longer than Houston's NRG Stadium! What comes to your mind in the picture of the successful runner and the runner entangled with hindrances (ESV translates “hindrances” as “weights”)?

2. The race requires preparation, participation and perseverance. What do each of these activities look like in Christian life?
  - a. Preparation
  - b. Participation (service and action)
  - c. Perseverance
  - d. Compare a runner's perseverance to yours.
3. In verses 2-3, the author focuses on the suffering of Jesus at the hands of sinful men and compares it to their suffering. How was this a powerful comparison for the Hebrews?
4. Verses 5-6 refer to the Lord's discipline, rebuke and punishment. It would be easy to view any hardship as punishment for sin, so how do you discern between the Lord's guidance and any kind of hardship?
5. What is the goal of the Lord's discipline and any manner of suffering? See 1 Peter 1:6-7  
<sup>1Pe 1:6</sup> In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. <sup>1Pe 1:7</sup> These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire —may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.
6. An athlete learns the benefits of discipline through the coach's training plan and encouragement.
  - a. How does your view of discipline change from childhood to adulthood?

- b. What are some spiritual disciplines you desire

**Read Hebrews 12: 7-17**

Heb 12:7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?

Heb 12:8 If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.

Heb 12:9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!

Heb 12:10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.

Heb 12:11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Heb 12:12 Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees.

Heb 12:13 "Make level paths for your feet,"<sup>54z</sup> so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

Heb 12:14 Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. Heb 12:15 See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

Heb 12:16 See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. Heb 12:17 Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears.

7. In verses 7-17, the writer compares and contrasts God's discipline to a respected father.

- a. How are they similar?

- b. How are they different?

8. The link between sexual immorality and Esau is not apparent but is referenced because Esau married Canaanite women who were a source of grief to Isaac (Ge 26:35). He later repented and married wives from Ishmael's (Abraham's son of the maidservant) tribe. The story of Esau and Jacob is found in Genesis 25-36. The story is complex and entails Jacob's deception to rob Esau of his birthright and blessing from their father, Isaac, who loved Esau.

Even though Jacob secured his blessing by deception, God's covenant remained with him, not with Esau. What was the point of the author's example of Esau?

9. Given the background of Hebrews, what difficulties did the Hebrews face to be holy and live at peace with all people?
  - a. Fellow Jews
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Greeks / Gentiles
  
10. Discuss how the story of Esau illustrates how God's covenant in the OT was both similar and dissimilar to God's promise of the new covenant made with the Hebrews and us.
  - a. Similar
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Dissimilar

### **Read Hebrews 12:18-28**

Heb 12:18 You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; <sup>19</sup> to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, <sup>20</sup> because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned."

Heb 12:21 The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."

Heb 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, <sup>23</sup> to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, <sup>24</sup> to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Heb 12:25 See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?

Heb 12:26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” [Haggai 2:6, speaking of the glory to be returned to the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem during Persian rule ]

Heb 12:27 The words “once more” indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

Heb 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, <sup>29</sup> for our “God is a consuming fire.” [Deuteronomy 4:24, from the 10 commandments]

11. In verses 22-14, what is the spiritual inheritance the Hebrews have through their faith in Christ?

12. What qualities of God does the writer mention that we should remember, so we worship him with reverence and awe?

Verses 18-21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 26

Verse 29

**Closing Prayer and Blessing**