

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

3rd - 5th Grade

Sunday Morning

Study 24

Looking Unto Jesus

Looking Unto Jesus

The Objective is the key concept for this weeks lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The “Main passage” is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the “reward box” found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God’s Word.

Objective To finish up our study through Hebrews 11 with Paul’s exhortation to lay aside our sin and look to Jesus.

Key Verses

Hebrews 12:1-2—Main Teaching Passage
John 15:5

Memory Verse - 1 Corinthians 9:24

“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.”

Hook

Review last week’s memory verse, Philippians 1:27.

Ask for two students to volunteer for a push-up competition.

Have them both lie down on the floor ready to do their push ups, but before they start ask another one of the smaller students to sit on top of one of the participants. Then see who can do the most push-ups (if any).

This demonstrates the “weight and sin that so easily ensnares,” and shows how sin prevents us from doing the things we are supposed to do.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

This week we complete our study on Hebrews with an exhortation to the students. Hebrews 12:1-2 tells us to remember all of the heroes that we have studied out of Hebrews 11, and because of their faith, to lay aside the sins that ensnares us. Hebrews 12 uses the examples of faith given in Hebrews 11, the great cloud of witnesses, to show us that we too can walk a spirit filled life of faith. We are reminded that these other men and women of God were able to endure great hardships and still walk with the Lord. This is the practical application that caps off the Hall of Faith: "They have walked in faith, now YOU should walk in faith too."

The end point of that for the author of Hebrews is that we are to lay aside sin. In this instance sin is described as a weight that prevents us from running freely. If we can throw off the chains of sin, then we can run the race of faith that God has set before us.

The prescription for sin is of course given as Christ himself. In order to cast off our shackles we need to look to Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith. He was able to endure even the cross because of the joy that was set before Him. That joy was not sitting down in Heaven, it was sitting down in Heaven with you and me, living amongst us as we worship the Father. That same truth gives us endurance to run the race set before us.

LOOK

Hebrews 11 has been a wonderful journey through the Old Testament. We have looked at the stories of faith of some of the greatest heroes of the Bible. We saw how Abel in offered right sacrifices, how Enoch walked with God in a world that was walking away from Him. We read about Noah building an ark in faith that rain would come, and how Abraham and Sarah trusted God for a son in their old age. We looked at the stories of Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Rahab, Gideon, and David. We even looked at the faith of some saints who lived after the Bible was written.

Hebrews 12 tells us to think about all of these people. It calls them a great cloud of witnesses. In a courtroom, the more people who are able to testify that something happened, the better. It convinces the judge that the events they are claiming actually happened. God has not given us just one or two people as examples of lives of faith, but rather a great "cloud of witnesses." We have so many examples of how people trusted God, and also of how God proved Himself trustworthy to those people. All of these stories of faith should tells us that God is true, He is who He says He is, and that He is absolutely worthy of our trust and praise.

The interpretation/
exegesis of the passage.
What does this passage
mean? How does this
passage apply to my
life?

LOOK (Continued)

In Hebrews 11, all of the examples of faith were unique. Everyone trusted God in different ways. For example, Joshua trusted God by marching around Jericho for seven days, and David trusted God by believing that He would bring victory over the giant Goliath. So what does faith look like for us? Knowing what we know, how do we walk with God and show Him that we trust Him?

Hebrews 12 tells us to lay aside *every sin*. That is how we show faith in God. We are told that sin is something that ties us up. It drags us down and stops us from moving and living the way that should. We are told that God wants us to run with Him, and that when sin is in our lives it weighs us down, it slows us and traps us.

How do we lay aside our sin? How do we stop lying, stealing, cheating, or being angry at our brother or sister? There is only one way. There has only ever been one way. We are to look to Jesus, and ask Him to help us. We are not strong enough to do anything by ourselves. John 15:5 says that without Him we can do nothing. He is the Author of our faith. He is the one who gives us faith, and He is the one who gives us victory over sin. Jesus can give us the endurance to run the races of our lives. We can overcome everything this world throws at us, if we lean on Him and remember His example. He endured death on a cross, knowing that one day you and I would have the opportunity to place our hope and trust in Him, that through His sacrifice we could be forgiven and could cast off the sin the ensnares us.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize 1 Corinthians 9:24.

Ask the students if they can give an example of faith from Hebrews 11. Ask them how that example can help us to honor Christ.

Pray: Thank the Lord for His sacrifice that brings us forgiveness and freedom from sin. Praise Him for the lives of so many that we can look to and emulate. Ask Him for the ability to run our races with endurance, free from the chains of sin.

Parent Question: How do we lay aside “every weight and sin that so easily ensnares us”?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Hebrews 12:1-2 by David Guzik

Hebrews 12 - Reasons to Endure Discouraging Times

A. Look unto Jesus.

1. (1) Application of the examples of enduring faith in Hebrews 11.

