

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

Chapter 12 Part 1

“Looking unto Jesus”

After a pastor finished his sermon one Sunday morning, one of the Elders approached the Podium and whispered to the pastor: “Just for your own information, Point number 1, point number 2 and all the little sub points got up and left during your closing story...”

Sometimes, when the Lord is really speaking to us about an area of our life that He really wants to deal with, It gets very uncomfortable...

But this morning, we are not going to look at each other as examples of what not to do, we are going to look to Jesus and the Example of who we want to be like...

We spent 4 weeks going over chapter 11 of Hebrews carefully because it is the chapter dealing with what faith is, and what kind of people in the Old Testament had great faith.

- ☞ **We discovered** that they were ordinary people like us.
- ☞ **What made** them people of great faith was not a perfect record, but that they just believed the Lord and what He had told them.
- ☞ **You can be a great person of faith** this morning, if you will just believe what the Lord has said to you concerning your life.

Chapter 12 this morning, begins with **“Therefore”**.

- ☞ **Whenever a chapter begins** with the word **“Therefore”**, it is referring to what was just previously spoken.
- ☞ **In this case**, as we begin chapter 12, we are referred back to those people in chapter 11 that were examples to us of people with great faith.

Hebrews 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.

A Cloud of Witnesses

- ☞ **The great cloud of witnesses** are the men and women that we just read about in the Old Testament that put their trust and confidence in the Lord.
- ☞ **Since, we have this example in the Old Testament** of men who struggled just like we do everyday, but they believed what God told them, we should then also, in the

midst of our everyday struggles, not give up on our confidence in what the Lord has promised us.

Lay aside every weight

- ⊕ **When a man was going to compete** in the ancient Olympic games, he understood that anything that he had attached to his body, had the potential of slowing him down in his race.
- ⊕ **As a result**, ancient Olympic runners did not run with any clothing on their body's.
- ⊕ **They didn't want** anything to hinder them in their race.

The idea here for us is that we are also in a great race to finish this life being found faithful in living for Jesus.

- ⊕ **We should then** not want anything in our life to hinder us.
- ⊕ **There are many things** that are in this life that can have that effect.
- ⊕ **There are many things** that can hinder us or slow us down in the race that we are running.

How serious are you about following Jesus?

- ⊕ **Is there anything** in your life right now that is hindering you or slowing you down from following Jesus with all your heart?
- ⊕ **Then these things** need to go.

The Church at Corinth was a church that very closely resembled the church of today, a church that was compromising.

- ⊕ **The Christians at Corinth** thought that they could continue to believe in and follow Jesus, while at the same time, keep one foot in the world and do what the rest of the world was doing.
- ⊕ **What is it** that is in your life this morning that is slowing you down or hindering you from following and serving Jesus more closely?
 1. A relationship.
 2. What you do with you leisure time (TV, Movies)
 3. An Attitude.
 4. Un forgiveness
 5. Bitterness
 6. A Habit

It is important for us to understand that when Jesus forgave us and made us free, we really are free.

- ⊕ **In a sense**, there is nothing that is not lawful for the person who belongs to Jesus, as long as it is not specifically spoken against in the Bible.

- ☞ **There are certain liberties** that an individual Christian might have, that the Bible doesn't have anything to say about.
- ☞ **During the times of the New Testament**, certain people had come out of pagan religions where they ate meat that had been sacrificed to idols.
- ☞ **After they gave their lives to Jesus**, they no longer felt like they could eat meat that had been offered to an Idol.
- ☞ **So Paul wrote** instructions on this subject.

1Corinthians 8:1-13

1 Now concerning things offered to idols:

4 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one.

5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords),

6 yet for us there is one Go

7 However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled

7 However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.

8 But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

9 But **beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are**

10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?

11 And **because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?**

12 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

13 **Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.**

So, the idea here then is perhaps you have the freedom to partake of something as a Christian that does not bother your conscience, such as have beer with your dinner.

- ☞ **So you go to the Outback steak house** in Flagstaff and you are sitting there having your dinner with your wife.
- ☞ **There sitting across the room from you** is another Bother and his wife from our church.

This brother sitting there was an alcoholic before he gave his life to the Lord.

- ☞ **As he sees you sitting there** having your beer with dinner, and he knows that you are also a believer in Jesus.
- ☞ **You have the freedom** to have a beer with dinner, but to him, he cannot ever drink a beer because of his former addiction.

