

The Book of Hebrews

12. The Race of Faith



If you go to a pet shop one of the animals, you are sure to see is a gerbil. When you buy one like many of us have growing up, you have to also buy a wheel, the little rodent runs around in the wheel, giving him exercise and taking away the boredom from being in ten-gallon tank for the rest of its life.

In many ways, we are like that gerbil, except we live in a much bigger tank, and we do not see our gerbil wheel. Life is grind and many begin to feel it as they grow older, asking themselves the question, "Is this all there is?" What the point of living? Only when we find Christ, are we fully aware of the true reality of life. Imagine if the owner of the gerbil, became a gerbil, then he gave his fellow gerbil the revelation that it was living in a ten-gallon glass tank. Along with this, it also him there was a much bigger world out there, with an eternal and glorious plan for its future existence beyond the tank. Then the gerbil owner who became a gerbil died showing the its fellow gerbil how to escape the tank. In many ways this is exactly what happened to us.

The creator of the Universe became one of us to lead us into eternity through His blood. He set the example of how to run the race of life. Therefore do not give up, but continue in the race, this the point of Hebrews. Take the knowledge of your position in Christ, and run for victory.



12 (1) Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **Hebrews 12:1-2**

(1)Therefore: This is the conclusion from Chapter 11, using the example of these victorious believers who have struggled just as you, the Jewish believers of Hebrews, and by extension all believers. Let us use their example. They are waiting for us, they are cheering us as, and they are a great **cloud of witnesses**, watching us as we

escape this world and enter heaven. The picture is one of the victors entering the stadium cheered by the crowd.

ogkos

ong'-kos/

Lay aside every weight; So how do we do it? How do we run the

race of life, first we need to understand weight will slow us down. Therefore, we need shed the weight. What is weight in this spiritual race? Anything that slows down your run, it could be your pride, it could be your anger at people in church, it could be your laziness in learning God's Word. You know what your weights is. So to run victorious, you have to be willing to put the race as a priority.

Probably from the same as **G43**; a *mass* (as *bending or bulging by its load*), that is, *burden (hindrance)*: - weight.

Ensnare us: Along with the weight that slows us down is sin that tangles up the believer, slowing or stopping our run. The Greek word *euperistatos* here means to be wrapped around, only appears here in the New Testament, it pictures clothes entangling the runner, tripping the runner up. Imagine running in a full toga and falling as you try to run, this is the picture conveyed here. Sin and weight hinder spiritual progress, as believers who are running for victory we need to become aware of what is slowing us down and make a priority of freeing ourselves for the run.

(2) looking unto Jesus: Earlier in chapter 11, we had the examples Abel, Moses, Daniel and others, but the ultimate example is Jesus Christ. When we struggle in our spiritual walk, we have to always realize we are not the first, others have run the same race. We can use them as our example on how to be successful, Jesus modeled this for us, he **endured the cross**. God became man; he was rejected, abused and despised. He had the power and ability to stop it, yet he chose to bear it for our sakes. Now he sits on the throne of God for our sakes giving us bold access to approach.

The Discipline of God

3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. 4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. 5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

*"My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord,
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;
6 For whom the Lord loves He chastens,
And scourges every son whom He receives."*[a]

7 If[b] you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. **Hebrews 12:3-11**

(3)Consider Him: The author of Hebrews points to Jesus as an example for the weary



believer. Jesus Himself went through rejection, hate and abuse, let look to him as our example. He is our example, if need help turn to Jesus as an example. **Lest you:** It is easy to give up, the battle is in the mind, the writer warns about becoming fainthearted in the *psuchē* or the soul or mind.

(4)have not: One of the reasons for an early date of Hebrews is verse 4, we know in A.D. 70, the attacks on Jewish believers becomes more sever, including bloodshed, however this is not the case here at the time Hebrews is written. They have endured loss of good for the gospel, but not blood (Hebrews 10:34).

Resisted to bloodshed: Jesus shed his blood for our sins, whipping, the nails in his hands and feet and the spear in his side, the readers have not even gotten to this point. So how can they give up?

(5)You have forgotten: Through Jesus Christ, we are now "Sons" or children of God, heirs of the kingdom of God. A parent is treats his child different then a stranger's child, the stranger is under a different chain of authority. Quoting Proverbs 3:15-16, we need to understand why we are

disciplined, it is for our benefit. **Chastening of the Lord** is a sign of a loving relationship between a Father and his child.

(6) The Lord loves: How do we feel when we see an unruly child in a public place? With a parent who refuses to silence him or her? Do we say, "What a loving parent?" No, it is usually the opposite; we recognize the harm done to the child with lack of discipline. Most times a parent's punishment is harder on the parent, because we must endure the anguish in our child's face, knowing we have the power to stop it, but the greater love causes us to follow-through. When the Lord **Chastens** it is a sign of "Love" and "Position", we are adopted into the family of God as His children, and as a parent he punishes us for our greater good, even if it brings temporary tribulation in our lives.