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,

a. **Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses:** In the mind's eye, the author pictures these previous champions of faith as spectators from the heavens, cheering us on as we press on to overcome present discouragement as in an athletic competition.

i. The idea of the past heroes of faith as spectators, watching as we live the life of faith makes some think that in heaven, people can and do observe what goes on earth. This single passage may *suggest* this, but it is inconclusive to *prove* this.

ii. We rightly think of heaven as a place where people are always happy and untroubled. It is hard to think that those in heaven are happy and untroubled if they see what is happening on the earth. So, it is difficult to say that people in heaven are actually observing us.

iii. Others consider that these **witnesses** are not witnessing *us* as we conduct our lives. Instead, they are **witnesses** to us of faith and endurance.

iv. "Both the *Greeks* and the *Latins* frequently use the term *cloud*, to express a *great number* of persons or things." (Clarke)

b. **Lay aside every weight, and the sin:** Sin can hold us back. But there are also things that may not be sin (**every weight**) but are merely hindrances that can keep us from running effectively the race God has for us.

i. Our choices are not always between right and wrong, but between something that may hinder us and something else that may not. Is there a **weight** in your life you must **lay aside**?

c. **So easily ensnares us:** The words **easily ensnares** translate a difficult ancient Greek word (*euperistaton*), which can be translated four ways: "easily avoided," "admired," "ensnaring," or "dangerous."

i. Let us **lay** them *all aside*:

• Some sins can be *easily avoided*, but are not.

- Some sins are *admired*, yet must be laid aside.
- Some sins are *ensnaring* and thus especially harmful.
- Some sins are more *dangerous* than others are.

ii. If such ensnaring sins were really the work of demonic possession or demonic influence in the Christian, this would be an ideal place for the Holy Spirit to address this. Yet we are never given reason to blame our sin on demons; the appeal is simply for us to, in the power of the Holy Spirit, **lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us.**

d. **Let us run with endurance:** What is needed is **endurance**, to finish what we have begun in Jesus Christ - a **race that is set before us.**

i. God has set before you a **race**. You must run it, and it will involve effort and commitment. Being passive never runs or wins a race. God wants us to run the race and to finish it right.

ii. **Endurance** is needed to run that race. **Endurance** translates the ancient Greek word *hupomone*, "which does not mean the patience which sits down and accepts things but the patience which masters them . . . It is a determination, unhurrying and yet undelaying, which goes steadily on and refuses to be deflected." (Barclay)

iii. In Acts 20:24, Paul pictured himself as a runner who had a race to finish, and nothing would keep Paul from finishing the race with joy. In that passage, Paul speaks of *my race* - he had his race to run, we have our own - but God calls us to finish it with joy, and that only happens with **endurance.**

e. **The race that is set before us: Race** is the ancient Greek word *agona*, a word used for conflict or struggle of many kinds, and it was a favorite word of the Apostle Paul (Philippians 1:30, Colossians 2:1, 1 Thessalonians 2:2, 1 Timothy 6:12, 2 Timothy 4:7).

2. (2) The ultimate example: Jesus Christ.

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.

a. **Looking unto Jesus:** The *New American Standard Version* translates this beautifully as, *fixing our eyes on Jesus*. We can only run the race as we look to Jesus and have our eyes locked on to Him. He is our focus, our inspiration, and our example.

i. In the ancient Greek, **looking unto Jesus** uses a verb that implies a definite *looking away* from other things and a present *looking unto* Jesus.

ii. "The Greek word for 'looking' is a much fuller word than we can find in the English language. It has a preposition in it which turns the look away from everything else. You are to look from all beside to Jesus. Fix not thy gaze upon the cloud of witnesses; they will hinder thee if they take away thine eye from Jesus. Look not on the weights and the besetting sin-these thou hast laid aside; look away from them. Do not even look upon the race-course, or the competitors, but look to Jesus and so start in the race." (Spurgeon)

iii. We must guard against seeing Jesus as *only* an example; He was and is so much more. But He also remains the ultimate example of Christian endurance.

b. **The author and finisher of our faith:** Jesus is not only the **author** of our faith; He is the **finisher** of it also. The idea of *He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ* (Philippians 1:6) is comforting indeed to these discouraged Christians.

c. **Who for the joy that was set before Him:** Jesus did not regard the cross itself as a joy. But He could look past the horror of the cross to enjoy the joy beyond it. The same mentality will enable these Jewish Christians (and we ourselves) to endure.

d. **Despising the shame:** One of the prominent elements of the torture of the cross was its extreme **shame**. Jesus did not welcome this shame - He *despised* it - yet He endured through it to victory.

i. **Shame** is a significant trial. Daniel 12:2 says that shame will be an aspect of the terrors of hell: *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt*. Jesus bore this hellish shame to accomplish our redemption.

- Jesus bore a shameful accusation: blasphemy.
- Jesus bore shameful mocking.
- Jesus bore a shameful beating.
- Jesus wore a shameful crown.
- Jesus wore a shameful robe.
- Jesus bore shameful mocking even as He prayed on the cross.

ii. This is a stumbling block to many. They will do just about anything for Jesus *except* endure shame or embarrassment. Spurgeon spoke boldly to Christians who could not bear the shame that comes from the world for following Jesus: "Yet you are a coward. Yes, put it down in English: you are a coward. If anybody called you so you would turn red in the face; and perhaps you are not a coward in reference to any other subject. What a shameful thing it is that while you are bold about everything else you are cowardly about Jesus Christ. Brave for the world and cowardly towards Christ!"

iii. "I heard of a prayer the other day which I did not quite like at first, but there is something in it after all. The good man said, 'Lord, if our hearts are hard, make them soft; but if our hearts are too soft, make them hard.' I know what he meant, and I think I can pray that last prayer for some of my friends who are so delicate that a sneer would kill them. May the Lord harden them till they can despise the shame!" (Spurgeon)

e. **And has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God:** This speaks of Jesus' glorification. The same promise of being glorified (in a different sense) after our shame is true for the Christian.