- ☞ **Will you, by your freedom**, cause another who also loves Jesus, to be stumbled in their walk with the Lord, by the exercise of your freedom?

There in verse 13, Paul says, for this reason, if ___ makes my brother stumble, I will never again partake of _____, lest I make my brother stumble.

We are not to use our liberty in such a way that it has any chance of making another believer in Jesus stumble. For this reason it would be better Paul says to never exercise this liberty.

1 Corinthians 6:12

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but **I will not be brought under the power of any.**

1 Corinthians 10:23

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, **but not all things edify.**

When Jesus saved you, he wanted you to be free from the power that the things of this world have to make you a slave to them.

- ☞ **Some of us** had addictions to Alcohol and drugs.
- ☞ **Some had** addictions to other things.

Even though now in Christ Jesus you might have to freedom to do certain things, ask yourself the question:

- ☞ *“Is this really helpful to me in my walk with Jesus”*
- ☞ *“Will this thing have the potential of slowing me down or hindering me in my race that I am trying to finish with Jesus?”*
- ☞ *Does the time that I spend in this particular recreation take away from time I could spend drawing closer to Jesus?*

I always get scared when a Christian comes to me and asks me just how far they can go in a particular area before they are sinning.

- ☞ **It's kind of like saying** “How close can I get to the fire before I get burned?”
- ☞ **What we should be asking ourselves** is “Why would I want to do anything that might slow me down or hinder me from achieving everything Jesus wants to do in my life?”
- ☞ **“Is it possible that if I exercise my freedom in Jesus and I have that beer or glass of wine, is it possible that I might make someone else stumble, or loose their faith in Jesus, or could I be hindering or slowing myself down?”**

- ☞ **Did you know that some Believers** have a really hard time with “R” Rated movies. If they went to see one, it would really cause them to stumble in their walk with Jesus.
- ☞ **What if one of these Brothers or Sisters** see you coming out of an “R” rated movie and it causes them to stumble. ARE WE REALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR OTHER BELIEVERS!

Galatians 5:13

For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Then because of my gratefulness to Jesus for how much He suffered for me to make me free, and because of my love for other believers who also love Jesus, I will not do anything that may make them stumble, or slow myself down, or cause disrespect to fall on Jesus name by me exercising my freedom.

Hebrews 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.

Run with endurance the race

In the ancient Olympic Games, the runners that competed ran their races completely naked. They did not want anything to hinder them from being able to win.

- ☞ **Now, It makes you wonder,** how perhaps a tiny little pair of shorts would slow one of these Olympic runners down, but they considered that anything, no matter how small it was, AS LONG AS IT WAS ATTACHED TO THEM, IT COULD SLOW THEM DOWN.

This is what is meant then by “Running this race with endurance...”

- ☞ **Laying aside anything** in this life that might slow me down.
- ☞ **For some of us,** what is slowing us down in our race is our own **Pride**, we are still so self reliant, and self confident in our abilities that it is hindering us from finishing this race.
- ☞ **Some of us** are so full of our own pride that we cannot see just how interdependent we all are on each other.
- ☞ **Another thing about Pride:** When we are selfish or prideful, we don’t see it in ourselves, we only see it in other people.

Some of us are so angry and short tempered with people, and harsh with even people we love, that we are being hindered in finishing our race.

This morning, let us lay aside all of these weights that hinder us, and run our race with endurance.

- ☞ **Endurance means**, “*Hanging in there*”.
- ☞ Yes, you have struggles.
- ☞ Yes there are still **parts of your life** that you are very disappointed with.
- ☞ Yes you still have **too much pride**.
- ☞ Yes you still are still **too harsh with people**, and you still have a **bad temper**.
- ☞ Yes you are still **not very patient with other people** or with the **circumstances** of your life.

But will you endure these, as the Lord is working on you throughout your life, to bring a change?

- ☞ **Now, I didn't say** put up with these things.
- ☞ **You and I** should never put up with these things, we should never accept them.
- ☞ **We should always** hate them and desire to change them
- ☞ **But what we should not do is stop trying**, stop hating them, and begin to accept them as just a part of our personality.

To Run the race with endurance, means to continue to struggle against pride, anger, impatience and whatever else plagues us.