Eph 1:10-12

(10) as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

(11) In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

(12) so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

(7)endure chastening: The example of earthly discipline is the focus here, the Hebrew believers were struggling, why were they struggling? One point is clear from Chapter 5, part of their struggle was due to their lack of diligence in their faith. They were still children when they should have been adults; they were still learning the ABC's when they should be teaching. Their struggles could have been a direct result of their immaturity of faith, they could be thriving but they were struggling. We are to take God's rebuke to heart and use it for our benefit; because we are His children, he wants the best for us. A **Father** who does not chasten his children is not a father.

(8)without chastening: the punishment from God on His people is proof of relationship, so when we suffer as believers for disobedience, it is proof of relationship, it is proof of "sonship". An **Illegitimate** vacates the rights of chastisement; he was not there so he has no right to correct the wayward child. Our Father is not like this he chooses to be involved in our spiritual development.

(9)human fathers: Our human experience parallels our spiritual experience, a child who responds well to correction is a child who will flourish, they take the correction to heart and move forward. It's the same in the spiritual realms, let take God's correction and move forward with it.

Father of spirits: There are earthly fathers, but there is only one Father of spirits, we were made in His image.

(10) Partakers of His holiness: The endgame for the believer is an eternal relationship in glory, giving and partaking in His Glory, through the blood of Jesus Christ. An earthly father has an endgame also in mind, but it is limited by his earthly understanding. The LORD has bigger and better things for us, He wants us to grow and flourish, even if it is painful.

(11)seems joyful for the present: Training is not fun, it takes discipline, self discipline, while others are enjoying time relaxing you are on the track, in the weight room or out in the field under a hot sun. The goal is what is in mind; the end result is the target, not the temporary current circumstances.

Trained by it: The confidence of those who have endured training is finishing well, it's the same with God's chastisement, it moves us to finish well, giving us the **peaceable fruit of righteousness**.

Renew Your Spiritual Vitality

12 Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. 14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: 15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; 16 lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears. **Hebrews 12:12-17**

(12)Therefore: Concluding from the chastisement, what are we to do? The mature believer is to help the struggling. We need to **Strengthen hands** hanging down and **knees** which can't support the body. Like a stronger better trained athlete can encourage the other runners on the track, so we are encouraged to get involved.

(13)make straight paths: Obstacles are a major problem when someone struggles in their walk, If you have ever helped an elderly person try to walk a path, one of the things we do is move potential tripping hazards out of the way. We should not encumber the Good News of the Gospel with walking hazards, the reference could be for confusing Mosaic regulations mixed with the Gospel. **Healed** an injured or lame person needs a clear path, so they can heal.

(14)Pursue peace: We are a picture of God to the fallen world, our job is to advance the Kingdom of God, to be holy these are the signs of the mature believer. The Hebrew believers struggled with their walk and chastised in the process. They were falling short; the goal was for them was to refocus, to set a mark.

(15)fall short of the grace; There is only one Gospel and one salvation, (Hebrews 6:4-6,10:26-30). The only way of falling short of the Grace of god is to not have Jesus, either someone is "Born Again" or they are not. (John 3:3) **Bitterness:** has the power to turn off the seeking heart, rather than being open to the Gospel they become its enemy. The goal of the believer is to put Christ first and ourselves second.

(16)Esau: Here is a negative example, Jacob's brother did not value his position, he did not value the privilege of being "First Born". Salvation is a free gift, but the cost was infinite, Don't be like Esau and put little value on a highly prized possession. Salvation through Christ was the focus of all the prophets and saints in the Old Testament, do not demean its value.

(17) Afterward: Only through Christ is salvation found, those who reject it have no other option. Esau was sorry for he **Rejected** his position but it was too late, even though he was sincere it could not bring it back. He **Sought it diligently with tears.**

The Glorious Company



18 For you have not come to the mountain that[c] may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness[d] and tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. 20 (For they could not endure what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned[e] or shot with an arrow." [f] 21 And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling." [g])

22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to

Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. **Hebrews 12:18-24**

(18)The mountain: Mount Sinai was a place where God presented Himself to Israel, but Israel was to keep its distance. God wanted them to fear Him, lest the nation sin. God was distant and separated from His creation because of sin.

Exo 20:19-21

(19) and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die."

(20) Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin."

(21) The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.

**(19)The trumpet
(20)could not endure**



**(21)so terrifying
(22)Mount Zion
Heavenly Jerusalem
(23)Church of the firstborn
(24) Jesus the mediator
New Covenant**

Hear the Heavenly Voice

25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, 26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake[h] not only the earth, but also heaven." [i] 27 Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.



28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may [i] serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire. **Hebrews 12:25-28**

**(25) Do not refuse Him
(26)voice shook the earth
(27) removal of these things...shaken
(28)Kingdom which cannot be shaken**