Hebrews 12

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.

Looking unto Jesus

During World War 1, there was a detachment of troops that had been badly beaten up by the enemy. They were tired, discouraged and scared. The Captain noticed on the front of the Church that they were marching past, a Picture of Jesus on the Cross.

The Captain remembered How much Jesus had suffered and endured so that He could be forgiven.

He commanded his troops as they were marching to “**Eyes Right**”, as they turned their heads to the right, they also saw Jesus on the Cross, and remembered how much he endured.

From that moment on, those men were not afraid, not nearly as tired, and all discouragement had left...

- ☞ **We are looking to Jesus** as our example of what we want to become.

- ☞ **We look at What Jesus Endured** for us, and we remember that He never gave up.
- ☞ **We do not compare** ourselves to each other.
- ☞ **We do not** compare ourselves to some great man or woman of God.
- ☞ **We compare ourselves to Jesus**, we look to Him as the example of what we want to be like.

If you look close enough at any other person, no matter how much you might admire them or respect their walk with Jesus, if you look close enough or spend enough time with them, you will always be disappointed.

- ☞ **Now, if you have been looking to them as your example** of someone you want to be like, and then you find out that they have faults, it can really make you stumble,
- ☞ **But if your example is Jesus**, and you are only trying to be like Jesus, then when you see someone that you have admired and respected make a mistake, it will not cause you to stumble.

If you look close enough at me, if you really get to know me, you will be disappointed, because I am just like you.

- ☞ **I still have problems** with my foolish pride.
- ☞ **I still have** a bad temper.
- ☞ **I still am selfish.**
- ☞ **I still struggle with sin** in my life,
- ☞ **AND SO DO ALL OF YOU!**

So, all of us “Looking unto Jesus...” He is the Author and the finisher of our faith...

- ☞ **As we are looking unto Jesus as our example**, and we are not looking at each other, then when each one of us blows it, or we see pride or a temper or some other problem that we all have, we will not be surprised or it will not cause us to stumble and break fellowship with each other.
- ☞ **It will cause us to have compassion** on each other, realizing that we are just the same, we all struggle.
- ☞ **Looking unto Jesus** as our example.

The author and finisher of our faith

- ☞ **The Author of a Book** is the one that wrote the Book.
- ☞ **He or she** is the one that knows how the story goes.
- ☞ **They alone** know the details of the lives of the characters in the story.
- ☞ **They alone know** the final outcome of the story.

Jesus is the Author of your life's story.

- ☞ **He alone knows** how the story of your life is going to go.

- ☞ **Only Jesus knows the details of your life**, and how He is going to work through all the circumstances of your life to make you into the image of Himself.
- ☞ **Only Jesus knows how everything** is going to turn out, and that all will work out for good for you, because you are trusting in Him.

Since Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith, we can have great confidence that every single microsecond of our life on this earth, Jesus is working, Jesus is moving and bringing everything into alignment just as it needs to be, to get us to where He wants us to be...Like Him!

Hebrews 12

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.

Jesus, Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross

Now we get to the place where as we are “**Looking to Jesus**”, using Him as our example, we get to see some real practical examples of why we should be looking to Jesus and the example he left to us.

- ☞ **Here in verse 2**, we see that when Jesus was headed towards to Cross, there was something that He was focused on that was ahead of Him, that helped Him endure all the terrible punishment He suffered.

“The Joy set before Him”

- ☞ **Do you know** what that Joy was that was before Jesus, that caused him to hang in there and take all of the punishment that He had to endure?
- ☞ **It was YOU!**
- ☞ **You were that Joy** that Jesus saw before Him, that caused Him to go through all He suffered.

On the Cross, at the place where they tore Jesus Body to shreds, Jesus saw your beautiful face before Him.

- ☞ **Jesus saw** what His sacrifice was going to bring to your life.
- ☞ **He saw you**, not as you are now, struggling through the difficulties of your life.
- ☞ **Jesus saw you as you are going to be** someday very soon, “**Perfected**”, in every way, just as Jesus is perfected.
- ☞ **Jesus doesn’t see you** the way that you or others see yourself, with all your faults, he looks at you the way that you are going to be someday.
- ☞ **Jesus knows** that all of these heartaches and struggles of this life are absolutely necessary, in order to make you into the perfect person you are going to be someday.
- ☞ **Jesus knows that as long as we live** in these bodies that still love to sin, that still are selfish and prideful and full of anger and lust, that it is only by

suffering like Jesus suffered, that our bodies are brought into subjection to the new Spirit that is Born again inside these bodies of death.

So, even while we are enduring these times of suffering, we know that they are for the express purpose of training us, teaching us, changing us..

Henry Ford said: *“Obstacles are those frightening things that you see when you take your eyes off the goal...”*

- ☞ **So, in our suffering and struggling**, we do not look to anyone else, but to Jesus and His example of suffering, to encourage us and help us make it through our own struggles and suffering.

Hebrews 12

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.

Consider Him who endured, (Who is he talking about?)

- ☞ **While you are in this time of suffering**, this time of struggle, disappointments, loss, trials, difficulties and heart breaks, **Consider what Jesus went through for you.**
- ☞ **Imagine how hard it was for Jesus to endure** what He had to go through for you so that today you would be completely forgiven!
- ☞ **Imagine the temptation Jesus must have felt** to just give up or call thousands of angels down to rescue Him from his trial by fire.

And yet, Jesus endured the pain, all the suffering, all the temptations He felt, Jesus so resisted that the stress caused Him to sweat drops of Blood from his pours.

- ☞ **We talked about this on Easter Sunday**, a medical Condition called ***“Hematridosis”***, when a person is under such severe stress that the tiny capillaries under their skin rupture and mix blood with their sweat and pour out on the ground.
- ☞ **Jesus went through such tremendous stress** and pressure when He was suffering for you, that he bled through his sweat glands.

Hebrews 12

4 **You have not yet resisted to bloodshed**, striving against sin.

Have you ever been that stressed out, have you ever been under that kind of pressure where you sweat drops of blood?

- ☞ **Have you ever taken such a strong stance** against your Trial, Difficulty, or even your pride your anger, your impatience or selfishness, that you Bled out all the blood from your body on the ground?

☞ **No?, Jesus did,**

Hebrews 12

3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls

Consider Jesus and how much He suffered for you, lest you become weary and discouraged in your should and give up or give in your own trials and struggles...

Hebrews 12

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.”

“The Chastening of the Lord”

“He Scourges every son...”

Here is a promise from the Lord that I bet you don't want!

- ☞ **If you really love Jesus** and if you really belong to Him, he will put you through times of trials and suffering.
- ☞ **Because** “*Whom the Lord loves, He Chastens...*”

Chastening is like Spanking.

- ☞ **When I spanked my sons Rob and Mike,** I think that it was really harder on me to have to punish them, then it was on them.
- ☞ **It broke my heart** to have to punish those little guys.’
- ☞ **But I did it** because I Loved them and I knew that this was the only way that they could learn and grow.
- ☞ **They just could not grow** unless they endure the punishment for their mistakes.

In the same way, Because the Father loves you so much, he needs to spank us once in a while, so that by the spanking, we learn and grow.

- ☞ **So we don't despise it when we suffer** and are spanked by the Lord, because we know that He allows it and does it because he is working towards the greater food of changing us and our hearts.

Hebrews 12

7 If 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.

Endure chastening Sons Illegitimate

For most of us, When our parents were spanking us, somehow we knew that they were doing it because they really did love us.

- ☞ **Somehow we understood** that we really deserved it anyway.

We were talking last week about some of the times that we had to spank our kids and one of the parents said that one time they had spanked their child and found out later that the Child really had not done it.

When the Child complained that they were falsely spanked, the parent told the Child, "That is for some of the things that you did, that I didn't know about!"

- ☞ **Most of us understood** that the spanking was necessary to teach us.
- ☞ **Most of us understood that the reason** our parents spanked us **was because we were their son or daughter.**

Even so, today we can understand that when the trials come, when life is difficult and hard to understand why the Lord would allow or bring such heart ache into our life, we can know this morning with great confidence that **These things come into our life, because we are HIS SON OR DAUGHTER.**

Hebrews 12

8 **But if you are without chastening**, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

If you do not go through these intense times of trials in your life, if when you really need a good spanking, you don't get one, then it means that you really are not the Son or Daughter of God.

- ☞ **Sometimes we look at people in the world** who deny the Lord in their life, and they are living strictly for their own selfish lives and we wonder, "How come they never suffer like I do?"
- ☞ **It is because** they are not a son or daughter of God like you are.
- ☞ **The Father discipline his children** because they are His Children.

It is important that everyone in the world is not the Children of God.

- ☞ **Only those who have come into a personal relationship** with God through Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the Cross, are called "Children of God".

Hebrews 12

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.

Most kids that had a healthy relationship with their Fathers or Mothers, understood instinctively that when they were getting spanked or disciplined, it was for a good purpose.

- ⊕ **Kids need spanking and discipline** to help them have their guilt removed.
- ⊕ **When we punished our children** for the wrong they did, it served a few purposes.
 1. It helped them understand the consequences of wrong behavior in life.
 2. It encouraged them to make changes in their behavior.
 3. It helped change them from selfish human beings into selfless human beings.
 4. It removes the guilt that they felt for doing things they knew were wrong.

We forget that we were created with a sense of what is right and wrong.

In the garden of Eden the Lord told us that one of the things that happened to us is that we now have a sense of Good and Evil.

Genesis 2:17

...but **of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil** you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

- ⊕ **Every person that is born,** knows the difference between what is right and what is wrong.
- ⊕ **Unless the person is born with a mental disability,** everyone has the capacity to understand what they are doing.

If there is no place for our guilt to be taken and removed, then guilt begins to build up and build up until all kinds of social and behavioral problems manifest themselves.

- ⊕ **Depression,** is large part is **due to Unresolved guilt.**
- ⊕ **A person builds up guilt upon guilt,** regrets of their past, until they become so depressed in their life, they cannot function.
- ⊕ **The answer is to take all of the guilt to Jesus, ask for His forgiveness** for all of these sins, and then the Lord will cleanse you and take away all of the guilt.

If you find that you spend allot of time being depressed, it is possible that you have allowed your guilt to build up instead of taking it to Jesus, confessing it, asking Him to forgive it and cleanse you of it.

- ☞ **There are other medical reasons for Depression**, but I personally believe most all depression could be eliminated by giving your life, your sin and your guilt to Jesus and letting Him cleanse you.

So, back to our study this morning in Hebrews 12, when the Lord Chastens us or Spanks us by bringing certain trials into our life, **after the trial is over, we will feel like we have been somehow cleansed from some of the struggles** we have previously had with our own flesh.

- ☞ **For most of us** here this morning, the only way we can learn to not be so harsh, and angry and impatient with other people, is by having our own heart broken.
- ☞ **So, in the Lords love**, he will Spank you when you need to be spanked.
- ☞ **Let His Chastening have it's desired effect**, **let your heart be broken** , let the Lord break you of yourself, let Him purge you and cleanse you.

Because You are a Son, You are a Daughter!

Hebrews 12

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.

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.

Now, I don't recall my sons Rob or Mike ever jumping up and down after I spanked them and saying "**Yippee, this spanking is great dad, thank you!**"

I don't know anyone that in the midst of a terrible time of suffering in their life, or a difficult trial, that jumps up and down and says "**Yippee, thank you Lord for this trial...**"

James 1:2-4

2 My brethren, **count it all joy when you fall into various trials**,

3 **knowing** that the testing of your faith produces patience.

4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Count it all Joy when you fall into various trials, **KNOWING THAT** the testing of your faith produces patience.

Notice that James didn't say "Count the Trial all Joy".

- ☞ **It says** "*Count the knowledge of what the trial will produce as All Joy*".
- ☞ **In our trials**, because we know that we belong to Jesus and we know how great His love is for us, that Jesus is going to use this trial to change us and grow us.

Jesus proved forever how great His love is for us when He gave up everything and endured the terrible punishment he endured for us when He was Beaten and Crucified.

- ☞ **So, whenever we begin to wonder**, “*Does the Lord really love me...*”, we look back to the Cross and remind ourselves, “*Yes, Jesus does really love me, look at what He endured so that I could be forgiven..*”
- ☞ **We take this knowledge** and inject it into our present situation, so that we can have confidence that the Lord does love us in this heart breaking trial of our life, and he will make it turn out for Good, because He loves me and I love Him.

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose

Next Sunday we will pick back up where we left off here in Hebrews 12, with the subject of **Bitterness in our life, how it can grow in our hearts** to the point where if it is not dealt with properly **it can destroy us from the inside...**